

The Holy Bible:

New European Version

With commentary by Duncan Heaster

Carelinks Publishing

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Preface

The New European Version isn't so much a fresh translation as largely a remediation into modern English of existing traditional translations, especially the KJV and ASV. It attempts to provide a text which is in outline terms familiar to those who have been used to those traditional Bible versions, and yet which is sensitive to the needs of those for whom English is a second language. Another intention of this version is to provide a modern English text which is available for use with far more liberal copyright and usage restrictions than those attached to many other modern English versions. Any wishing to reprint or quote at length from the New European Version are welcome to contact the publishers. The New European Version and commentary, along with the reduced version of *Bible Basics* at the end of this volume, are copyright Duncan Heaster, but requests for usage will usually be freely granted; audio files of parts of the N.E.V. being dramatically read by Steve Gretton are obtainable free from our website n-e-v.info. This edition of the N.E.V. is not for sale and its production and distribution is funded entirely by voluntary donations.

The New European Version was first released as just the New Testament with commentary, and copies are available from the publishers. This is intended as a tool for evangelization, and therefore the commentary is somewhat more basic than that in the Old Testament. The Old Testament commentary uses the abbreviation "s.w." to mean "same original Hebrew word translated as"; and "LXX" to refer to the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament which is often quoted in the New Testament. Some of the comments use renderings other than that found in the N.E.V. text.

This edition is bound up with a reduced version of *Bible Basics*, a full copy of which is available from the publishers. If you have any comments or questions on that book or the commentary, please forward to the publishers. Next to each chapter there are dates. These are to enable the Bible to be read daily according to the *Bible Companion* reading tables, designed by Robert Roberts in the 19th century and well used by very many believers since then. Reading according to this plan enables the Old Testament to be read once and the New Testament twice in the course of a year. There are three portions to be read each day; the first portion begins in Genesis in January, the second portion begins in the Psalms in January, and the third is from the New Testament, beginning in Matthew in January.

Free copies of the New European Version are currently available from the Publishers and will be mailed worldwide on request whilst funding lasts; donations to enable this can be made to “Carelinks” and sent to the publishers, or see www.carelinks.net for more information.

Carelinks Ministries pray earnestly that this volume and the distribution of it will play a part in the spreading of the Gospel worldwide before Christ returns.

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GENESIS

CHAPTER 1 Jan. 1

The Record of Creation

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty; darkness was on the surface of the deep and God's Spirit was hovering over the surface of the waters. ³ God said, Let there be light, and there was light. ⁴ God saw the light, and saw that it was good. God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. There was evening and there was morning, one day. ⁶ God said, Let there be an expanse in the middle of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. ⁷ God made the expanse, and divided the waters

which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse sky. There was evening and there was morning, a second day. ⁹ God said, Let the waters under the sky be gathered together to one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called seas. God saw that it was good. ¹¹ God said, Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with its seed in it, on the earth; and it was so. ¹² The earth sprouted vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, with its seed in it, after their

1:2 Moses wrote Genesis, presumably during the 40 years wandering. He therefore wrote it in a context – of explaining things to Israel as they stumbled through that wilderness, wondering who they were, where they came from, where they were headed. This explains why there are so many links within the Pentateuch – e.g. the Spirit “flutters” over the waters, just as God like an eagle [a symbol of the Spirit] “flutters” over Israel in bringing about their creation as a nation (Dt. 32:1). The point is, what God did at creation, He can do at any time in re-forming our lives into a new creation. Those baptized into Christ are “a new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17). This process of making us new means that the creation of life, the huge expenditure of energy out of God which happened at the natural creation, is ongoing in our lives today.

The earth being “without form and void” uses a phrase elsewhere used to describe the judgment that has come on an order of things (Jer. 4:23; Is. 24:10; 34:11). It may be, therefore, that there was a previous creation on earth which was destroyed in judgment. Hence the command to “replenish the earth” (:28).

1:12 God created matter. All that exists was made by Him; and by faith we believe that things which now exist were not made from what already existed apart from God. The Genesis record of creation, however, emphasises how God brought order out of chaos. He brought this present world of beauty and order out of a darkness that brooded upon a sea, and from an earth that was “without form and void”, the Hebrew images behind the words implying ‘a chaos’. The references to the earth and sea ‘bringing forth’ (here and :24) use a Hebrew word which means ‘to let something which is within to come out’. The present world was created by a re-organization of things which

kind; and God saw that it was good. ¹³ There was evening and there was morning, a third day. ¹⁴ God said, Let there be lights in the expanse of sky to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; ¹⁵ and let them be for lights in the expanse of sky to give light on the earth; and it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the expanse of sky to give light to the earth, ¹⁸ and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day. ²⁰ God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of sky. ²¹ God created the large sea

creatures, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind. God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. ²³ There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day. ²⁴ God said, Let the earth produce living creatures after their kind, livestock, creeping things, and animals of the earth after their kind; and it was so. ²⁵ God made the animals of the earth after their kind, and the livestock after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind. God saw that it was good.

The Creation of Man

²⁶ God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish

existed in some form before. This means that when our own lives, or the collective life of God's people, appears to be in chaos – then we can in faith reflect that God has brought beautiful order out of chaos, and He can likewise powerfully bring order to what seems hopeless.

1:26 *Let us* – The Hebrew construction here is a ‘communicative plural’, implying God conferring with His council. To assume that God is speaking to Jesus here is a desperate assumption. The Bible doesn’t teach that Jesus literally existed before His birth. The Hebrew word *elohim* translated “God” here literally means ‘mighty ones’, and here refers to the Angels. The Angels were the agents of creation (Job 38:7). The word *elohim* is translated “Angels” by many translations in Ps. 8:5. The Hebrew construction used here has been described as a ‘plural of deliberation’, whereby an individual may use a plural to describe his or her decision. Take David’s words in 2 Sam. 24:14: “Let *us* fall into the hand of the Lord... but let not *me* fall into the hand of man”. Ezra 4:18 has a King saying: “The letter you sent unto *us* has been plainly read before *me*”. In Is. 6:8 we read the same of God Himself: “Whom shall *I* [singular] send, and who will go for *us*?”. This would enable us to better understand God’s decision making in 11:7: “Go to, let *us* go down, and there confound their speech. So “Let *us* make man...” may refer to God’s personal self-deliberation in making human beings; to a Semitic reader of the original, it would emphasize the vast passion which

of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. ²⁷ God created man in His own image. In God's image He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth, and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. ²⁹ God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree, which bears fruit yielding seed. It will be your food. ³⁰ To every animal of the earth, and to every bird of the sky, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food; and it was so. ³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and, behold,

it was very good. There was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

CHAPTER 2 Jan. 1

The heavens and the earth were finished, and all their vast array. ² On the seventh day God finished His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. ³ God blessed the seventh day, and made it holy, because He rested in it from all His work which He had created to make.

The Garden of Eden

⁴ This is the history of the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that Yahweh God made the earth and the heavens. ⁵ No plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for Yahweh God had not caused it to rain on the earth. There was not

God Almighty put into this decision. And it therefore follows that He passionately wishes to have a very definite purpose with us, that He *so* loves us, and wishes only our eternal good.

In our image, after our likeness – We aren't in God's mental likeness, because His thoughts are so far above our thoughts (Is. 55:9). But the "our" refers to the Angels, and whenever they appear on earth, they have appeared in human form. God is a real, actual person, existing in Heaven but everywhere present by His Spirit. Thus man is made in the image and likeness of God, as manifested through the angels. James 3:9 speaks of "...men, which are made in the similitude of God". Our creation in the image of God means that we can infer something about the real object of which we are but an image. Thus God, whom we reflect, is not something nebulous of which we cannot conceive. Ezekiel saw God enthroned above the cherubim, with the silhouette of "the likeness of a man" (Ez. 1:26; 10:20); it is God Himself who is located above the cherubim (2 Kings 19:15). All this has a practical import; because we are in the image of God, because it is imprinted on every part of our bodies, we must give that body to God, just as men were to give the penny which had Caesar's image on it to Caesar (Lk. 20:25). The Hebrew word *tselem*, 'image' is in modern Hebrew 'photograph'. God is personal and He has a concrete, actual form and being.

a man to cultivate the ground, ⁶ but a mist went up from the earth, and watered the whole surface of the ground. ⁷ Yahweh God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. ⁸ Yahweh God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there He put the man whom He had formed. ⁹ Out of the ground Yahweh God made every tree to grow that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the middle of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰ A river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it was parted, and became four headstreams. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pison: this is the one which flows through the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; ¹² and the gold of that land is good. There is aromatic resin and

the onyx stone. ¹³ The name of the second river is Gihon: the same river that flows through the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river is Tigris: this is the one which flows east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates. ¹⁵ Yahweh God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it. ¹⁶ Yahweh God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die.

The Creation of Woman

¹⁸ Yahweh God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him. ¹⁹ Out of the ground Yahweh God formed every animal of the field, and every bird of the sky, and brought

2:7 The ‘soul’ refers to the person, body or self. ‘Save Our Souls’ (S.O.S.) clearly means ‘Save us from death!’ The ‘soul’ is therefore ‘you’, or the summation of all the things that make up a person. It is understandable, therefore, that many modern versions of the Bible rarely use the word ‘soul’, translating it instead as ‘you’ or ‘the person’. The animals which God created are called “living creatures... every living thing that moves” (1:20,21). The Hebrew word translated “creatures” and “living thing” here is *nephesh*, which is also translated ‘being’; for example here: “...and man became a living being”. Thus man is a ‘soul’ or ‘living being’, just as the animals are ‘souls’ or ‘living beings’. The only difference between mankind and animals is that man is mentally superior to them; he is created in the image of God (1:26), and some men are called to know the Gospel through which the hope of immortality is opened up to them (2 Tim. 1:10). As regards our fundamental nature and the nature of our death, there is no difference between man and animals.

2:17 The serpent was a beast of the field which God had made (3:1). Yet out of the ground [Heb. *adamah* – earth, soil] God formed all the beasts of the field, including the serpent. So the serpent was likewise created by God out of the ground – it wasn’t a pre-existing agent of evil. Note the snake, as one of the beasts of the field, was “very good” (1:31) – hardly how one would describe the serpent according to the orthodox reasoning.

them to the man to see what he would call them. Whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock, and to the birds of the sky, and to every animal of the field; but for man there was not found a helper suitable for him. ²¹ Yahweh God caused a deep sleep to fall on the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² He made the rib, which Yahweh God had taken from the man, into a woman, and brought her to the man. ²³ The man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh! She will be called ‘woman’, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴ Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother, and will join with his wife, and they will be one flesh. ²⁵ They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

CHAPTER 3 Jan. 2

The Serpent and the Temptation of Adam and Eve

Now the serpent was more subtle than any animal of the field which Yahweh God had made. He said to the woman, Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?’ ² The woman said to the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat, ³ but of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die’. ⁴ The serpent said to the woman, You won’t surely die, ⁵ rather God knows that in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. ⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took

2:21 Woman was created from the side of Adam, not from his head nor from his feet.

2:24 *Cleave* – Mt. 19:5,6 interpret this as meaning that God “joins together” man and woman in marriage; not simply at the wedding, but throughout their life experience together. It’s therefore going against God’s work to break apart what He has tried to join together.

3:1 The serpent was an animal, created by God. The words ‘satan’, ‘lucifer’ and ‘devil’ don’t occur in the entire book of Genesis. Adam, and not the serpent, was the means by which sin entered the world (Rom. 5:12). The Bible doesn’t teach that the satan exists as a personal being who sinned in Heaven and came to earth.

3:3 Eve had been told by Adam that they must not even touch it, although this is not what God had told Adam (2:16,17 cp. 3:2,3). Adam turned to Eve and as it were wagged his finger at her and said ‘Now you see that tree over there in the middle, *don’t you even touch it* or else there’ll be trouble, O.K.’. She didn’t *understand*, he didn’t *explain* that it was forbidden because it was the tree of knowledge, and so she was deceived into eating it – unlike Adam, who understood what he was doing (1 Tim. 2:14). *Why* didn’t Adam tell her more clearly what God had said? Maybe he was disillusioned with the wife God gave him; he didn’t have intercourse with her as he had been asked, he separated from her so that she was alone with the snake. 3:12 seems to reflect more than a hint of resentment against Eve and God’s provision of her.

of its fruit, and ate; and she gave some to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ The eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves loincloths. ⁸ They heard the voice of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh God among the trees of the garden.

The Punishments for Sin

⁹ But Yahweh God called to the man, and said to him, Where are you? ¹⁰ The man said, I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. ¹¹ God said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? ¹² The man said, The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate. ¹³ Yahweh God said to the woman, What is this you have done? The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. ¹⁴ Yahweh God said to the serpent, Because you have done

this, you are cursed above all livestock, and above every animal of the field. On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel. ¹⁶ To the woman He said, I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth. In pain you will bear children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. ¹⁷ To Adam He said, Because you have listened to your wife's voice, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it', cursed is the ground for your sake. In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will yield thorns and thistles to you; and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face will you eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return. ²⁰ The man called his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹ Yahweh God made coats of skins for Adam and for his wife, and

3:15 The descendant of the woman was to be a specific individual – Jesus. He was literally “made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). He was the son of Mary, although God was His Father. Thus He was the descendant of the woman but not the descendant of a man, as He had no human father. This descendant of the woman was to be temporarily wounded by sin, the serpent – “you shall bruise his heel”. A snakebite on the heel is normally a temporary wound, compared to the permanence of hitting the snake / sin on the head, which Jesus did in His death.

3:21 Sin results in death (Rom. 6:23), i.e. a pouring out of the blood, which carries the life. For this reason the Israelites were expected to pour out blood each time they sinned, to remind them that sin resulted in death. "... according to the law (of Moses) almost all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22). Because of this, Adam and Eve's covering of themselves with fig leaves was unacceptable; instead, God killed a lamb (Rev.13:8) to provide skins to

clothed them. ²² Yahweh God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand, and also take of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever... ²³ Therefore Yahweh God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ So He drove out the man; and He placed Cherubs at the east of the garden of Eden, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

CHAPTER 4 Jan. 2

The History of Cain and Abel

The man knew Eve his wife. She conceived, and gave birth to Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with Yahweh's help. ² Again she gave birth, to Cain's brother Abel. Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a cultivator of the ground. ³ As time passed, it happened that Cain brought an offering to Yahweh from the fruit of the ground. ⁴ Abel also brought some of the firstborn of his flock and of its fat. Yahweh respected

Abel and his offering, ⁵ but He didn't respect Cain and his offering. Cain was very angry, and the expression on his face fell. ⁶ Yahweh said to Cain, Why are you angry? Why has the expression of your face fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will it not be lifted up? If you don't do well, sin crouches at the door. Its desire is for you, but you are to rule over it. ⁸ Cain said to Abel, his brother, Let's go into the field. It happened when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and killed him.

The Punishment of Cain

⁹ Yahweh said to Cain, Where is Abel, your brother? He said, I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper? ¹⁰ Yahweh said, What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries to Me from the ground. ¹¹ Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² From now on, when you cultivate the ground, it won't yield its strength to you. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the

cover their sin (:7,21). Similarly, Abel's sacrifice of animals was accepted rather than Cain's offering of vegetables, because he appreciated this principle that without shedding blood there could be no forgiveness and acceptable approach to God (4:3-5).

3:24 The cherubim have Angelic associations. They were to keep "the way" to the tree of life, whereas the keeping of the way is later said to be in the control of Angels – e. g. in 18:19 the Angels decide Abraham will keep "the way of the Lord", implying they were the ones guarding it.

4:10 In Rev. 6:9, the blood of the dead believers cries out from under the altar, demanding vengeance on this world: on the Catholic, Protestant, Babylonian, Roman, Nazi, Soviet systems that slew them for their faith. To God, their blood is a voice, just as real as the voice of Abel, which cried out (in a figure) for judgment against Cain. There is no immortal soul, we personally feel nothing in death. But there is an immortal spirit, in that who we essentially are, our personality, remains in the memory of a loving Father.

land. ¹³ Cain said to Yahweh, My sin is greater than I can bear. ¹⁴ Behold, you have driven me out this day from the surface of the ground. I will be hidden from your face, and I will be a fugitive and a wanderer in the land. It will happen that whoever finds me will kill me. ¹⁵ Yahweh said to him, Therefore whoever slays Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold. Yahweh appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should strike him. ¹⁶ Cain went out from Yahweh's presence, and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. ¹⁷ Cain knew his wife. She conceived, and gave birth to Enoch. He built a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. ¹⁸ To Enoch was born Irad; Irad became the father of Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of

Lamech. ¹⁹ Lamech took two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ²⁰ Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. ²¹ His brother's name was Jubal, who was the father of all who handle the harp and pipe. ²² Zillah also gave birth to Tubal Cain, the forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron. Tubal Cain's sister was Naamah. ²³ Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, hear my voice. You wives of Lamech, listen to my speech, for I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for bruising me. If Cain will be avenged seven times, truly Lamech seventy-seven times. ²⁵ Adam knew his wife again. She gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for God has appointed me another child instead of Abel, for Cain killed him. ²⁶ There

4:16 “Went out” is the language of Judas going out (Jn. 13:30), Cain “went out”, as did condemned Zedekiah in the judgment of Jerusalem (Jer. 39:4; 52:7). Esau went out from the land of Canaan into Edom, slinking away from the face of his brother Jacob, sensing his righteousness and his own carnality (36:2-8). Even in this life, those who leave the ecclesia ‘go out’ after the pattern of Judas, condemning themselves in advance of the judgment by their attitude to the ecclesia (1 Jn. 2:19 cp. Acts 15:24). The unrighteous flee from God now, as they will then (Hos. 7:13). The ungrateful servant “went out” and condemned his brother – thus condemning himself (Mt. 18:28).

4:26 The early chapters of Genesis highlight the fact that there were these two sorts of people; the descendants of Seth called themselves “by Yahweh’s name” and comprised the righteous “sons of God”, the seed of the woman. By contrast, the descendants of Cain are described as being associated with murder and instituting polygamy (:19,23), the art of weapon production (:22) and entertainment (:21). The names of these people imply that at this time they started an alternative, apostate, system of worship to replace the true worship of God, which angered God; e.g. Cain named a city after Enoch, whose name means “dedicated”; Irad means “eternal city”; Mehujael means “God combats”; Lamech means “Overthrower” (of the truth?). The sons of God marrying the daughters of men in 6:2-4 would therefore describe the intermarriage of these two lines, so that only Noah and his family were the “seed of the woman” at the time of the flood.

was also a son born to Seth, and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call themselves by Yahweh's name.

CHAPTER 5 Jan. 3

The Descendants of Adam

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in God's likeness. ² He created them male and female, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. ³ Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. ⁴ The days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he became the father of sons and daughters. ⁵ All the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, then he died. ⁶ Seth lived one hundred and five years, and became the father of Enosh. ⁷ Seth lived after he became the father of Enosh eight hundred and seven years, and became the father of sons and daughters. ⁸ All the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, then he died. ⁹ Enosh lived ninety years, and became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰ Enosh lived after he became the father of Kenan, eight hundred and fifteen years, and became the father of sons and daughters. ¹¹ All the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years, then he died. ¹² Kenan lived seventy years, and became the father of Mahalalel. ¹³ Kenan lived after he became the father of Mahalalel eight

hundred and forty years, and became the father of sons and daughters; ¹⁴ and all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years, then he died. ¹⁵ Mahalalel lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Jared. ¹⁶ Mahalalel lived after he became the father of Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and became the father of sons and daughters. ¹⁷ All the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years, then he died. ¹⁸ Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and became the father of Enoch. ¹⁹ Jared lived after he became the father of Enoch eight hundred years, and became the father of sons and daughters. ²⁰ All the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, then he died. ²¹ Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah. ²² Enoch walked with God after he became the father of Methuselah for three hundred years, and became the father of sons and daughters. ²³ All the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God snatched him away. ²⁵ Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and became the father of Lamech. ²⁶ Methuselah lived after he became the father of Lamech seven hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of sons and daughters. ²⁷ All the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, then he died. ²⁸ Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son, ²⁹ and he

named him Noah, saying, This same will comfort us in our work and in the toil of our hands, because of the ground which Yahweh has cursed. ³⁰ Lamech lived after he became the father of Noah five hundred and ninety-five years, and became the father of sons and daughters. ³¹ All the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, then he died. ³² Noah was five hundred

years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

CHAPTER 6 Jan. 3

The Background to the Flood

It happened that when men began to multiply on the surface of the land, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took for themselves wives

5:29 *Shall comfort us* – Did Noah’s parents expect Noah to be the child who would do all the hard menial work for them, so that they would suffer less from the curse placed upon the ground in Eden? This might explain why Noah had children when he was 500, far older than others of his time (:28,32 – Noah’s father had had his first children at 182; Seth had his first child at 105;6; Enos at 95;9; Cainan at 70, :12; Mahaleel at 65, :15; Jared at 162, :18; Enoch at 65, :21; Methuselah at 187, :25); 6:18 implies that Noah only had three sons, whereas for people with such long life spans we’d have expected him to have had far more than that. He only had three children – for he prepared the ark to save “his house” (Heb. 11:7) and 7:1 is quite clear: “Go into the ark, you and all your household” – his whole household was his wife, three sons and their wives. Period . Perhaps we get the picture of a man who was the underdog, the farm worker, the sidekick of the family, whose own family life was delayed and limited by this background. Perhaps he turned to alcohol for comfort (hence 9:21). But it was he whom God chose to save, he alone who was righteous in that generation which perished. It was the quiet, broken man who was saved. The Hebrew word for “Comfort” occurs later, when we read how God “repented” that He had made man (6:6,7). Lamech’s desire for ‘comfort’ was fulfilled but not as he imagined; not through his son being his personal slave, but rather in God changing His mind about humanity and making a new start. We get what we desire, in essence; and so we need to desire the right things.

5:32 *500 years old* – The flood came when Noah was 600 (7:11), yet he spent 120 years preparing it (6:3). So it’s possible that he wasn’t married when the call came to build the ark; he’d have explained his life mission to his wife, and she’d have been his first convert. Alternatively, if he were already married at 480, they had many years of barrenness in their marriage. Given the long lifespans in those days, this would’ve been very hard to take. Yet he didn’t take another wife. He was “moved with fear”, ‘reverently apprehensive’ at what God told him, and prepared the ark in order to save his family (Heb. 11:7). Yet he began doing this before he had any children, and perhaps before he was married. He had faith that he would one day have a family, in accordance with God’s invitation to make an ark in which to save his family.

6:2 “Sons of God” is used concerning men, especially those who know the true God (Dt. 14:1; Hos. 1:10; Lk. 3:38; Jn. 1:12; 1 Jn. 3:1). Lk. 20:35-36 says that the angels do not marry. See on 4:26.

of all that they chose. ³ Yahweh said, My Spirit will not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; yet will his days be one hundred twenty years. ⁴ There were aggressive men [*Nephilim*] in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. ⁵ Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ Yahweh was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him in His heart. ⁷ Yahweh said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the surface of the ground; man, along with animals, creeping things, and birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them. ⁸ But Noah found favour in Yahweh's eyes.

God's Relationship with Noah

⁹ This is the history of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰ Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ¹¹ The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² God saw the earth, and saw that it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted His way on the earth. ¹³ God said to Noah, The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴ Make a ship of gopher wood. You shall make rooms in the ship, and shall seal it inside and outside with pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you shall make it. The length of the ship will be three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶ You shall

6:3 *120 years* – Knowing the destruction that would come on all except Noah, God waited in the hope that more would be saved. He as it were hoped against His own foreknowledge that more would be saved (1 Pet. 3:20). Peter says in 1 Pet. 3:19 that Christ through His Spirit preached to the people of Noah's day. In 2 Pet. 2:5 he says that Noah was a preacher of, or [Gk.] 'by' righteousness to the people around him. Yet in 1 Pet. 3:19 Peter says that Christ preached to those same people through His Spirit. The resolution surely is that although Noah had never met the Lord Jesus, he lived according to the same Godly spirit as did Jesus; and this was his witness to his world. In this sense the spirit or disposition of Christ was found in all the Old Testament prophets (1 Pet. 1:11).

6:4 The Hebrew word for "aggressive men" or "giants" is also used to describe the sons of a man called Anak in Numbers 13:33. Freak human beings of unusual size or strength are sometimes born today, but it does not mean that their parents were angels. We are not specifically told that these men were the children of the "sons of God". "There were aggressive men... and also *after that*... the sons of God came in to the daughters of men".

6:5 The days of Noah are a type of the last days of AD70, and of the last days before Christ's return: "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the son of man be" (Mt. 24:37).

make a roof in the ship, and you shall finish it leaving a cubit between the roof and the sides. You shall set the door of the ship in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third levels. ¹⁷ I, even I, do bring the flood of waters on this earth, to destroy all flesh having the breath of life from under the sky. Everything that is in the earth will die. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you- you shall come into the ship, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ Of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ship, to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds after their kind, of the livestock after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every sort shall come to you, to keep them alive. ²¹ Take with you of all food that is eaten, and gather it to yourself; and it will be for food for you, and for them. ²² Thus Noah did. According to all that God commanded him, so he did.

CHAPTER 7 Jan. 4

The Preparations for the Flood

Yahweh said to Noah, Come with all of your household into the ship, for I have seen your righteousness before Me in this generation. ² You shall take seven pairs of every clean animal with you, the male and his female. Of the animals that are not clean, take two, the male and his female. ³ Also of the birds of the sky, seven and seven, male and female, to keep seed alive on the surface of all the earth. ⁴ In seven days, I will cause it to rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights. Every living thing that I have made, I will destroy from the surface of the ground. ⁵ Noah did everything that Yahweh commanded him. ⁶ Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came on the land. ⁷ Noah went into the ship with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, in the face of the floodwaters. ⁸ Clean animals, animals that are not clean, birds, and everything that creeps on the ground ⁹ went by pairs to Noah into the ship, male and female, as God commanded Noah. ¹⁰ It

7:1 *All your household* – his entire family consisted of his three sons. He therefore had no daughters and it would seem that his sons had no children. This tiny family size must be significant – for in those long lived ages, most women would have likely had over 50 children. Again, it was the small, broken and despised who were chosen of God. It seems that Noah's daughters in law only started bearing after the flood.

7:7 *In the face of* – Seems to imply that he waited until the very last minute. It seems this was not due to any lack of faith, but rather because of the urgency and desperation he felt in appealing to others to come into the ark with him. He truly was a remarkable “preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet. 2:5). Our knowledge of this world's future means that as we walk the streets and mix with men and women, our heart should cry out for them, no matter how they behave towards us, and there should be a deep seated desire for at least some of them to come to repentance and thereby avoid the judgments to come.

happened after the seven days that the waters of the flood came on the earth. ¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep were burst open, and the sky's windows were opened. ¹² The rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.

The Flood

¹³ In the same day Noah, and Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, entered into the ship; ¹⁴ they, and every animal after its kind, all the livestock after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. ¹⁵ They went to Noah into the ship, by pairs of all flesh with the breath of life in them. ¹⁶ Those who went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God commanded him; and Yahweh shut him in. ¹⁷ The flood was forty days on the earth. The waters increased, and lifted up the ship, and it was lifted up above the earth. ¹⁸ The waters prevailed, and increased greatly on the earth; and the ship floated on the surface of the waters. ¹⁹ The waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth.

All the high mountains that were under the whole sky were covered. ²⁰ The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. ²¹ All flesh died that moved on the earth, including birds, livestock, animals, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. ²² All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was on the dry land, died. ²³ Every living thing was destroyed that was on the surface of the land, including man, livestock, creeping things, and birds of the sky. They were destroyed from the land. Only Noah was left alive, and those who were with him in the ship. ²⁴ The waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.

CHAPTER 8 Jan. 4

The End of the Flood

God remembered Noah, all the animals, and all the livestock that were with him in the ship; and God made a wind to pass over the earth. The waters subsided. ² The deep's fountains and the sky's windows were also stopped, and the rain from the sky was restrained. ³ The waters receded from the earth in going and returning. After the end of one hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. ⁴ The ship

7:23 Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him – Noah is the focus of salvation, but in him and with him his family were saved. Likewise our salvation is by being “in Christ”.

8:3 *In going and returning* – this is the language of the surges of huge tidal waves, caused by the underwater eruptions of the “fountains of the deep” being broken up (7:11; 8:2). Being in the ark must've been a very rocky ride; the boat would've been tossed and thrown most of the time. And so it is with our ride in Christ.

rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on Ararat's mountains. ⁵ The waters receded continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. ⁶ It happened at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ship which he had made, ⁷ and he sent out a raven. It went back and forth, until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸ He sent out a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from the surface of the ground, ⁹ but the dove found no place to rest her foot, and she returned to him into the ship; for the waters were on the surface of the whole earth. He put out his hand, and took her, and brought her to him into the ship. ¹⁰ He stayed yet another seven days; and again he sent the dove out of the ship. ¹¹ The dove came back to him at evening, and, behold, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off. So Noah knew that the waters were abated from the earth. ¹² He stayed yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; and she didn't return to him any more.

Leaving the Ark

¹³ It happened in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth. Noah removed the covering of the ship, and looked. He saw that the surface of the ground was dried. ¹⁴ In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. ¹⁵ God spoke to Noah, saying, ¹⁶ Go out of the ship, you, and your wife, and your sons, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁷ Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh, including birds, livestock, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply on the earth. ¹⁸ Noah went out, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him. ¹⁹ Every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, whatever moves on the earth, after their families, went out of the ship. ²⁰ Noah built an altar to Yahweh, and took of every clean animal, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹ Yahweh smelled the pleasant aro-

8:4 *Seventeenth day of the seventh month* – Israel left Egypt on the 14th day of Abib, the seventh month which became the first month in their new calendar; they likely crossed the Red Sea on the 17th day of that month. So perhaps it was on the very same day that the ark rested. Israel's passage through the Red Sea typified baptism (1 Cor. 10:1,2), just as Noah's passing through the flood waters did (1 Pet. 3:19-21). Note that this was the same day that the Lord Jesus was resurrected – He died at Passover, 14th Abib, and resurrected three days later, 17th Abib.

8:20 *Built an altar* – This was on Noah's initiative. There had been no altars stipulated previously. God had asked Noah to build an ark, and now Noah of his own volition builds an altar. As we mature in Christ, we no longer simply follow commands but take our own initiative in God's service. Noah's first reaction may have been to build a house for himself and his family; but he put God first and built an altar.

ma. Yahweh said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, because the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again strike everything living, as I have done.²² While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

CHAPTER 9 Jan. 5

God's Covenant with Noah

God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.² The fear of you and the dread of you will be on every animal of the earth, and on every bird of the sky. Everything that the ground teems with, and all the fish of the sea, are delivered into your hand.³ Every moving thing that lives will be food for you. As the green herb, I have given everything to you.⁴ But flesh with its life, its blood, you shall not eat.⁵ I will surely require your blood of your lives. At the hand of every animal I will require it. At the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, I

will require the life of man.⁶ Whoever sheds man's blood, his blood will be shed by man, for God made man in His own image.⁷ Be fruitful and multiply. Increase abundantly in the earth, and multiply in it.⁸ God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying,⁹ As for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you, and with your offspring after you,¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the livestock, and every animal of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ship, even every animal of the earth.¹¹ I will establish My covenant with you: all flesh will not be cut off any more by the waters of the flood, neither will there ever again be a flood to destroy the earth.¹² God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:¹³ I set my rainbow in the cloud, and it will be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.¹⁴ It will happen, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow will be seen in the cloud,¹⁵ and I will remember My covenant, which

8:21 *Said in His heart* – We may never know in this life God's feelings in response to our sacrifices. We can touch the heart of God, we tiny mortals on earth...

9:6 As James 3:9; the fact humans are made in God's image means we should perceive the value and meaning of persons, from not killing to holding the door open for people... Defacing God's image earns death. In what ways can we destroy the image of God in others apart from by killing them? Any form of dehumanizing surely does the same. Because we are made in God's image, we should therefore not *kill* other humans. James says the same, in essence, in teaching that because we are in God's image, we shouldn't *curse* others. To curse a man is to kill him. That's the point of James' allusion to Genesis and to God as creator. Respect for the person of others is inculcated by sustained reflection on the way that they too are created in God's image.

is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and the waters will no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ The rainbow will be in the cloud. I will look at it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth. ¹⁷ God said to Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.

Noah Gets Drunk

¹⁸ The sons of Noah who went out from the ship were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham is the father of Canaan. ¹⁹ These three were the sons of Noah, and from these, the whole earth was populated. ²⁰ Noah began to be a farmer, and planted a vineyard. ²¹ He drank of the wine and got drunk. He was uncovered within his tent. ²² Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. ²³ Shem and Japheth took a garment,

and laid it on both their shoulders, went in backwards, and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were backwards, and they didn't see their father's nakedness. ²⁴ Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his youngest son had done to him. ²⁵ He said, Canaan is cursed. He will be servant of servants to his brothers. ²⁶ He said, Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Shem. Let Canaan be his servant. ²⁷ May God enlarge Japheth. Let him dwell in the tents of Shem. Let Canaan be his servant. ²⁸ Noah lived three hundred fifty years after the flood. ²⁹ All the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, then he died.

CHAPTER 10 Jan. 5

The Descendants of Noah's Sons

Now this is the history of the generations of the sons of Noah and of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood. ² The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech,

9:25 *Canaan* – Noah thrice rails against Canaan (:26,27). Why, seeing that the shame had been done to him by Ham, Canaan's father? This seems a classic example of transference – people often focus their anger not against the one who has hurt them, but against that person's relative, family or cause. We should deal with persons directly, perceiving the value and meaning of the human person; and not deflect the relationship onto others as Noah appears to have done. The curses placed by Noah have no fulfillment [contrary to many racist and misguided attempts to force such a fulfillment]. The story ends with a huge spiritual anticlimax, although later reference to Noah shows that he was judged faithful overall.

9:29 *And he died* – In the myth of Utnapishtim, the one who survives the flood is turned into a hero and becomes a god. But Moses' inspired record is different. The flood account ends with Noah dying – not becoming a god. And Noah not only remains human, but he remains *very* human – because he goes out and gets drunk after he comes out of the ark. Moses' point is surely to show that real human lives really do intersect with Almighty God's work, words and actions.

10:2 This chapter lists 70 Gentile nations as being the descendants of Noah. The He-

and Tiras. ³ The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. ⁴ The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. ⁵ Of these were the islands of the nations divided in their lands, everyone after his language, after their families, in their nations. ⁶ The sons of Ham: Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. ⁷ The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. ⁸ Cush became the father of Nimrod. He began to be a mighty one in the land; ⁹ he was a mighty hunter before Yahweh. Therefore it is said, Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before Yahweh. ¹⁰ The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. ¹¹ Out of that land he went into Assyria, and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah ¹² and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (the same is the great city). ¹³ Mizraim became the father of Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, ¹⁴ Pathrusim, Casluhim (which the Philistines descended from), and

Caphtorim. ¹⁵ Canaan became the father of Sidon (his firstborn), Heth, ¹⁶ the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Girgashite, ¹⁷ the Hivite, the Arkite, the Sinite, ¹⁸ the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were spread abroad. ¹⁹ The border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as you go toward Gerar, to Gaza; as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, to Lasha. ²⁰ These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their languages, in their lands, in their nations. ²¹ To Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, to him also were children born. ²² The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram. ²³ The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. ²⁴ Arpachshad became the father of Shelah. Shelah became the father of Eber. ²⁵ To Eber were born two sons. The name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided. His brother's name was Joktan. ²⁶ Joktan became the father of Almodad, Shel-

brew word *eretz* translated “land” is the same word translated “earth”. The flood was likely a flood of the land promised to Abraham rather than of the whole planet. These 70 descendants of Noah all lived within the Middle East rather than throughout the entire world. The original purpose of Genesis was to explain to the Israelites in the wilderness where they had come from and the context of the nations amongst whom they found themselves.

10:9 The Hebrew could mean “the mighty hunter against the Lord”. The Hebrew for ‘Nimrod’ is related to ‘Gibbor’, the title of Christ used in Is. 9:6. Nimrod appears to be a prototype anti-God and anti-Christ, and for this he was well known even then. 10:10,11 shows his characteristic of building cities in the Babylon/Assyria area. Seeing that “the beginning of his kingdom was Babel” (Gen. 10:10), it is not unreasonable to assume that when “a man said to his neighbour, Come, let’s make bricks” to build the tower of Babel, this man was Nimrod (11:3).

10:25 *Earth divided* – Probably a reference to the division of the peoples recorded in 10:32 and then in chapter 11, rather than to plate tectonics.

eph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷ Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸ Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹ Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan. ³⁰ Their dwelling was from Mesha, as you go toward Sephar, the mountain of the east. ³¹ These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their languages, in their lands, after their nations. ³² These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations. Of these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.

CHAPTER 11 Jan. 6

The Tower of Babel

The whole earth was of one language and of one speech. ² It happened, as they travelled east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they lived there. ³ A man said to his neighbour, Come, let's make bricks, and burn them thoroughly. They had brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. ⁴ They said, Come, let's build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top reaches to the sky, and let's make ourselves a name, lest we be scattered abroad on the surface of the whole earth. ⁵ Yahweh came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built. ⁶ Yahweh said, Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is what they begin

to do. Now nothing will be withheld from them, which they intend to do. ⁷ Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. ⁸ So Yahweh scattered them abroad from there on the surface of all the earth. They stopped building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there Yahweh confused the language of all the earth. From there, Yahweh scattered them abroad on the surface of all the earth.

The Generations from Shem to Abram

¹⁰ This is the history of the generations of Shem. Shem was one hundred years old and became the father of Arpachshad two years after the flood. ¹¹ Shem lived five hundred years after he became the father of Arpachshad, and became the father of sons and daughters. ¹² Arpachshad lived thirty-five years and became the father of Shelah. ¹³ Arpachshad lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Shelah, and became the father of sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Shelah lived thirty years, and became the father of Eber: ¹⁵ and Shelah lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Eber, and became the father of sons and daughters. ¹⁶ Eber lived thirty-four years, and became the father of

11:15 The genealogies of Genesis 11 reveal how some human lives repeat according to the same outline schema. Thus both Arpachshad and Shelah each lived 403 years after the births of the eldest sons; Shelah, Peleg and Serug were each 30 when their first sons were born. Abraham and Shem both had sons at 100 years old (:10). And it is the very nature of Christian fellowship that God has arranged that our human lives likewise have elements of amazing similarity of pattern.

Peleg. ¹⁷ Eber lived four hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Peleg, and became the father of sons and daughters. ¹⁸ Peleg lived thirty years, and became the father of Reu. ¹⁹ Peleg lived two hundred and nine years after he became the father of Reu, and became the father of sons and daughters. ²⁰ Reu lived thirty-two years, and became the father of Serug. ²¹ Reu lived two hundred and seven years after he became the father of Serug, and became the father of sons and daughters. ²² Serug lived thirty years, and became the father of Nahor. ²³ Serug lived two hundred years after he became the father of Nahor, and became the father of sons and daughters. ²⁴ Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and became the father of Terah. ²⁵ Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years after he became the father of Terah, and became the father of sons and daughters. ²⁶ Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. ²⁷ Now this is the history of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Ha-

ran. Haran became the father of Lot. ²⁸ Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldees. ²⁹ Abram and Nahor took wives; the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, who was also the father of Iscah. ³⁰ Sarai was barren; she had no child. ³¹ Terah took Abram his son, Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife. They went from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan. They came to Haran and lived there. ³² The days of Terah were two hundred five years. Terah died in Haran.

CHAPTER 12 Jan. 6

Abram and Lot Travel to Canaan

Now Yahweh had said to Abram, Get you out of your country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who

11:31 Terah and his family departed “to go into the land of Canaan”. These are the same Hebrew words as in the command to Abram: “Get you out of your country” (12:1). We can therefore conclude that Abram received this call to quit his country, but didn't obey it, until some unrecorded situation led his father to announce the family's emigration to Canaan. Abram was therefore very slow to obey the call. Note too that the command to Abram had been to leave his land and also his “relatives and... father's house”. This he didn't do – for he left Ur with his father and brothers, i.e. his kindred. His brother Haran died, and his father then died in Haran, where they temporarily lived on the way to Canaan. We see here how God seeks to almost make us obedient. And 15:7 records that it was God who brought Abram out of Ur – even though Abraham failed to rise up and be obedient in his own strength, God manipulated family circumstances to make him obedient to the call; and in essence He does this for us too.

bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. All of the families of the earth will be blessed in you. ⁴ So Abram went, as Yahweh had spoken to him. Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran. ⁵ Abram took Sarai his wife, Lot his brother's son, all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls whom they had gotten in Haran, and they went to go into the land of Canaan. Into the land of Canaan they came. ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. The Canaanite was then in the land. ⁷ Yahweh appeared to Abram and said, I will give this land to your seed. He built an altar there to Yah-

weh, who appeared to him. ⁸ He left from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to Yahweh and called on the name of Yahweh. ⁹ Abram travelled, going on further toward the south. ¹⁰ There was a famine in the land.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

Abram went down into Egypt to live as a foreigner there, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ It happened, when he had come near to enter Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman to look at. ¹² It will happen, when the Egyptians will

12:3 Grammatically, this can be read as passive (“be blessed”) or reflexive “bless themselves” (as RSV), implying those blessed have to do something to appropriate the blessing. In this we see how God will play His part, but we must play our part. And yet the covenant in Gen. 15 was one way, unconditional, from God to us. It’s as if *His* part in our salvation is so much greater than our response. Yet there is still an obvious element of choice which we have to make. The way 12:1-3 is structured implies that Abraham receives an unconditional blessing, yet he therefore is to go forth and “be a blessing”. And it’s the same for us – and note how the “blessing” is interpreted as forgiveness in Acts 3:27-29. We are to forgive and generally bless others, in all forms of gracious generosity, as God has blessed us.

12:5 Abram had “gathered” much in the years of staying in Haran. According to Jewish tradition, Abraham stayed 23 years in Haran. All he had to go on was a word from the Lord which he’d received some years ago whilst living in Ur. There’s no reason to think that Angels regularly appeared to him and kept urging him to leave, or that he could read the Lord’s word in written form as we can. Presumably that one word which he received worked in his conscience, until he said to the family ‘Right, we’re quitting this nice life for a wilderness journey to some place I don’t know’. We can underestimate the power of ‘just’ one word from the Lord. We’re so familiar with possessing His entire word in written form that we can forget the need to be obedient to just one of those words, to the extent of losing all we once held dear.

12:6 God’s promise to Abraham was made more specifically at “the oak of Moreh” – a Canaanite shrine; and it’s emphasized that “the Canaanite was then in the land”. It’s as if God’s invitation to Abraham [as to us] to have a unique relationship with Him was made amidst the calls and presence of many other gods, and in the thick of the Gentile world.

see you, that they will say, ‘This is his wife’; they will kill me, but they will save you alive. ¹³ Please say that you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that my soul may live because of you. ¹⁴ It happened that when Abram had come into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵ The princes of Pharaoh saw her, and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. ¹⁶ He dealt well with Abram for her sake. He had sheep, cattle, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels. ¹⁷ Yahweh plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. ¹⁸ Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that you have done to me? Why didn’t you tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, ‘She is my sister’, so that I took her to be my wife? Now therefore, see your wife, take her, and go your way. ²⁰ Pharaoh commanded men concerning him, and they brought him on the way with his wife and all that he had.

CHAPTER 13 Jan. 7

Abram and Lot Separate

Abram went up out of Egypt: he, his wife, all that he had, and Lot with him, into the South. ² Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. ³ He went on his journeys from the South even to Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴ to the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first. There Abram called on the name of Yahweh. ⁵ Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. ⁶ The land was not able to bear them, that they might live together: for their substance was great, so that they could not live together. ⁷ There was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite lived in the land at that time. ⁸ Abram said to Lot, Please, let there be no strife between me and you, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are relatives. ⁹ Isn’t the whole land before you? Please separate yourself

13:9 Here Abraham gives Lot the choice as to what land he would like to live in. Lot was the orphaned nephew of Abraham – such magnanimity would’ve been unheard of in those societies, for the elder to give the junior dependent such a choice. The elder in the relationship would’ve chosen the best for himself, and that was that. Abraham’s unusual attitude in this matter was a direct outcome of his faith in the promise that the whole land really would one day be given to *him*. If we have the faith of Abraham... we won’t fight for our corner in this world. It’ll be *so* much easier to ‘let go’ as Abraham did, and take an attitude to material wealth and possessions which is radically counter-cultural in *our* societies. The way that Lot lifted up his eyes and looked around the land is matched by the way in which God then bids Abraham to likewise lift up his eyes and view the very same territory which Lot had just chosen (:10,14) – and was told that the land which Lot had chosen, along with all other land, would be Abraham’s eternally. When God told Abraham at this point “all the land which you

from me. If you go to the left hand, then I will go to the right. Or if you go to the right hand, then I will go to the left. ¹⁰ Lot lifted up his eyes, and saw all the plain of the Jordan, that it was well-watered everywhere, before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of Yahweh, like the land of Egypt, as you go to Zoar. ¹¹ So Lot chose the Plain of the Jordan for himself. Lot travelled east, and they separated themselves the one from the other. ¹² Abram lived in the land of Canaan, and Lot lived in the cities of the plain, and moved his tent as far as Sodom. ¹³ Now the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinners against Yahweh.

Yahweh's Promises to Abram

¹⁴ Yahweh said to Abram, after Lot was separated from him, Now, lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, ¹⁵ for all the land which you see, I will give to you, and to your offspring forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then your seed may also be numbered. ¹⁷ Arise, walk through the

land in its length and in its breadth; for I will give it to you. ¹⁸ Abram moved his tent, and came and lived by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to Yahweh.

CHAPTER 14 Jan. 7 ***The Rebellion against Chedorlaomer***

It happened in the days of Amraphel, king of Shinar, Arioch, king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and Tidal, king of Goiim, ² that they made war with Bera, king of Sodom, and with Birsha, king of Gomorrah, Shinab, king of Admah, and Shemeber, king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar). ³ All these joined together in the valley of Siddim (the same is the Salt Sea). ⁴ Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year, they rebelled. ⁵ In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer came, and the kings who were with him, and struck the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzim in Ham, and the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, ⁶ and the Horites in their Mount Seir, to Elparan, which is by the wilderness. ⁷ They re-

see, I will give to you, and to your offspring forever” (:15), He was alluding to what He had initially told Abram back in Ur: “Get you out of... to the land that I will show (s.w. “see” in :15) you” (12:1). It was as if God was saying: ‘Well Abraham, this is it. This is the land I told you about’ – and yet the best of it has now been given to Lot! The whole thing could have seemed some kind of cruel, just as many of our life experiences do. Abraham had given up all, made a long and dangerous journey, to receive a land from God – and when he arrives there, the best of it is given to his younger relative. But God’s purpose was to focus Abraham’s faith upon the fact that he would *eternally* inherit this land. And so it is with many of the twists and turns of our lives which can appear nothing but cruel fate to the unbelieving observer.

turned, and came to En Mishpat (the same is Kadesh), and struck all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that lived in Hazazon Tamar. ⁸ The king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar) went out; and they set the battle in array against them in the valley of Siddim; ⁹ against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings against the five. ¹⁰ Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell there, and those who remained fled to the hills. ¹¹ They took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their food, and went their way. ¹² They took Lot, Abram's brother's son,

who lived in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

Abram Rescues Lot from Chedorlaomer

¹³ One who had escaped came and told Abram, the Hebrew. Now he lived by the oaks of Mamre, the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner; and these were allies of Abram. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his relative was taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued as far as Dan. ¹⁵ He divided himself against them by night, he and his servants, and struck them, and pursued them to Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. ¹⁶ He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative, Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. ¹⁷ The king of Sodom went

14:13 God never let go of Abraham, even when Abraham didn't readily obey what God required of him. He was told to "walk through the land in its length and in its breadth; for [because] I will give it unto you" (13:17). But Abraham didn't willingly do this – because perhaps he doubted that he would be given it. It's like saying to a child: 'Come and look at this! I am going to give it to you!', and the child doesn't even want to look. In this context we read of how Abraham "*lived by the oaks of Mamre*" – that's stressed twice (13:18; 14:13). Instead of travelling around in his land to see it, he tried to settle down. But God brought circumstances into his life which made him travel around the length and breadth of Canaan – thus Abraham had to pursue Lot's captors "unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus" before he recovered Lot (:15). Hobah is in the far north east of Canaan – Abraham had to go all the way there from Mamre in the centre of Canaan. For unknown reasons, Abraham also lived in Beersheba for a while (22:19); he had a meeting with the local rulers at Shaveh, near Jerusalem (:17); and at the time of 16:14 Abraham was near Kadesh Barnea, in the very South of Canaan on the Egyptian border. One wonders whether the attraction of Egypt had led him there once more – in which case it was his own weakness which was used by God to ensure that he travelled to the very south of Canaan. Maybe the record includes all these geographical markers in order to demonstrate how Abraham did indeed travel around Canaan through providentially arranged circumstances, although not it seems as an act of direct obedience to the Divine command to do so.

out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).¹⁸ Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine: and he was priest of God Most High.¹⁹ He blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth:²⁰ and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand. Abram gave him a tenth of all.²¹ The king of Sodom said to Abram, Give me the people, and take the goods to yourself.²² Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth,²³ that I will not take a thread nor a sandal strap nor anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'.²⁴ I will accept nothing from you except that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. Let them take their portion.

CHAPTER 15 Jan. 8

Yahweh's Covenant with Abram

After these things the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, saying, Don't be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.² Abram said, Lord Yahweh, what will you give me, since I go childless, and he who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?³ Abram said, Behold, to me you have given no seed: and, behold, one born in my house is my heir.⁴ Behold, the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, This man will not be your heir, but he who will come out of your own body will be your heir.⁵ Yahweh brought him outside, and said, Look now toward the sky, and count the stars, if you are able to count them. He said to Abram, So shall your seed be.⁶ He believed in Yahweh; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness.⁷ He said to him, I am Yahweh who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit

14:22 Abraham's belief in *God's* blessing of him is reflected in the way he is insistent to the King of Sodom that he will not take any of the spoil, lest anyone should think that man rather than God had blessed Abraham. It could be pointed out that this rather contrasts with his not returning to Pharaoh the things he gave him in return for Sarah becoming his wife (12:16). Perhaps Abraham later reflected upon his failure in this incident, realizing he'd not displayed faith in *God's* blessing of him... and learnt his lesson when the same temptation occurred in Gen. 14 to be made rich by the men of this world. Our stumbling response to the same Abrahamic promises often develops in the same way.

15:5 According to Jewish midrash, Abram and his father Terah were leading diviners of the stars in Ur. 'Terah' can mean 'brother of the moon', and Ur and Haran were noted centers of moon worship. In this case, the invitation to Abram to count the stars and discern there his future seed was a calling to reject his entire former world-view, to admit his helplessness in counting the stars, to throw himself upon God's grace rather than the strength of his own former education, wisdom, and inherited ability to discern the stars.

it. ⁸ He said, Lord Yahweh, how will I know that I will inherit it? ⁹ He said to him, Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. ¹⁰ He brought him all of these, and divided them in the middle, and laid each half opposite the other; but he didn't divide the birds. ¹¹ The birds of prey came down on the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. ¹² When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. Now terror and great darkness fell on him. ¹³ He said to Abram, Know for sure that your seed will live as foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them. They will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴ I will also judge that nation, whom they will serve. Afterward they will come out with great wealth, ¹⁵ but you will go to your fathers in peace. You will be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ In the fourth generation they will come here again, for the in-

iquity of the Amorite is not yet full. ¹⁷ It came to pass that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ In that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram, saying, To your seed I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates: ¹⁹ the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

CHAPTER 16 Jan. 8

Abram Seeks an Heir through Hagar

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. ² Sarai said to Abram, See now, Yahweh has restrained me from bearing. Please go in to my handmaid. It may be that I will obtain children by her. Abram lis-

15:10 The idea of the dead animals in this was to teach that 'So may I be dismembered and die if I fail to keep my promise'. Jer. 34:18 speaks of how Israelites must die, because they passed between the pieces of the dead animal sacrifices in making a covenant. But here in Gen. 15, it is none less than the God who cannot die who is offering to do this, subjecting Himself to this potential curse! And He showed Himself for real in the death of His Son. That was His way of confirming the utter certainty of the promises to Abraham which are the basis of the new covenant which He has cut with us (Rom. 15:8; Gal. 3:17). The "blood of the covenant" doesn't mean that the blood of Jesus *is* or was the covenant; the covenant is a set of promises to us, namely the promises to Abraham and his seed. The blood of Jesus is the token of that covenant, the sign that this is all so utterly and totally true for each one of us. The Lord died, in the way that He did, to get through to us how true this all is – that God Almighty cut a sober, unilateral covenant with us personally, to give us the Kingdom

16:2 "Abram listened to the voice of Sarai" is framed in the language of Adam hearing to Eve's voice. We can only take this incident – and the less than honourable treatment of Hagar afterwards – to be another trough in Abraham's faith graph. All historical and cultural evidence from the time points to Abraham's action as being

tened to the voice of Sarai. ³ Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to Abram her husband to be his wife. ⁴ He went in to Hagar, and she conceived. When she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. ⁵ Sarai said to Abram, This wrong is your fault. I gave my handmaid into your bosom, and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. Yahweh judge between me and you. ⁶ But Abram said to Sarai, Behold, your maid is in your hand. Do to her whatever is good in your eyes. Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her face. ⁷ The angel of Yahweh found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. ⁸ He said, Hagar, Sarai's handmaid, where did you come from? Where are you going? She said, I am fleeing from the face of my mistress Sarai. ⁹ The angel of Yahweh said to her, Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hands. ¹⁰ The angel of Yahweh said to her, I will greatly multiply your seed, that they will not be numbered for multitude. ¹¹ The angel

of Yahweh said to her, Behold, you are with child, and will bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because Yahweh has heard your affliction. ¹² He will be like a wild donkey among men. His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him. He will live opposite all of his brothers. ¹³ She called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her, You, God, see me, for she said, Have I even stayed alive after seeing Him? ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi. Behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. ¹⁵ Hagar bore a son for Abram. Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

CHAPTER 17 Jan. 9

Yahweh Re-Affirms the Covenant Promises

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, Yahweh appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am God Almighty. Walk before Me, and be blameless. ² I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly. ³ Abram fell on his face. God talked with

most unusual. In the case of a barren wife, the man chose himself a second wife. It's almost unheard of in contemporary records for a man to have his wife choose him a woman to have a child by – let alone for it to be one of her slavegirls. This historical background provides a window into Abraham's faithful commitment to Sarah – for it's significant that he's not recorded as taking another wife. Instead, his fine faith and character slips up in a moment of weakness by giving in to Sarah for a moment.

16:13 The common Hebrew word for 'to see', especially when used about God's 'seeing', means also 'to provide'. When Hagar said "You God see me", she was expressing her gratitude for His *provision* for her. The fact God sees and knows all things means that He can and will therefore and thereby provide for us in the circumstances of life; for He sees and knows all things.

him, saying, ⁴ As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you. You will be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵ Neither will your name any more be called Abram, but your name will be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you. Kings will come out of you. ⁷ I will estab-

lish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you and to your seed after you. ⁸ I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land in which you are travelling, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. I will be their God. ⁹ God said to Abraham, As for you,

17:5 Abram means ‘high / exalted father’, and can mean “he is of exalted ancestry”. Yet Abram’s name was changed. He was to be the father of a new family, as ‘Abraham’ implied, and to sever all connection with his human ancestry and family. The way ‘Abram’ was changed to ‘AbraHAM’ and ‘Sarah’ to ‘SarAH’ shows how God wishes to mix syllables of His Name with that of men. Jacob was changed to Isra-el, mixing God’s name with that of his father. This is indeed mutuality between God and man – and it demands so much. By baptism into the Name the same process happens to us.

17:5-11. Blessings of many children, a specific seed / son who would bring glory and blessing, and a name change... are all frequently found in records of wedding blessings. In making those promises to Abraham, in mixing the letters of His Name with that of Abram... Yahweh was entering a marriage covenant with Abraham the impotent, the childless, the humanly hopeless. And He does the very same for each of us who are baptized into that same Name and become recipients of the very same promises (Gal. 3:27-29). What was weird and *so* counter-instinctive was the token of the marriage covenant. Abraham was to mutilate his male generative organ as a sign that God would generate him a great seed and family. Our response to what God has promised us requires us to likewise respond in a counter-cultural and counter-instinctive way.

17:7 The Abrahamic covenant is made personally with every member of the seed in “their generations”. The records of the renewing of the covenant to Isaac and Jacob are but indicators that this is the experience of each one of the seed. This means that the covenant love of God and the promise of personal inheritance of the land is made personally, and confirmed by the shedding of Christ’s blood, to each of us. God promised Abraham that through Christ, his seed, blessing would come on people from all nations, with the result that God would be the God of Abraham’s multitudinous seed: “To be a God to... your seed...I will be their God”. The seed is Christ, and the “God” is Yahweh. In Rev. 21:3 this fundamental promise is alluded to; God Himself will be our God then; we will see Him and have a personal relationship with Him. This idea of personally being with God is a fundamental part of the Gospel preached to Abraham.

17:8 The idea of eternal life is in the Old Testament as well as the new. The promise of eternal life on earth was given to Abraham and his seed, the Lord Jesus (Gal. 3:8), but applies to all of us who are baptized into Him (Gal. 3:27-29).

you will keep My covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰ This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your seed after you.

Circumcision As a Sign of the Covenant

Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin. It will be a token of the covenant between Me and you. ¹² He who is eight days old will be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he who is born in the house, or bought with money from any foreigner who is not of your seed: ¹³ He who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your money, must be circumcised. My covenant will be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ The uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people. He has broken My covenant. ¹⁵ God said to Abraham, As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. Yes, I will bless her, and she will be a mother of nations. Kings of peoples will come from her. ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, A child shall be born to him who is one hundred years old! Sarah, who is ninety years old, shall give birth! ¹⁸ Abraham said to God, Oh

that Ishmael might live before you! ¹⁹ God said, No, but Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son. You shall call his name Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him. ²⁰ As for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. ²¹ But My covenant I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this set time next year. ²² When He finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. ²³ Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house, and all who were bought with his money; every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the same day, as God had said to him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵ Ishmael, his son, was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶ In the same day both Abraham and Ishmael, his son, were circumcised. ²⁷ All the men of his house, those born in the house, and those bought with money of a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

CHAPTER 18 Jan. 9

Three Angels Visit Abraham and Sarah

Yahweh appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the

17:17 Abraham's exaltation here is referred to in Jn. 8:56 as Abraham rejoicing to see the day of Christ.

tent door in the heat of the day. ² He lifted up his eyes and looked, and saw that three men stood opposite him. When he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth, ³ and said, My lord, if now I have found favour in your sight, please don't go away from your servant. ⁴ Now let a little water be fetched, wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵ I will get a morsel of bread so you can refresh your heart. After that you may go your way, for this is why you have come to your servant. They said, Very well, do as you have said. ⁶ Abraham ran into the tent to Sarah, and said, Quickly prepare three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes. ⁷ Abraham ran to the herd, and fetched a tender and good calf, and gave it to the servant. He hurried to dress it. ⁸ He took butter, milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them. He stood by them under the tree, and

they ate. ⁹ They asked him, Where is Sarah, your wife? He said, See, in the tent. ¹⁰ He said, I will certainly return to you when the season comes round. Behold, Sarah your wife will have a son. Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age. Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. ¹² Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have grown old will I have pleasure, my lord being old also? ¹³ Yahweh said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Will I really bear a child, seeing I am old?' ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for Yahweh? At the set time I will return to you, when the season comes round, and Sarah will have a son. ¹⁵ Then Sarah denied, saying, I didn't laugh, for she was afraid. He said, No, but you did laugh. ¹⁶ The men rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom. Abraham went with them to see them on their way. ¹⁷ Yahweh said,

18:2 *Three men* – Three Angels, who bore the Name of Yahweh (as in Ex. 23:21).

18:12 Sarah murmured that it was impossible for her to have “pleasure” in childbearing. She uses the word *ednah*, related to the word *Eden*. Yet in the events of Gen. 19, she sees how the land around Sodom that was once “like the garden of Eden” (13:10) is made barren and sowed with salt so that nothing could grow there (19:25; Dt. 29:23). She was being taught that God can give and take away fertility on a huge scale. God uses circumstances and experiences to teach us what is possible for us in His strength.

Sarah is commended for calling Abraham her “Lord” (1 Pet. 3:6). But she said it “within herself” whilst laughing at the improbability of God fulfilling His promise; yet in doing so, when she came to think of Abraham, in her heart she called him “my lord”. So in the midst of her lack of faith in one respect, she also had a commendable attitude to Abraham. God searched her thoughts, He saw her wrong attitudes there deep in her heart, and He saw what was commendable there too; and through Peter He drags this out and reveals it to us all as an inspiration. We should have a similar positive attitude to others, discerning what's good in them even if it's surrounded by weakness.

Will I hide from Abraham what I do, ¹⁸ since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him? ¹⁹ For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Yahweh, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Yahweh may bring on Abraham that which He has spoken of him. ²⁰ Yahweh said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, ²¹ I will go down now, and see whether their deeds are as bad as the reports which have come to me. If not, I will know.

Abram Pleads with Yahweh to Save Sodom

²² The men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before Yahweh. ²³ Abraham drew near, and said, Will You consume the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ What if there are fifty righteous within the city? Will You consume and not spare the place for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Be it far from You to do things like that, to kill the righteous with the wicked, so

that the righteous should be like the wicked. May that be far from You. Shouldn't the Judge of all the earth do right? ²⁶ Yahweh said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sake. ²⁷ Abraham answered, See now, I have taken it on myself to speak to the Lord, who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸ What if there will lack five of the fifty righteous? Will You destroy all the city for lack of five? He said, I will not destroy it, if I find forty-five there. ²⁹ He spoke to Him yet again, and said, What if there are forty found there? He said, I will not do it for the forty's sake. ³⁰ He said, Oh don't let the Lord be angry, and I will speak. What if there are thirty found there? He said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. ³¹ He said, See now, I have taken it on myself to speak to the Lord. What if there are twenty found there? He said, I will not destroy it for the twenty's sake. ³² He said, Oh don't let the Lord be angry, and I will speak just once more. What if ten are found there? He said, I will not destroy it for the ten's sake. ³³ Yahweh went His way, as soon as He had finished communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

18:23 God is open to dialogue; but a telling example of the limitation of God's potential by men is in Abraham's request that God would spare Sodom for the sake of 50 righteous there. He then lowers the number to 40, and then finally to ten, assuming that surely Lot's family were righteous and would comprise ten righteous. If Abraham had left off praying at, say, forty... then this would have been the limit God set. But Abraham set the limit at ten. But what would have happened if he had gone further and asked God to save Sodom for the sake of one righteous man, i.e. Lot? My sense is that the Father would have agreed. But the city wasn't saved for the sake of the one man Lot, because Abraham limited God's desire to save by the smallness of his vision. His mercy will be upon us according as we hope in Him (Ps. 33:22).

CHAPTER 19 Jan. 10***Two Angels and Lot Confront the Wicked Sodomites***

The two angels came to Sodom at evening. Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. Lot saw them, and rose up to meet them. He bowed himself with his face to the earth,² and he said, See now, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house, stay all night, wash your feet, and you can rise up early, and go on your way. They said, No, but we will stay in the street all night.³ He urged them greatly, and they came in with him, and entered into his house. He made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.⁴ But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter.⁵ They called to Lot, and said to him, Where are the men who came in to you this night? Bring them out to us, that we may have sex with them.⁶ Lot went out to them to the door, and shut the door after him.⁷ He said, Please, my brothers, don't act so wickedly.⁸ See now, I have two virgin daughters. Please let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them what seems good to

you. Only don't do anything to these men, because they have come under the shadow of my roof.⁹ They said, Stand back! Then they said, This one fellow came in to live as a foreigner, and he appoints himself a judge. Now will we deal worse with you, than with them! They pressed hard on the man Lot, and drew near in order to break the door.¹⁰ But the men reached out their hand, and brought Lot into the house to them, and shut the door.¹¹ They struck the men who were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

Lot Abandons Doomed Sodom

¹² The men said to Lot, Do you have anybody else here? Sons-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whoever you have in the city, bring them out of the place:¹³ for we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown so great before Yahweh that Yahweh has sent us to destroy it.¹⁴ Lot went out, and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters, and said, Get up! Get out of this place, for Yahweh will destroy the city. But

19:3 The Angels who visited Lot in Sodom wanted initially to lodge in the street, but they were persuaded by Lot to change their plans. And who is to say that to some extent this isn't possible today, too?

19:14 Lot's sons in law "were to marry" his daughters. Christ perceived that they were marrying and giving in marriage the very day the flood came, and He pointed out the similarities with the Sodom situation (Lk. 17:27-29). Perhaps the very day of the double wedding, they had to leave? With all the build up to the wedding, Lot and his wife would so wanted to have stayed just another day to see the wedding of their two daughters. It is to the girls credit that they both left. But Lot's wife had invested so much in it emotionally that she just had to look back.

he seemed to his sons-in-law to be joking. ¹⁵ When the morning came, then the angels hurried Lot, saying, Get up! Take your wife, and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the sin of the city. ¹⁶ But he lingered; and the men grabbed his hand, his wife's hand, and his two daughters' hands, Yahweh being merciful to him; and they took him out, and set him outside of the city. ¹⁷ It came to pass, when they had taken them out, that one of them said, Escape for your life! Don't look behind you, and don't stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be consumed! ¹⁸ Lot said to them, Oh, not so, my lord. ¹⁹ See now, your servant has found favour in your sight, and you have magnified your grace, which you have shown to me in saving my life. I can't escape to the mountain, lest evil pursue me there, and I die. ²⁰ See now, this city is near to flee to, and it is a little one. Oh let me escape there (isn't it a little one?), and

my soul will live. ²¹ He said to him, Behold, I have granted your request concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. ²² Hurry, escape there, for I can't do anything until you get there. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. ²³ The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar.

The Destruction of Sodom

²⁴ Then Yahweh rained on Sodom and on Gomorrah sulphur and fire from Yahweh out of the sky. ²⁵ He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew on the ground. ²⁶ But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. ²⁷ Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he had stood before Yahweh. ²⁸ He looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and looked, and saw that the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace. ²⁹ It happened, when God

19:26 This suggests the picture of the wife following behind Lot, filled with remorse at the loss of all she had held dear. Lk. 17:29-33 comments concerning not desiring our "stuff which is in the house" in the day of Christ's coming: "Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever (like her) shall seek (Greek: 'plot') to save his life shall lose it". We can infer from this that she plotted and schemed how to save her possessions – i.e. her 'life', seeing that for her, her life did consist of the abundance of the things which she possessed (Lk.12:15). These feelings grew so strong that she paused to take a loving, wistful look at the city. The fire only fell after Lot was in Zoar; therefore the city was looking as it normally did. She was walking "behind him", so Lot would not have actually seen her turn into a pillar of salt. As he ceased to hear her footsteps behind him he must have guessed what had happened – but now the Angel's words seemed more vital to him: "Don't look behind you". Sodom was turned into an area of salt (Dt.29:23; Zeph.2:9); as Sodom was turned into salt by fire, so Lot's wife suffered the same punishment through a bolt of fire striking her and turning her too into salt. The unworthy of the last day will suffer the same punishment as the surrounding world which they failed to truly leave.

destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the middle of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived.

The Birth of Moab and Ammon

³⁰ Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to live in Zoar. He lived in a cave with his two daughters. ³¹ The firstborn said to the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in to us in the way of all the earth. ³² Come, let's make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve our father's seed. ³³ They made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father. He didn't know when she lay down, nor when she arose. ³⁴ It came to pass on the next day, that the firstborn said to the younger, Behold, I lay last night with my father. Let us make him drink wine again tonight. You go in, and lie with him, that we may preserve our father's seed. ³⁵ They made their father drink wine that night also. The younger went and lay with him. He didn't know when she lay down,

nor when she got up. ³⁶ Thus both of Lot's daughters were with child by their father. ³⁷ The firstborn bore a son, and named him Moab. He is the father of the Moabites to this day. ³⁸ The younger also bore a son, and called his name Ben Ammi. He is the father of the children of Ammon to this day.

CHAPTER 20 Jan. 11

Abraham in Philistine Country

Abraham travelled from there toward the land of the South, and lived between Kadesh and Shur. He lived as a foreigner in Gerar. ² Abraham said about Sarah his wife, She is my sister. Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. ³ But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, Behold, you are a dead man, because of the woman whom you have taken. For she is a man's wife. ⁴ Now Abimelech had not come near her. He said, Lord, will you kill even a righteous nation? ⁵ Didn't he tell me, 'She is my sister?' She, even she herself, said, 'He is my brother'. In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands have I done this. ⁶ God said to him in the dream, Yes, I know that in

19:29 The prayers and loving spiritual concern of the faithful really can have an effect on the salvation of our weaker brethren. Abraham's prayer that Sodom would be saved if ten righteous were found there was unanswered; but God knew the real spirit of his prayer, that Lot should be saved, and that God's justice should be upheld in not destroying the righteous with the wicked. It was this which God recognized and answered, even though Abraham had not specifically verbalized those thoughts in prayer. Our true spiritual love for our brethren will likewise be heard in these last days.

20:3 Throughout the records of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his children there is continual repetition indicating how they tended to commit the same sins – e.g. going into Egypt and lying concerning their wives: 12:13; 20:3,13; 26:7. The sinfulness of sin is that our failures encourage our children to commit the same, and worse.

the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also withheld you from sinning against me. Therefore I didn't allow you to touch her. ⁷ Now therefore, restore the man's wife. For he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live. If you don't restore her, know for sure that you will die, you, and all who are yours. ⁸ Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ear. The men were very scared. ⁹ Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, What have you done to us? How have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done things to me that ought not to be done! ¹⁰ Abimelech said to Abraham, What did you see, that you have done this thing? ¹¹ Abraham said, Because I thought, 'Surely the fear of God is not in this place. They will kill me for my wife's sake'. ¹² Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. ¹³ It happened, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her,

'This is your kindness which you shall show to me. Everywhere that we go, say of me, He is my brother'. ¹⁴ Abimelech took sheep and cattle, male servants and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored Sarah his wife, to him. ¹⁵ Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before you. Dwell where it pleases you. ¹⁶ To Sarah he said, Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. Behold, it is for you an adorning of the eyes before all that are with you. In front of all you are reprovved. ¹⁷ Abraham prayed to God. God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his female servants, and they bore children. ¹⁸ For Yahweh had closed up tight all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

CHAPTER 21 Jan. 11

The Birth of Isaac

Yahweh visited Sarah as He had said, and Yahweh did to Sarah as He had spoken. ² Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. ³ Abraham called his son who was born to him, whom

20:16 Sarah was "reprovved" by King Abimelech for going along with Abraham's lie about her not being his wife. And yet kings were reprovved for her sake, and were not allowed to do anything harmful to her (Ps. 105:14)! And Abraham reprovves Abimelech later – for something Abimelech claimed he had not done (21:25). The repetition of the word "reprove" is surely meant to indicate that here is an example of Abraham and Sarah being counted righteous because of their faith – when clearly they were not wholly righteous. Abraham, the man who had to be reprovved, was used by God to reprove the man who had reprovved him... it would have sounded very hypocritical to Abraham's neighbours. Yet the point was, that God saw him as being righteous.

20:18 This shows that we can suffer the effect of others' sins, whilst being personally innocent of the specific sin they committed – as has happened with the effect of Adam's sin.

Sarah bore to him, Isaac. ⁴ Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ Sarah said, God has made me laugh. Everyone who hears will laugh with me. ⁷ She said, Who would have said to Abraham, that Sarah would nurse children! For I have borne him a son in his old age.

Hagar Is Thrown Out

⁸ The child grew, and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹ Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking. ¹⁰ Therefore she said to Abraham, Cast out this handmaid and her son! For the son of this handmaid will not be heir with my son Isaac! ¹¹ The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight on account of his son. ¹² God said to Abraham, Don't let it be grievous in your sight because of the boy, and because of your handmaid. In all that Sarah says to you, listen to her voice. For in Isaac

will your seed be called. ¹³ I will also make a nation of the son of the handmaid, because he is your seed. ¹⁴ Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder; and gave her the child, and sent her away. She departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. ¹⁵ The water in the bottle was spent, and she cast the child under one of the bushes. ¹⁶ She went and sat down opposite him, a good way off, about a bow shot away. For she said, Let me not see the death of the child. She sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept. ¹⁷ God heard the voice of the boy. The angel of God called to Hagar out of the sky, and said to her, What ails you, Hagar? Don't be afraid. For God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. ¹⁸ Get up, lift up the boy, and hold him in your arm. For I will make him a great nation. ¹⁹ God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went, filled the bottle with water, and gave the boy drink. ²⁰ God was with the boy, and he grew. He lived

21:10 Her attitude in implying that Ishmael was not the seed is gently rebuked by God in his subsequent words to Abraham concerning Ishmael: "He is your seed" (:13). And yet Sarah's words are quoted in Gal. 4:30 as inspired Scripture! Here we see the wonder of the God with whom we deal, in the way in which He patiently bore with Sarah and Abraham. He saw through her anger, her jealousy, the pent up bitterness of a lifetime, and saw her faith. He worked through that screaming, angry woman to be His prophet. According to Gal. 4:30, God Himself spoke through her in those words, outlining a principle which has been true over the generations; that the son of the slave must be cast out, and that there must always be conflict between him and the true seed. Sarah in her time of child-birth is likened to us all as we enter the Kingdom, full of joy (Is. 54:1-4); and yet at that time she was eaten up with pride and joy that she could now triumph over her rival. And yet Sarah at that time is seen from a righteous perspective, in that she is a type of us as we enter the Kingdom. God's gracious counting of righteousness to Sarah and Abraham is repeated to us daily.

in the wilderness, and as he grew up he became an archer. ²¹ He lived in the wilderness of Paran. His mother took a wife for him out of the land of Egypt.

The Argument about Beersheba

²² It happened at that time, that Abimelech and Phicol the captain of his army spoke to Abraham, saying, God is with you in all that you do. ²³ Now therefore, swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son. But according to the kindness that I have done to you, you shall do to me, and to the land in which you have lived as a foreigner. ²⁴ Abraham said, I will swear. ²⁵ Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a water well, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. ²⁶ Abimelech said, I don't know who has done this thing. You didn't tell me, neither did I hear of it, until today. ²⁷ Abraham took sheep and cattle, and gave them to Abimelech. Those two made a covenant. ²⁸ Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. ²⁹ Abimelech said to Abraham, What mean these

seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves? ³⁰ He said, You shall take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that it may be a witness to me, that I have dug this well. ³¹ Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because they both swore there. ³² So they made a covenant at Beersheba. Abimelech rose up with Phicol, the captain of his army, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. ³³ Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and called there on the name of Yahweh, the Everlasting God. ³⁴ Abraham lived as a foreigner in the land of the Philistines many days.

CHAPTER 22 Jan. 12

Abraham Is Prepared to Offer Isaac

It happened after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, Abraham! He said, Here I am. ² He said, Now take your son, your only son, whom you love, even Isaac, and go into the land of Moriah. Offer him there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you of. ³ Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his don-

21:34 *Lived as a foreigner* – Alluded to in Heb. 11:9, which says that Abraham lived in the promised land as a foreigner. He is our example and spiritual father. His characteristics are to be seen in those who have been baptized into Christ and thus become Abraham's seed (Gal. 3:27-29). Although this earth where we live has been promised to us, it's our eternal inheritance which we will receive at Christ's return, yet we now live in our own land as if we're foreigners.

22:3 *Arose and went* – Abraham was progressively set up by God so that his spiritual growth would be an upward spiral. Initially, he was told to walk / go to a land which God would shew him (12:1); when he got there, he was told to "arise", and "walk" through that land of Canaan (13:17). Abraham, albeit in a faltering kind of way, did just this. But this was to prepare him for this test in the command to offer Isaac. His obedience this time isn't at all faltering. He "arises" and "goes" [s.w. "walk"] "unto

key, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place far off. ⁵ Abraham said to his young men, Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go yonder. We will worship, and come back to you. ⁶ Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. He took in his hand the fire and the knife. They both went together. ⁷ Isaac spoke to Abraham his father, and said, My father? He said, Here I am, my son. He said, Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? ⁸ Abraham said, God will Himself provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son. So they both went together. ⁹ They came to the place which God had told him of. Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, on the wood. ¹⁰ Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to kill his son. ¹¹ The angel of Yahweh called to him out of the sky, and said,

Abraham, Abraham! He said, Here I am. ¹² He said, Don't lay your hand on the boy, neither do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.

God's Promise to Abraham

¹³ Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and saw that behind him was a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ Abraham called the name of that place 'Yahweh Will Provide'. As it is said to this day, On Yahweh's mountain, it will be provided. ¹⁵ The angel of Yahweh called to Abraham a second time out of the sky, ¹⁶ and said, I have sworn by Myself, says Yahweh, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ that I will bless you greatly, and I will multiply your seed greatly like the stars of the sky, and like the sand which is on the seashore. Your seed will possess the gate of his enemies. ¹⁸ In your seed will all the nations of the earth be

the place of which God had told him" to offer Isaac. This is exactly what he had been called to do in Ur – to arise and walk / go to a land / place which God would show him (12:1). Our obedience in one challenge of God leads us to obedience in others. Circumstances tend to repeat both within and between the lives of God's faithful. One experience is designed to lead us to another. Nothing in our lives is senseless chance. All is part of a higher plan for our spiritual good, in our latter end.

22:18 The blessing is defined as forgiveness of sins and salvation (Acts 3:26,26). We become "in" the seed by baptism into Christ, who is Abraham's seed (Gal. 3:8, 27-29). All that is true of Christ becomes true of us, if we are in Him. We all wish to be a blessing to others – we see people suffering from their sins, physically damaged by earthquakes, war, famine, and we wish to get out there and help them; yet we are limited by our life situation. By being in Christ, we can be a blessing for others by bringing them to the blessing of salvation and a place in God's Kingdom on earth.

blessed, because you have obeyed My voice. ¹⁹ So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba. Abraham lived at Beersheba. ²⁰ It happened after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she also has borne children to your brother Nahor: ²¹ Uz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, ²² Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel. ²³ Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. ²⁴ His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

CHAPTER 23 Jan. 12

Abraham Buys a Burial Place for Sarah

Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; this was the length of Sarah's life. ² Sarah died in Kiriath Arba (the same is Hebron), in the land of Canaan. Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for

her. ³ Abraham rose up from before his dead, and spoke to the children of Heth, saying, ⁴ I am a stranger and a foreigner living with you. Give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. ⁵ The children of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, ⁶ Hear us, my lord. You are a prince of God among us. Bury your dead in the best of our tombs. None of us will withhold from you his tomb. Bury your dead. ⁷ Abraham rose up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. ⁸ He talked with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, ⁹ that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he has, which is in the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me for a possession among you of a burying-place. ¹⁰ Now Ephron was sitting in the middle of the children of Heth. Ephron the Hittite answered

23:3 Abraham was promised eternal inheritance of the land (17:8) – but he didn't receive any of it in this life, he even had to buy a plot of land to bury his wife. This point is emphasized in the New Testament because it implies a future resurrection and eternal inheritance for Abraham (Acts 7:5; Heb. 11:13,39,40). Hence we have this laboured account of the purchase of the cave of Machpelah. Not only is the presence of the children of Heth highlighted (23:3,5,7,10,11,12,13,16,18), but the record of Abraham's words demonstrates his appreciation that he was only passing through: "*Entreat for me to Ephron... the cave... which he has... for the full price... me for a possession... amongst you... Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land... and the field... in all of its borders*" (23:9-17 AVmg.). The mention of the borders really rubs it in. Not only was the land promised to Abraham, but he was politically more powerful than the children of Heth; he could have annexed it for himself at ease. The children of Heth were willing to give it to him for free anyway (23:11). Yet the realization by Abraham of his present position, the humility created by faith, shines through the narrative. This earth is ours, eternally. But we like Abraham live in it as foreigners – for the moment.

Abraham in the hearing of the children of Heth, even of all who went in at the gate of his city, saying, ¹¹ No, my lord, hear me. I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. In the presence of the children of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead. ¹² Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land. ¹³ He spoke to Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if you will, please hear me. I will give the price of the field. Take it from me, and I will bury my dead there. ¹⁴ Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, ¹⁵ My lord, listen to me. What is a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver between me and you? Therefore bury your dead.

Arrangements for Inheriting the Burial Place

¹⁶ Abraham listened to Ephron. Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the current merchants' standard. ¹⁷ So the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field,

that were in all of its borders, were deeded ¹⁸ to Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. ¹⁹ After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre (that is, Hebron), in the land of Canaan. ²⁰ The field, and the cave that is in it, were deeded to Abraham for a possession of a burying place by the children of Heth.

CHAPTER 24 Jan. 13

Abraham's Concern about a Wife for Isaac

Abraham was old, and well stricken in age. Yahweh had blessed Abraham in all things. ² Abraham said to his servant, the elder of his house, who ruled over all that he had, Please put your hand under my thigh. ³ I will make you swear by Yahweh, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live. ⁴ But you shall go to my country, and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac. ⁵ The servant said to him, What if the woman isn't willing to follow me to this land? Must I bring your son again to the land

24:4 It must be significant that Abraham told his servant to take Isaac a wife from “my country... my relatives” and not from the people “among whom I live”. There were none of Abraham’s country or kindred, which he had been commanded to leave, living anywhere near him. He had truly and fully obeyed the command to separate from them! As with many Christian youngsters today, the avoidance of marrying those in the surrounding world just seemed too much to ask. But Abraham knew that a way would be made. As God had *taken* Abram from Ur and Haran and Lot, so God would *take* a woman from there, suitable for Isaac. Faithful parents should do all they can to ensure their children marry within the family of faith.

you came from? ⁶ Abraham said to him, Beware that you don't bring my son there again. ⁷ Yahweh, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house, and from the land of my birth, who spoke to me, and Who swore to me, saying, 'I will give this land to your seed', He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. ⁸ If the woman isn't willing to follow you, then you shall be clear from this my oath. Only you shall not bring my son there again. ⁹ The servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter. ¹⁰ The servant took ten camels of his master's camels, and departed, having a variety of good things of his master's with him. He arose, and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. ¹¹ He made the camels kneel down outside the city

by the well of water at the evening time, the time that women go out to draw water. ¹² He said, Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. ¹³ Behold, I am standing by the spring of water. The daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴ Let it happen, that the young lady to whom I will say, 'Please let down your pitcher, that I may drink', and she will say, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels drink'—let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. By this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master.

Rebekah's Choice

¹⁵ It happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel the son

24:7, 8 Abraham told his servant that God would use His Angel so that his mission to find a suitable wife for Isaac would surely succeed. He speaks as if success is certain, and yet he recognizes the possibility that the woman may not be "willing to follow you". We should have the same positive, hopeful attitude in our enterprises for God, expecting success rather than failure. The Angel prepared in prospect for the success of the mission; but it still depended upon the woman's freewill. The whole incident can be read as typical of the search, through the preaching of the Gospel, for the bride of Christ. The preacher of the Gospel, represented by Abraham's servant, must go ahead believing that he will succeed (:40,41), just as the shepherd searches for the sheep until he finds it.

24:14 To water even a few camels was a few hours work. It was impossible that a traveller requesting a cup of water would then be offered to have his camels watered. This would have to be from God.

Your servant... my master – The servant was aware that his master was also a servant, of God. We shouldn't think of those 'above us' as being too far above us – for as we are to them, so should they be to God. And it's our standing before Him which is all important.

24:15 He spoke his prayer out loud. In the private, online worlds in which we live, it's no bad practice to say our prayers out loud, however quietly. This verse is surely alluded to by Jesus when He taught that we should pray knowing that God knows our

of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher on her shoulder. ¹⁶ The young lady was very beautiful to look at, a virgin, neither had any man known her. She went down to the spring, filled her pitcher, and came up. ¹⁷ The servant ran to meet her and said, Please give me a drink, a little water from your pitcher. ¹⁸ She said, Drink, my lord. She hurried, and let down her pitcher on her hand, and gave him drink. ¹⁹ When she had done giving him drink, she said, I will also draw for your camels, until they have done drinking. ²⁰ She hurried, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again to the well to draw, and drew for all his camels. ²¹ The man looked at her amazed, remaining silent, to know whether Yahweh had made his journey prosperous or not. ²² So it happened, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold, ²³ and said, Whose daughter are you? Please tell me. Is there room in your father's house for us to lodge in? ²⁴ She said to him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor. ²⁵ She said moreover to him, We have

both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. ²⁶ The man bowed his head, and worshiped Yahweh. ²⁷ He said, Blessed be Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His loving kindness and His truth toward my master. As for me, Yahweh has led me in the way to the house of my master's relatives. ²⁸ The young lady ran, and told her mother's house about these words. ²⁹ Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban. Laban ran out to the man, to the spring. ³⁰ It happened, when he saw the ring, and the bracelets on his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, This is what the man said to me, that he came to the man. Behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. ³¹ He said, Come in, you blessed of Yahweh. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and room for the camels. ³² The man came into the house, and he unloaded the camels. He gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. ³³ Food was set before him to eat, but he said, I will not eat until I have told my message. He said, Speak on.

needs before we ask Him (Mt. 6:8) – before we've finished our prayer, the answer has sometimes come along. See on :63.

24:21 The servant had asked for this to happen, and it did. And he can't believe the prayer has been answered – rather like the believers praying for Peter's release, who disbelieved it could be him knocking at the door (Acts 12:15). We are *so* similar. It is in those moments that we realize just what a momentous thing it is, to ask something of God, to be performed on this earth. And to realize it actually happened. He did it, for me, a little ant crawling on the surface of a small planet that is hurtling through space, in a remote part of His universe...

Abraham's Servant Makes a Speech

³⁴ He said, I am Abraham's servant.
³⁵ Yahweh has blessed my master greatly. He has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants, and camels and donkeys.
³⁶ Sarah, my master's wife, bore a son to my master when she was old. He has given all that he has to him.
³⁷ My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live,³⁸ but you shall go to my father's house, and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son'.
³⁹ I asked my master, 'What if the woman will not follow me?'
⁴⁰ He said to me, 'Yahweh, before whom I walk, will send His angel with you, and prosper your way. You shall take a wife for my son of my relatives, and of my father's house.
⁴¹ Then will you be clear from my oath, when you come to my relatives. If they don't give her to you, you shall be clear from my oath'.
⁴² I came this day to the spring, and said, 'Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, if now You do prosper my way which I go—⁴³ behold, I am standing by this spring of water. Let it happen, that the maiden who comes out to draw, to whom I will say, Please give me a little water from your pitcher to drink,⁴⁴ and she will tell me, Drink, and I will also draw for your camels—let her be the woman whom Yahweh has appointed for my master's son'.⁴⁵ Before I had finished speaking in my heart,

behold, Rebekah came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. She went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, 'Please let me drink'.⁴⁶ She hurried and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink'. So I drank, and she also gave the camels a drink.⁴⁷ I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him'. I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her hands.⁴⁸ I bowed my head, and worshiped Yahweh, and blessed Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter for his son.
⁴⁹ Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. If not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

I Will Go

⁵⁰ Then Laban and Bethuel answered, The thing proceeds from Yahweh. We can't speak to you bad or good.
⁵¹ Behold, Rebekah is before you. Take her, and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as Yahweh has spoken.
⁵² It happened that when Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself down to the earth to Yahweh.
⁵³ The servant brought out jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and her mother.
⁵⁴ They ate and drank, he and the men who were with him, and stayed all night. They rose up in the

morning, and he said, Send me away to my master. ⁵⁵ Her brother and her mother said, Let the young lady stay with us a few days, at least ten. After that she will go. ⁵⁶ He said to them, Don't hinder me, since Yahweh has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master. ⁵⁷ They said, We will call the young lady, and ask her. ⁵⁸ They called Rebekah, and said to her, Will you go with this man? She said, I will go. ⁵⁹ They sent away Rebekah, their sister, with her nurse, Abraham's servant, and his men. ⁶⁰ They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and let your seed possess the gate of those who hate them. ⁶¹ Rebekah arose with her ladies. They rode on the camels, and followed the man. The servant took Rebekah, and went his way. ⁶² Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he lived in the land of the South. ⁶³ Isaac went out to pray in the field at the evening. He lifted up his eyes, and

saw, and behold, there were camels coming. ⁶⁴ Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel. ⁶⁵ She said to the servant, Who is the man who is walking in the field to meet us? The servant said, It is my master. She took her veil, and covered herself. ⁶⁶ The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. ⁶⁷ Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife. He loved her. Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

CHAPTER 25 Jan. 14

The Genealogy of Abraham and Keturah

Abraham took another wife, and her name was Keturah. ² She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. ³ Jokshan became the father of Sheba, and Dedan. The sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. ⁴ The sons of Midian: Ephah, Epher,

24:56 Abraham's servant said that he walked 'before Yahweh' (:40), reflecting how he felt that he was following an Angel. He therefore urges Bethuel: "Don't hinder me, since Yahweh has blessed my way". He felt he was on a roll, being led onwards by the Angel – and he didn't want anything to interrupt that. The sensitive believer will perceive similar situations, time and again, as we seek to follow the leading of the Angel / cherubim before whom we walk. If we walk in step with the Angel, success is assured.

24:58 Rebekah immediately says "I will go" (Heb. *elek*) – just as Abraham had been called to "go" from Ur (*lek*, 12:1); "and he went" (*wayyelek*, 12:4). This would seem to suggest an undesigned similarity of character between the family members. Our response to the call of God should be immediate, like the disciples immediately leaving their nets.

24:63 The same thing happened as in :15 – a man was walking alone, grieving for his mother and praying – presumably for a wife to fill that gap. And the answer to that prayer had already been prepared for quite some time before he had made that request.

Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. ⁵ Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac, ⁶ but to the sons of Abraham's concubines, Abraham gave gifts. He sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, to the east country. ⁷ These are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. ⁸ Abraham gave up the spirit, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people. ⁹ Isaac and Ishmael, his sons, buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre, ¹⁰ the field which Abraham purchased of the children of Heth. Abraham was buried there with Sarah, his wife. ¹¹ It happened after the death of Abraham that God blessed Isaac, his son. Isaac lived by Beer Lahai Roi.

The Genealogy of Ishmael

¹² Now this is the history of the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bore to Abraham. ¹³ These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to the order of their birth: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth, then Kedar, Adbeel,

Mibsam, ¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵ Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. ¹⁶ These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their villages, and by their encampments: twelve princes, according to their nations. ¹⁷ These are the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years. He gave up the spirit and died, and was gathered to his people. ¹⁸ They lived from Havilah to Shur that is before Egypt, as you go toward Assyria. He lived opposite all his relatives.

The Birth of Esau and Jacob

¹⁹ This is the history of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham became the father of Isaac. ²⁰ Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Paddan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian, to be his wife. ²¹ Isaac entreated Yahweh for his wife, because she was barren. Yahweh was entreated by him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. ²² The children struggled together within her. She said, If it be so, why do I live? She went to inquire of Yahweh. ²³ Yahweh said to her, Two nations are in your womb. Two peoples will be separated from your body. The one people will be stronger than the other people. The elder

25:8 As the reward will only be given at the judgment on Christ's return, it follows that the righteous and wicked go to the same place when they die, i.e. the grave. There is no differentiation made between them in their deaths. Righteous Abraham was "gathered to his people" (or ancestors) on death; they were unbelieving idolaters (Josh. 24:2).

25:23 God loves to work through the weak, the despised, the last, or in this case, the younger.

will serve the younger. ²⁴ When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. ²⁵ The first came out red all over, like a hairy garment. They named him Esau. ²⁶ After that, his brother came out, and his hand had hold on Esau's heel. He was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

Jacob Supplants Esau as Firstborn

²⁷ The boys grew. Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field. Jacob was a perfect man, living in tents. ²⁸ Now Isaac loved Esau, because he ate his venison. Rebekah loved Jacob. ²⁹ Jacob boiled stew. Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. ³⁰ Esau said to Jacob, Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am famished. Therefore his name was called Edom. ³¹ Jacob said, First, sell me your birthright. ³² Esau said, Behold, I am about to die. What good is the birthright to me? ³³ Jacob said, Swear to me first. He swore to

him. He sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils. He ate and drank, rose up, and went his way. So Esau despised his birthright.

CHAPTER 26 Jan. 14

The Promises Repeated to Isaac

There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, to Gerar. ² Yahweh appeared to him, and said, Don't go down into Egypt. Live in the land I will tell you about. ³ Live in this land, and I will be with you, and will bless you. For to you, and to your seed, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ I will multiply your seed as the stars of the sky, and will give to your seed all these lands. In your seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, ⁵ because Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My requirements, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.

25:26 Isaac is presented as delaying parenthood until he could have children by a believing woman.

25:27 By grace, righteousness has to be imputed to us. This happened to Jacob; he didn't make it to the spiritually perfect / mature status with which he is credited right at the beginning. Job is an identical case; he is labelled "perfect" at the beginning, but at the end of his spiritual growth, he confessed his imperfection. Jacob is described as "perfect" at a time when he had not even accepted Yahweh as his God (28:21). God counts His beloved children as being far more righteous than they are. The mechanism by which He now does this is through our baptism into Christ, whereby we are counted as if we are Him. Being counted perfect is therefore not simply the bias and ridiculous favoritism of a doting, unrealistic, Divine parent.

25:30 Jacob's behaviour here was wrong. It's alluded to in a negative way by Paul when he says that we should eagerly feed even our enemy (Rom. 12:20). Jacob should have believed God's promise, that he as the younger would be the more blessed (:23), rather than trying to obtain the birthright in his own strength.

Isaac at Gerar

⁶ Isaac lived in Gerar. ⁷ The men of the place asked him about his wife. He said, She is my sister, for he was afraid to say, My wife, lest, he thought, the men of the place might kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to look at. ⁸ It happened, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out of a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was caressing Rebekah his wife. ⁹ Abimelech called Isaac and said, Behold, surely she is your wife. Why did you say, ‘She is my sister?’ Isaac said to him, Because I said, ‘Lest I die because of her’. ¹⁰ Abimelech said, What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us! ¹¹ Abimelech commanded all the people, saying, He who touches this man or his wife will surely be put to death. ¹² Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year one hundred times what he planted. Yahweh blessed him. ¹³ The

man grew great, and grew more and more until he became very great. ¹⁴ He had possessions of flocks, possessions of herds, and a great household. The Philistines envied him. ¹⁵ Now all the wells which his father’s servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped, and filled with earth. ¹⁶ Abimelech said to Isaac, Go from us, for you are much mightier than we. ¹⁷ Isaac departed from there, encamped in the valley of Gerar, and lived there.

Controversy about Wells

¹⁸ Isaac dug again the wells of water, which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father. For the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham. He called their names after the names by which his father had called them. ¹⁹ Isaac’s servants dug in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. ²⁰ The herdsmen of Gerar argued with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, The water is ours! He called the name of the well Esek,

26:6 Isaac chose to live in Gerar, right on the border of Egypt – as close as he could get to the world, without crossing the line. And he thought nothing of denying his marriage to Rebekah, just to save his own skin (:7). So it seems Isaac had some marriage problems; the record speaks of “Esau his son” and “Jacob (Rebekah’s) son” (27:5,6). The way Jacob gave Isaac wine “and he drank” just before giving the blessings is another hint at some unspirituality (27:25). And yet Isaac is counted as one of the faithful fathers; he was made strong out of his weakness, just as we are.

26:11 The Abimelech kings appear far more gracious and honourable than the Abraham family who wandered in and out of their territory; the way Abimelech threatens his own people with death if they touch Isaac or his wife, after Isaac had been deceitful to him, is an example. Yet it was not the nice people of the world, but this wandering, spiritually struggling family whom God loved and worked with.

26:12, 13 God hugely blessed Isaac materially right after Isaac’s failure of faith and selfish disloyalty in his marriage. Material blessing isn’t therefore immediately given or withheld on the basis of our righteousness.

because they contended with him. ²¹ They dug another well, and they argued over that, also. He called its name Sitnah. ²² He left that place, and dug another well. They didn't argue over that one. He called it Rehoboth. He said, For now Yahweh has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land. ²³ He went up from there to Beersheba. ²⁴ Yahweh appeared to him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham your father. Don't be afraid, for I am with you, and will bless you, and multiply your seed for My servant Abraham's sake. ²⁵ He built an altar there, and called on the name of Yahweh, and pitched his tent there. There Isaac's servants dug a well. ²⁶ Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath his friend, and Phicol the captain of his army. ²⁷ Isaac said to them, Why have you come to me, since you hate me, and have sent me away from you? ²⁸ They said, We saw plainly that Yahweh was with you. We said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, even between us and you, and let us make a covenant with you, ²⁹ that you will do us no harm, as we have not touched you, and as we have done to you nothing but good, and have sent you away in peace'. You are now the blessed of

Yahweh. ³⁰ He made them a feast, and they ate and drank. ³¹ They rose up some time in the morning, and swore one to another. Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. ³² It happened the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had dug, and said to him, We have found water. ³³ He called it Shibah. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day. ³⁴ When Esau was forty years old, he took as wife Judith, the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Basemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite. ³⁵ They grieved Isaac's and Rebekah's spirits.

CHAPTER 27 Jan. 15

Jacob Deceives Isaac

It happened, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his elder son, and said to him, My son? He said to him, Here I am. ² He said, See now, I am old. I don't know the day of my death. ³ Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field, and take me venison. ⁴ Make me savoury food, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat, and that my soul may bless you before I die. ⁵ Rebekah heard when Isaac

26:29 *You are now the blessed of Yahweh* – As if the surrounding people knew about the promises of blessing which Yahweh had made to His people, and they recognized that those promises were starting to have some level of fulfilment even then in the lives of Isaac and his family. In our lives too, God's promised future Kingdom blessings have a way of starting to come true even now (1 Tim. 4:8).

26:35 Isaac had waited a long time and his family had gone to great lengths so that he could marry a believer. He and Rebekah were understandably disappointed that their son chose to marry unbelieving women from the surrounding world.

spoke to Esau his son. Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it. ⁶ Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, ⁷ ‘Bring me venison, and make me savoury food, that I may eat, and bless you before Yahweh before my death’. ⁸ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command you. ⁹ Go now to the flock, and get me from there two good young goats. I will make them savoury food for your father, such as he loves. ¹⁰ You shall bring it to your father, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death. ¹¹ Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. ¹² What if my father touches me? I will seem to him as a deceiver, and I would bring a curse on myself, and not a blessing. ¹³ His mother said to him, Let your curse be on me, my son. Only obey my voice, and go get them for me. ¹⁴ He went, and got them, and brought them to his mother. His mother made savoury food, such as his father loved. ¹⁵ Rebekah took the

good clothes of Esau, her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob, her younger son. ¹⁶ She put the skins of the young goats on his hands, and on the smooth of his neck. ¹⁷ She gave the savoury food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. ¹⁸ He came to his father, and said, My father? He said, Here I am. Who are you, my son? ¹⁹ Jacob said to his father, I am Esau your first-born. I have done what you asked me to do. Please arise, sit and eat of my venison, that your soul may bless me. ²⁰ Isaac said to his son, How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son? He said, Because Yahweh your God gave me success. ²¹ Isaac said to Jacob, Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not. ²² Jacob went near to Isaac his father. He felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. ²³ He didn’t recognize him, because his hands were hairy, like his brother Esau’s hands. So he blessed him. ²⁴ He said, Are you really my son Esau? He said, I am.

27:11 What should Jacob have replied to his mother? It makes a good exercise to write out what he should’ve said.

27:12 *Deceiver* – The rare Hebrew word used here is found elsewhere in Jer. 10:15,16, where it refers to a maker of idols. Again the record is forging the link between Jacob and paganism.

27:13 There are clear allusions here to Eve in Eden; the curse came about because of a hearkening to a woman’s voice. Jacob ought to have perceived the similarities of the situation; but he failed to. All human sin is in some way a living out of the Adam and Eve scenario; hence Paul in Romans presents Adam as everyman, and in so many Biblical records of sin (and in our own sins too) we can see similarities with what happened in Eden. We can therefore safely say that if we had been in Eden, we would’ve sinned likewise. The fact we suffer the effect of that sin is therefore not unjust.

27:24 As Jacob deceived his blind father, so he was himself deceived by Laban. “De-

Isaac Blesses Jacob

²⁵ He said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless you. He brought it near to him, and he ate. He brought him wine, and he drank. ²⁶ His father Isaac said to him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. ²⁷ He came near, and kissed him. He smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him, and said, Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which Yahweh has blessed. ²⁸ God give you of the dew of the sky, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and new wine. ²⁹ Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers. Let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you. Blessed be everyone who blesses you.

Esau's Anger

³⁰ It happened, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob had just gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. ³¹ He also made savoury

food, and brought it to his father. He said to his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that your soul may bless me. ³² Isaac his father said to him, Who are you? He said, I am your son, your firstborn, Esau. ³³ Isaac trembled violently, and said, Who, then, is he who has taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before you came, and have blessed him? Yes, he will be blessed. ³⁴ When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceeding great and bitter cry, and said to his father, Bless me, even me also, my father. ³⁵ He said, Your brother came with deceit, and has taken away your blessing. ³⁶ He said, Isn't he rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright. See, now he has taken away my blessing. He said, Haven't you reserved a blessing for me? ³⁷ Isaac answered Esau, Behold, I have made him your lord, and all his brothers have I given to him for servants. With grain and new wine have I sustained him. What then will I do for you, my son? ³⁸ Esau said to his father, Have you

ceiving and being deceived" may allude to Jacob (2 Tim. 3:13). What goes around comes around.

27:29 *Lord over your brothers* – Isaac had apparently forgotten the Divine promise that the firstborn was to serve the younger. However, the blessing which Isaac was giving wasn't the same as the Divine blessing of Abraham's seed. All of the family seem to have forgotten the prime importance of God's blessing, and rated *human* blessing far higher. This can so easily happen to us. The Gospel is contained in the promises to Abraham (Gal. 3:8), and we need to continually remind ourselves of their paramount significance in our lives. There was no Divine inspiration in Isaac's blessings, he was not speaking from God's mouth to his sons, although the recording of them is inspired.

27:38 The way Esau lifted up his voice and wept is picked up in Heb. 12:17 as a warning to all those who would fritter away their spirituality for sensuality – for they will

but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, my father. Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. ³⁹ Isaac his father answered him, Behold, of the fatness of the earth will be your dwelling, and of the dew of the sky from above. ⁴⁰ By your sword will you live, and you will serve your brother. It will happen, when you will break loose, that you shall shake his yoke from off your neck. ⁴¹ Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him. Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand. Then I will kill my brother Jacob. ⁴² The words of Esau, her elder son, were told to Rebekah. She sent and called Jacob, her younger son, and said to him, Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you. ⁴³ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban, my brother, in Haran. ⁴⁴ Stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury turns away; ⁴⁵ until your brother's anger turn away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will

send, and get you from there. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day? ⁴⁶ Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these, of the daughters of the land, what good will my life do me?

CHAPTER 28 Jan. 16

Jacob Sent to Laban

Isaac called Jacob, blessed him, and commanded him, You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. ² Arise, go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father. Take a wife from there from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. ³ May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, that you may be a company of peoples, ⁴ and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you, and to your seed with you, that you may inherit the land where you travel, which God gave to Abraham. ⁵ Isaac sent Jacob away. He went to Paddan Aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, Rebekah's broth-

weep in the same way at the day of judgment, aching from the pain of what might have been. Esau was a type of those who will be rejected at the final judgment – they will beg with tears for a change of mind, but it will be too late. None of us will stand before Christ indifferent – we will all desperately wish for His blessing, and therefore our commitment to Him in this life should likewise be total.

27:46 Rebekah's apparent zeal against marriage out of the faith was really a cover for her desire to save her son from problems which he had only her to blame for. We really have to search our motives – for we do externally the right thing from quite wrong motives.

28:1 Here and in :7 we see the repeated emphasis on the need to marry within the household of faith.

28:4 Isaac perhaps now realized that the fatherly blessing over which there had been so much grief was irrelevant compared to God's blessing.

er, Jacob's and Esau's mother. ⁶ Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan Aram, to take him a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a command, saying, You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, ⁷ and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Paddan Aram. ⁸ Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan didn't please Isaac, his father. ⁹ Esau went to Ishmael, and took, besides the wives that he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife.

Jacob's Vision of the Ladder

¹⁰ Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. ¹¹ He came to a certain place, and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. He took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. ¹² He dreamed. Behold, a stairway set upon the earth, and its top reached to heaven. Behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. ¹³ Behold, Yahweh stood above it,

and said, I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed. ¹⁴ Your seed will be as the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. In you and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed. ¹⁵ Behold, I am with you, and will keep you, wherever you go, and will bring you again into this land. For I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken of to you. ¹⁶ Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Yahweh is in this place, and I didn't know it. ¹⁷ He was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other than God's house, and this is the gate of heaven. ¹⁸ Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on its top. ¹⁹ He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first. ²⁰ Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me

28:12 Jacob's dreaming of a pagan ziggurat could indicate that subconsciously his mind was in pagan things rather than those of Yahweh. But God worked through that, and transformed the dream into a message from the true God. God with amazing patience works through our weaknesses, lack of faith and misunderstandings to bring us to Him as the one true God.

28:13 God made these unconditional promises to Jacob even though at that time Jacob had not accepted Yahweh as his God (:21), thus showing His grace. God in Christ has potentially forgiven every person their sins and promised them salvation – all they have to do is accept Him in faith. God takes the initiative in grace – He doesn't give us His promises as a 'Well done' for our showing faith in Him. He has taken the initiative and it is for us to respond. Jacob there in his unbelief, or agnosticism, with Angels ascending and descending upon him, was in fact a type of Christ (Jn. 1:51).

bread to eat, and clothing to put on, ²¹ so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and Yahweh will be my God, ²² then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, will be God's house. Of all that you will give me I will surely give the tenth to you.

CHAPTER 29 Jan. 16

Jacob Falls in Love

Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the children of the east. ² He looked, and behold, a well in the field, and, behold, three flocks of sheep lying there by it. For out of that well they watered the flocks. The stone on the well's mouth was large. ³ There all the flocks were gathered. They rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again on the well's mouth in its place. ⁴ Jacob said to them, My relatives, where are you from? They said, We are from Haran. ⁵ He said to them, Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor? They said, We know him. ⁶ He said to them, Is it well with him? They said, It is well. See, Rachel, his daughter, is coming with the sheep. ⁷ He said, Behold, it is still the middle of the day, not time to gather the livestock together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them.

⁸ They said, We can't, until all the flocks are gathered together, and they roll the stone from the well's mouth. Then we water the sheep. ⁹ While he was yet speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she kept them. ¹⁰ It happened, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. ¹¹ Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. ¹² Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son. She ran and told her father.

Jacob Marries Rachel and Leah

¹³ It happened, when Laban heard the news of Jacob, his sister's son, that he ran to meet Jacob, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban all these things. ¹⁴ Laban said to him, Surely you are my bone and my flesh. He lived with him for a month. ¹⁵ Laban said to Jacob, Because you are my brother, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what will your wages be? ¹⁶ Laban had two daughters. The name of the

28:21, 22 Jacob seems sceptical of God's promise – he says that if indeed God does what He promises, *then* Jacob will accept Yahweh as his God and give him a tithe. The offer of a tithe seems very mean – the God who has promised us so very much deserves our all, not just a tenth.

29:2 Meeting a future wife by a well at watering time is what happened to Moses and to Isaac (by proxy). Situations repeat between the lives of God's children and even within our own lives, because the same God is working through His Angels to some kind of pattern and formula in the lives of His children, even if the complete algorithm is currently hid from our understanding.

elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷ Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and attractive. ¹⁸ Jacob loved Rachel. He said, I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter. ¹⁹ Laban said, It is better that I give her to you, than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me. ²⁰ Jacob served seven years for Rachel. They seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had for her. ²¹ Jacob said to Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her. ²² Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. ²³ It happened in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him. He went in to her. ²⁴ Laban gave Zilpah his handmaid to his daughter Leah for a handmaid. ²⁵ It happened in the morning that, behold, it was Leah. He said to Laban, What is this you have done to me? Didn't I serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me? ²⁶ Laban said, It

is not done so in our place, to give the younger before the firstborn. ²⁷ Fulfill the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you will serve with me yet seven other years. ²⁸ Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week. He gave him Rachel his daughter as wife. ²⁹ Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah, his handmaid, to be her handmaid. ³⁰ He went in also to Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years. ³¹ Yahweh saw that Leah was hated, and he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. ³² Leah conceived, and bore a son, and she named him Reuben. For she said, Because Yahweh has looked at my affliction. For now my husband will love me. ³³ She conceived again, and bore a son, and said, Because Yahweh has heard that I am hated, He has therefore given me this son also. She named him Simeon. ³⁴ She conceived again, and bore a son. She said, Now this time will my husband

29:17 As life worked out, it's apparent that Leah was the more faithful to Yahweh and her beauty queen sister wasn't so spiritually minded. But Jacob in his spiritual immaturity was attracted to Rachel after the flesh.

29:25 Why did Jacob only realize whom he had slept with the next morning? One is tempted to assume Jacob was drunk on his wedding night.

What is this – Very similar words and situation to Esau's cry of pain and disappointment at how Jacob had deceived him. It's not simply that what goes around comes around in a kind of measure for measure dynamic, but rather that God was seeking to educate Jacob as to how Esau must have felt at his behaviour, and to lead Jacob thereby to repentance.

29:33 *Has heard* – Yahweh noticed she was hated (:31) and read the situation as a prayer to Him. Sometimes we don't verbalize things in prayer, but God all the same perceives our situation as a prayer to Him.

29:34 Jacob was married to Leah but not "joined" to her, even though God's intention is to 'join' a married couple together (Mt. 19:6). It would seem Jacob like many people today resisted God's attempts to join a couple together.

be joined to me, because I have borne him three sons. Therefore his name was called Levi. ³⁵ She conceived again, and bore a son. She said, This time will I praise Yahweh. Therefore she named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

CHAPTER 30 Jan. 17

Jacob's Children and Domestic Problems

When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister. She said to Jacob, Give me children, or else I will die. ² Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, Am I in God's place, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb? ³ She said, Behold, my maid Bilhah. Go in to her, that she may bear on my knees, and I also may obtain children by her. ⁴ She gave him Bilhah her handmaid as wife, and Jacob went in to her. ⁵ Bilhah conceived, and bore Jacob a son. ⁶ Rachel said, God has judged me, and has also heard

my voice, and has given me a son. Therefore called she his name Dan. ⁷ Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, conceived again, and bore Jacob a second son. ⁸ Rachel said, With mighty wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed. She named him Naphtali. ⁹ When Leah saw that she had finished bearing, she took Zilpah, her handmaid, and gave her to Jacob as a wife. ¹⁰ Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bore Jacob a son. ¹¹ Leah said, How fortunate! She named him Gad. ¹² Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bore Jacob a second son. ¹³ Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me happy. She named him Asher. ¹⁴ Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother, Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Please give me some of your son's mandrakes. ¹⁵ She said to her, Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes, also? Rachel said, Therefore he will

30:4 Jacob's sleeping with his wives' maids was contrary to the one man: one woman ideal of Genesis. But God tolerated it and used the children conceived as the founding pillars of His people Israel; He worked through the weakness of people rather than turning away in disgust and disappointment at their failures. God does the same with us, and we ought to have a similar hopeful patience in dealing with people who fail.

30:6 It seems that this was a case of Rachel trying to force God's hand rather than Him blessing her. Yet she eagerly interpreted events as meaning God was blessing her, just as we can – we too easily attach positive meaning to our poor behaviour.

30:8 Leah didn't fight back nor have any personal part in wrestling with Rachel; the wrestling was all in Rachel's mind. We can assume others are actively against us and even fighting against us when actually they are just innocent people in the situation they are in, and our wrestling is in fact against God and not them as persons. Jacob learnt the same lesson when he wrestled with the Angel in chapter 32.

30:11 Gad was the name of an idol, the god of luck or fortune. In this name choice we see the pagan influences in the family which God was trying to transform into His people.

lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes. ¹⁶ Jacob came from the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, You must come in to me; for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes. He lay with her that night. ¹⁷ God listened to Leah, and she conceived, and bore Jacob a fifth son. ¹⁸ Leah said, God has given me my hire, because I gave my handmaid to my husband. She named him Issachar. ¹⁹ Leah conceived again, and bore a sixth son to Jacob. ²⁰ Leah said, God has endowed me with a good dowry. Now my husband will live with me, because I have borne him six sons. She named him Zebulun. ²¹ Afterwards, she bore a daughter, and named her Dinah. ²² God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her, and opened her womb. ²³ She conceived, bore a son, and said, God has taken away my reproach. ²⁴ She named him Joseph, saying, May Yahweh add another son to me.

Jacob Increases His Wealth

²⁵ It happened, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, Send me away, that I may go to my own place, and to my country. ²⁶ Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service with which I have served you. ²⁷ Laban said to him, If now I

have found favour in your eyes, stay here, for I have divined that Yahweh has blessed me for your sake. ²⁸ He said, Appoint me your wages, and I will give it. ²⁹ He said to him, You know how I have served you, and how your livestock have fared with me. ³⁰ For it was little which you had before I came, and it has increased to a multitude. Yahweh has blessed you wherever I turned. Now when will I provide for my own house also? ³¹ He said, What shall I give you? Jacob said, You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed your flock and keep it. ³² I will pass through all your flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted one, and every black one among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats. This will be my hire. ³³ So my righteousness will answer for me hereafter, when you come concerning my hire that is before you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep, that might be with me, will be counted stolen. ³⁴ Laban said, Behold, let it be according to your word. ³⁵ That day, he removed the male goats that were streaked and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons.

30:16 Mandrakes were supposed to be aphrodisiacs. The record is framed to show how meaningless were these pagan beliefs – for if they had really worked, she would have had no need to order Jacob to sleep with her. God's patient working through their misunderstandings is seen later in how He worked through Jacob's belief in the myth of cattle bearing spotted offspring if they conceived in front of spotted rods (:37).

³⁶ He set three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks. ³⁷ Jacob took to himself rods of fresh poplar, almond, plane tree, peeled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. ³⁸ He set the rods which he had peeled opposite the flocks in the gutters in the watering-troughs where the flocks came to drink. They conceived when they came to drink. ³⁹ The flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks produced streaked, speckled, and spotted. ⁴⁰ Jacob separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the streaked and all the black in the flock of Laban: and he put his own droves apart, and didn't put them into Laban's flock. ⁴¹ It happened, whenever the stronger of the flock conceived, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the flock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods; ⁴² but when the flock were feeble, he didn't put them

in. So the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. ⁴³ The man increased exceedingly, and had large flocks, female servants and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

CHAPTER 31 Jan. 18

Jacob's Family Escape from Laban

He heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob has taken away all that was our father's. From that which was our father's, has he gotten all this wealth. ² Jacob saw the expression on Laban's face, and, behold, it was not toward him as before. ³ Yahweh said to Jacob, Return to the land of your fathers, and to your relatives, and I will be with you. ⁴ Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock, ⁵ and said to them, I see the expression on your father's face, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me. ⁶ You know that I have served your father with all of my strength. ⁷ Your father

30:37-39 This was a pagan belief with no biological truth in it, but God still worked through it in order to bless Jacob; see on :16. The Lord Jesus did the same regarding the common belief that demons caused illness. His language went along with the idea, although the Bible is clear that demons don't exist and sickness is ultimately under God's control, in order to bring healing and blessing to those sick people. By doing so, He demonstrated that God's power is so far greater than that of demons that effectively, demons have no power and don't actually exist. God worked in the same way through the wrong ideas held by Jacob and his family.

30:43 *The man* – Stressing how Jacob humanly, in a fleshly sense, was blessed by God. Later on he must have reflected how this blessing was by Divine grace rather than because of any truth in the pagan beliefs of themselves, for afterwards he talks of how it was God who graciously gave him the extra cattle (31:9; 32:10).

31:5 *God of my father* – Jacob only spoke about Yahweh as his personal God towards the end of his life. At this stage he was still relating to Yahweh as the God of his father rather than seeing the personal reality of God as his personal God. Today God works in the same way, to transform for us the God of Sunday School Christianity into our personal Father.

has deceived me, and changed my wages ten times, but God didn't allow him to hurt me. ⁸ If he said this, 'The speckled will be your wages', then all the flock bore speckled. If he said this, 'The streaked will be your wages', then all the flock bore streaked. ⁹ Thus God has taken away your father's livestock, and given them to me. ¹⁰ It happened during mating season that I lifted up my eyes, and saw in a dream, and behold, the male goats which leaped on the flock were streaked, speckled, and grizzled. ¹¹ The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob', and I said, 'Here I am'. ¹² He said, 'Now lift up your eyes, and behold, all the male goats which leap on the flock are streaked, speckled, and grizzled, for I have seen all that Laban does to you. ¹³ I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you vowed a vow to me. Now arise, get out from this land, and return to the land of your birth'. ¹⁴ Rachel and Leah answered him, Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? ¹⁵ Aren't we accounted by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and has also quite devoured our money. ¹⁶ For all the riches which God has taken away from our father, that is ours and our children's. Now then, whatever God has said to you, do. ¹⁷ Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives on the camels, ¹⁸ and he took away all his livestock, and all his possessions which he had gathered, including

the livestock which he had gained in Paddan Aram, to go to Isaac his father, to the land of Canaan. ¹⁹ Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep: and Rachel stole the teraphim that were her father's. ²⁰ Jacob deceived Laban the Syrian, in that he didn't tell him that he was running away. ²¹ So he fled with all that he had. He rose up, passed over the River, and set his face toward the mountain of Gilead.

Laban Meets Jacob

²² Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. ²³ He took his relatives with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey. He overtook him in the mountain of Gilead. ²⁴ God came to Laban the Syrian, in a dream of the night, and said to him, Take heed to yourself that you don't speak to Jacob either good or bad. ²⁵ Laban caught up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountain, and Laban with his relatives encamped in the mountain of Gilead. ²⁶ Laban said to Jacob, What have you done, that you have deceived me, and carried away my daughters like captives of the sword? ²⁷ Why did you flee secretly, and deceive me, and didn't tell me, that I might have sent you away with mirth and with songs, with tambourine and with harp; ²⁸ and didn't allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Now have you done foolishly. ²⁹ It is in the power of my hand to hurt you, but the God of your fa-

31:9 See on 30:43.

31:19 Teraphim were household gods – Rachel clearly believed in them passionately.

ther spoke to me last night, saying, ‘Take heed to yourself that you don’t speak to Jacob either good or bad’.³⁰ Now you want to be gone, because you greatly longed for your father’s house, but why have you stolen my gods?³¹ Jacob answered Laban, Because I was afraid, for I said, ‘Lest you should take your daughters from me by force’.³² Anyone you find your gods with shall not live. Before our relatives, discern what is yours with me, and take it. For Jacob didn’t know that Rachel had stolen them.³³ Laban went into Jacob’s tent, into Leah’s tent, and into the tent of the two female servants; but he didn’t find them. He went out of Leah’s tent, and entered into Rachel’s tent.³⁴ Now Rachel had taken the teraphim, put them in the camel’s saddle, and sat on them. Laban felt about all the tent, but didn’t find them.³⁵ She said to her father, Don’t let my lord be angry that I can’t rise up before you; for I’m having my period. He searched, but didn’t find the teraphim.³⁶ Jacob was angry, and argued with Laban. Jacob answered Laban, What is my trespass? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued after me?³⁷ Now that you have felt around in all my stuff, what have you found of all your household

stuff? Set it here before my relatives and your relatives, that they may judge between us two.³⁸ These twenty years I have been with you. Your ewes and your female goats have not cast their young, and I haven’t eaten the rams of your flocks.³⁹ That which was torn of animals, I didn’t bring to you. I bore its loss. Of my hand you required it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night.⁴⁰ This was my situation: in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep fled from my eyes.⁴¹ These twenty years I have been in your house. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times.⁴² Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty. God has seen my affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked you last night.

Laban and Jacob Make a Covenant

⁴³ Laban answered Jacob, The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine: and what can I do this day to these my daughters, or to their children whom they have borne?⁴⁴ Now come, let

31:36 Jacob must have later reflected how this incident reflected God’s pure grace to him, and how self-righteous he had been. All the time in this record we are seeing God continuing to work with people through their weaknesses, to bring them to perceive and believe in Him as the God of all grace.

31:42 *Rebuked you* – There’s no evidence God actually did. Again we see a man attaching unwarranted meaning to events, assuming God was more pleased with him than He actually was. His wives made the same mistake in the obtaining and naming of their children.

us make a covenant, you and I; and let it be for a witness between me and you. ⁴⁵ Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. ⁴⁶ Jacob said to his relatives, Gather stones. They took stones, and made a heap. They ate there by the heap. ⁴⁷ Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. ⁴⁸ Laban said, This heap is witness between me and you this day. Therefore it was named Galeed ⁴⁹ and Mizpah, for he said, Yahweh watch between me and you, when we are absent one from another. ⁵⁰ If you afflict my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, no man is with us; behold, God is witness between me and you. ⁵¹ Laban said to Jacob, See this heap, and see the pillar, which I have set between me and you. ⁵² May this heap be a witness, and the pillar be a witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and that you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. ⁵³ The God of Abraham, and

the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us. Then Jacob swore by the fear of his father, Isaac. ⁵⁴ Jacob offered a sacrifice in the mountain, and called his relatives to eat bread. They ate bread, and stayed all night in the mountain. ⁵⁵ Early in the morning, Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them. Laban departed and returned to his place.

CHAPTER 32 Jan. 19

Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau

Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. ² When he saw them, Jacob said, This is God's army. He called the name of that place Mahanaim. ³ Jacob sent messengers in front of him to Esau, his brother, to the land of Seir, the field of Edom. ⁴ He commanded them, saying, This is what you shall tell my lord, Esau: 'This is what your servant, Jacob, says. I have lived as a foreigner with Laban, and stayed until now. ⁵ I have

31:45 Raising up a pillar or standing stone was a pagan ritual which God later forbade for His people (Lev. 26:1 uses the same Hebrew word). Constantly we are being reminded how paganistic were Jacob's beliefs at this time.

31:53 The god of Nahor was a pagan deity (Josh. 24:2); Jacob instead swore by the One his father Isaac feared, Yahweh. Even though Jacob hadn't yet accepted Yahweh as his personal God, he recognized theoretically the truth of Yahweh as opposed to any other god; Yahweh was working to transform this theoretical knowledge into a practical, personal reality for Jacob.

31:54 Eating bread together was a sign of agreeing to a covenant. It is behind the idea of the breaking of bread service, whereby God and His children state their mutual belief in each other and acceptance of God's covenant with us – which is quite simply to save us from our sins and give us eternal life in His Kingdom because we are in Christ.

32:2 'Mahanaim' means 'two camps'. The army of Jacob's enemies was matched by an invisible army of Angels which were on Jacob's side, weak in faith as he was. We must remember that each life crisis, each time we seem hopelessly outnumbered, is in fact a Mahanaim situation for us.

cattle, donkeys, flocks, male servants, and female servants. I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favour in your sight'.⁶ The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to your brother Esau. Not only that, but he comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him.⁷ Then Jacob was greatly afraid and was distressed. He divided the people who were with him, and the flocks, and the herds, and the camels, into two companies;⁸ and he said, If Esau comes to the one company, and strikes it, then the company which is left will escape.⁹ Jacob said, God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Yahweh, who said to me, 'Return to your country, and to your relatives, and I will do you good',¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the loving kindnesses, and of all the truth, which You have shown to Your servant; for with just my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I have become two companies.¹¹ Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he come and strike me, and the mothers with the children.¹² You said, 'I will surely do you good, and make your seed as the sand of the sea, which

can't be numbered because there are so many'.¹³ He lodged there that night, and took from that which he had with him, a present for Esau, his brother:¹⁴ two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams,¹⁵ thirty milk camels and their colts, forty cows, ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals.¹⁶ He delivered them into the hands of his servants, every herd by itself, and said to his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space between herd and herd.¹⁷ He commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau, my brother, meets you, and asks you, saying, 'Whose are you? Where are you going? Whose are these before you?'¹⁸ Then you shall say, 'They are your servant, Jacob's. It is a present sent to my lord, Esau. Behold, he also is behind us'.¹⁹ He commanded also the second, and the third, and all that followed the herds, saying, This is how you shall speak to Esau, when you find him.²⁰ You shall say, 'Not only that, but behold, your servant, Jacob, is behind us'. For, he said, I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face. Perhaps he will accept me.²¹ So the present

32:10 Staff – The Hebrew word for “staff” here suggests a magical, pagan stick associated with fertility, coming from a root meaning ‘to germinate’. The same word occurs when we read that Jacob put the animals before the “rods”; it seems this is an intensive plural for ‘the great rod’, i.e. his staff. Yet, fascinatingly enough, at the very point when Jacob leaves home to start his wilderness journey with only (in his eyes) his pagan staff to bring him good luck, God as it were takes a snapshot of him, and asks Israel to leave Egypt with a staff in their hands – a strange request, surely, unless it was intended to drive their minds back to Jacob, asking them to emulate his example. Jacob and idolatry go together. But now Jacob begins to realize that all he had in life was from God, and not from his staff.

passed over before him, and he himself lodged that night in the camp.

Jacob Wrestles with an Angel

²² He rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two handmaids, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford of the Jabbok.

²³ He took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over that which he had. ²⁴ Jacob was left alone, and wrestled with a man there until the breaking of the day. ²⁵ When he saw that he didn't prevail against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained, as he wrestled. ²⁶ The man said, Let me go, for the day breaks.

Jacob said, I won't let You go, unless You bless me. ²⁷ He said to him, What is your name? He said, Jacob. ²⁸ He said, Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you

have fought with God and with men, and have prevailed. ²⁹ Jacob asked him, Please tell me Your name. He said, Why is it that you ask what My name is? He blessed him there.

³⁰ Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for, he said, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

³¹ The sun rose on him as he passed over Peniel, and he limped because of his thigh. ³² Therefore the children of Israel don't eat the sinew of the hip, which is on the hollow of the thigh, to this day, because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.

CHAPTER 33 Jan. 19

Jacob Meets Esau

Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and with him four hundred men. He divided the children between Leah,

32:24 *Wrestled* – The Angel came to Jacob with the desire to kill him, as Esau (whom the Angel represented) approached him in the same spirit. It was by Jacob's desperate clinging on to God, his pleading, his intense prayer (Hos. 12:4) that he changed God's intention, as did Moses later. We know from Hos. 12 that Jacob became aware that he was wrestling with an Angel, not just a man. His wrestling is therefore to be understood as prayer and pleading, although doubtless it started as a physical struggle with an unknown stranger, who he later recognized as an Angel. Jacob wrestled / struggled in prayer with the Angel. Jacob's night of wrestling is a cameo of the experience of all who would be counted among the Israel of God – for "there He spoke with us" (Hos. 12:4). The Bible presents prayer as a struggle, not something we do half asleep in the comfort of our beds (Job 33:13; Heb. 12:4; Rom. 15:30; Col. 4:12). Through this, Jacob learnt the real import of the promises. He realized that all his life, he had been wrestling with God, his Angel, and he now came to beg his God for the blessing of forgiveness, implying he had repented. The Hebrew for "wrestle" can mean both to wrestle and also to cling on to. He started wrestling, and ended up clinging on to the Angel, desperately begging for salvation and forgiveness. His great physical strength (remember how he moved the huge stone from the well, 29:2) was redirected into a spiritual clinging on to the promises of forgiveness and salvation. And this will be our pattern of growth too.

32:31 Jacob's limping would've reminded him for the rest of his life of his brokenness and dependence upon God's grace to walk life's journey.

Rachel, and the two handmaids. ² He put the handmaids and their children in front, Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph at the rear. ³ He himself passed over in front of them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. ⁴ Esau ran to meet him, embraced him, fell on his neck, kissed him, and they wept. ⁵ He lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are these with you? He said, The children whom God has graciously given your servant. ⁶ Then the handmaids came near with their children, and they bowed themselves. ⁷ Leah also and her children came near, and bowed themselves. After them, Joseph came near with Rachel, and they bowed themselves.

⁸ Esau said, What do you mean by all this company which I met? Jacob said, To find grace in the sight of my lord. ⁹ Esau said, I have enough, my brother; let that which you have be yours. ¹⁰ Jacob said, Please no, if I have now found grace in your sight, then receive my present at my hand, because I have seen your face, as one sees the face of God, and you were pleased with me. ¹¹ Please take away my blessing that I brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have all things. He urged him, and he took it.

Jacob and Esau Part Company

¹² Esau said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before you. ¹³ Jacob said to him, My lord knows that the children are tender,

33:3 Jacob's new appreciation of the blessing of forgiveness is reflected by the way in which he effectively tells Esau that he is handing back to him the birthright, the physical blessings. The way he bows down seven times to Esau is rejecting the blessing he had obtained by deceit from Isaac: "Be master over your brothers, and let your mother's sons bow down to you" (27:29). His experience of the blessing of God's grace was sufficient for him, and he rejected all else. See on 33:11.

33:5 *Graciously given* – Jacob is beginning to understand that his blessings of family and wealth were a gift of God's grace and not achieved, as he had thought, as a result of his own hard work and pagan practices. The grace of the one true God is being subtly contrasted with the works-based mentality of paganism.

33:11 The Hebrew words translated "take (away)" and "blessing" are exactly the same as in 27:35,36, where Isaac laments that Jacob had *taken away* Esau's *blessing*, and *Esau repeats those same words*. Now Jacob is saying: "I have experienced the true grace of God, I stand forgiven before Him, I saw His face in His representative Angel, I therefore have all things, so I don't want that physical, material, temporal blessing I swindled you out of". This is why Jacob pointedly calls Esau his "Lord" in the record. He was accepting Esau as the firstborn. Because God had dealt graciously with him, he felt that he had "all things". All he needed was God's grace, and he had that. Rev. 21:7 appears to allude to Jacob by saying that he who overcomes [by wrestling?] shall inherit "all things". We are all to pass through Jacob's lesson; that material advantage is nothing, and God's grace is everything. Truly could Jacob later say, after another gracious salvation, that there God had been revealed to him [RV] in the experience of grace (35:7). See on 33:3.

and that the flocks and herds with me have their young, and if they overdrive them one day, all the flocks will die. ¹⁴ Please let my lord pass over before his servant, and I will lead on gently, according to the pace of the livestock that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord to Seir. ¹⁵ Esau said, Let me now leave with you some of the folk who are with me. He said, Why? Let me find favour in the sight of my lord. ¹⁶ So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. ¹⁷ Jacob travelled to Succoth, built himself a house, and made shelters for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. ¹⁸ Jacob came in peace to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan Aram; and encamped before the city. ¹⁹ He bought the parcel of ground where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. ²⁰ He erected an altar there, and called it El Elohe Israel.

CHAPTER 34 Jan. 20

Shechem Sleeps with Dinah

Dinah, the daughter of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. ² Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her. He took her, lay with her, and humbled her. ³ His soul joined to

Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young lady, and spoke kindly to the young lady. ⁴ Shechem spoke to his father, Hamor, saying, Get me this young lady as a wife. ⁵ Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah, his daughter; and his sons were with his livestock in the field. Jacob held his peace until they came. ⁶ Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to talk with him. ⁷ The sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it. The men were grieved, and they were very angry, because he had done folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; a thing which ought not to be done. ⁸ Hamor talked with them, saying, The soul of my son, Shechem, longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. ⁹ Make marriages with us, give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. ¹⁰ You shall dwell with us, and the land will be before you. Live and trade in it, and get possessions in it. ¹¹ Shechem said to her father and to her brothers, Let me find favour in your eyes, and whatever you will tell me I will give. ¹² Ask me a great amount for a dowry, and I will give whatever you ask of me, but give me the young lady as a wife.

Jacob's Sons Take Revenge

¹³ The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father with deceit, and spoke, because he had defiled Dinah their sister, ¹⁴ and

34:2 The story clearly shows the danger of young people from believing families mixing with unbelievers in an uncontrolled environment – what begins as curiosity can very quickly descend into serious failure with lifelong consequences.

said to them, We can't do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised; for that is a reproach to us. ¹⁵ Only on this condition will we consent to you. If you will be as we are, that every male of you be circumcised; ¹⁶ then will we give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. ¹⁷ But if you will not listen to us, to be circumcised, then we will take our sister, and we will be gone. ¹⁸ Their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. ¹⁹ The young man didn't wait to do this thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter, and he was honoured above all the house of his father. ²⁰ Hamor and Shechem, his son, came to the gate of their city, and talked with the men of their city, saying, ²¹ These men are peaceful with us. Therefore let them live in the land and trade in it. For behold, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. ²² Only on this condition will the men consent to us to live with us, to become one people, if every male among us is circumcised, as they are

circumcised. ²³ Won't their livestock and their possessions and all their animals be ours? Only let us give our consent to them, and they will dwell with us. ²⁴ All who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor, and to Shechem his son; and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city. ²⁵ It happened on the third day, when they were sore, that two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword, came upon the unsuspecting city, and killed all the males. ²⁶ They killed Hamor and Shechem, his son, with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went away. ²⁷ Jacob's sons came on the dead, and plundered the city, because they had defiled their sister. ²⁸ They took their flocks, their herds, their donkeys, that which was in the city, that which was in the field, ²⁹ and all their wealth. They took captive all their little ones and their wives, and took as plunder everything that was in the house. ³⁰ Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, You have troubled me, to make me odious to the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites. I being few in

34:16 Marriage out of the Faith reflects a lack of appreciation of covenant relationship. If Dinah had married Shechem, this would have been a covenant relationship which would have resulted in the people of God and the surrounding world becoming "one people" (:16,22). Through baptism, we are the seed of Abraham, we are *the* people of God, we have been selected to undergo a few years preparation now, so that when the Lord comes we may enter His Kingdom.

34:30 So true to our experience, even after the night of wrestling Jacob slipped back at times into the old way of thinking. His pathetic bleating here is a case of this: "*I* being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against *me* and slay *me*; and *I* shall be destroyed, *I* and *my* house". Just note all those personal pronouns. God had promised to go with him, and the whole tenor of all the promises was that there would

number, they shall gather themselves together against me and slay me, and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. ³¹ They said, Should he deal with our sister as with a prostitute?

CHAPTER 35 Jan. 20

Jacob Quits Pagan Gods

God said to Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and live there. Make there an altar to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother. ² Then Jacob said to his household, and to all who were with him, Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, change your garments. ³ Let us arise, and go up to Bethel. I will make there an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. ⁴ They gave to Jacob all the foreign gods which were in

their hands, and the rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. ⁵ They travelled, and a terror of God was on the cities that were around them, and they didn't pursue the sons of Jacob. ⁶ So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. ⁷ He built an altar there, and called the place El Beth El; because there God was revealed to him, when he fled from the face of his brother. ⁸ Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak; and its name was called Allon Bacuth.

Jacob Is Renamed Israel

⁹ God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan Aram, and blessed him. ¹⁰ God said to him, Your name is Jacob. Your name shall

come a singular seed from the line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who would become a great house, or nation. But in the heat of the moment, all this went out of the window. Our faith in the implications of God's promises to us – we who through baptism have the same Abrahamic promises made to us – can likewise easily become obscured by the immediate pressures of this world.

35:2 These household teraphim would have been the property deeds to Laban's property, but because of what God had promised him, Jacob was willing to resign all that hope of worldly advantage (:3). "Foreign gods" would've sounded strange to Jacob's family – the gods they worshipped would've been local Canaanite gods, yet Jacob speaks as if the local world around them was actually a foreign country. He thus shows how we who are in the family of faith should live even in our own land as if we are visitors from abroad in a foreign land (Heb. 11:13).

35:4 Jacob was outnumbered and surrounded by angry enemies, whom his sons had foolishly provoked. He turns to God and throws away all his human wealth, which he might have used to placate his angry enemies. And somehow, it all worked out for him – because there's no record that his enemies did in fact take revenge against the small and vulnerable Jacob family.

35:7 See on 33:11.

35:10 The record continues to sometimes refer to Jacob as "Jacob" rather than as "Israel". This reflects how Jacob didn't fully believe in nor accept that new name which

not be Jacob any more, but your name will be Israel. He named him Israel. ¹¹ God said to him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations will be from you, and kings will come out of your body. ¹² The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and to your seed after you will I give the land. ¹³ God went up from him in the place where He spoke with him. ¹⁴ Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He spoke with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it, and poured oil on it. ¹⁵ Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him Bethel.

The Deaths of Rachel and Isaac

¹⁶ They travelled from Bethel. There was still some distance to come to Ephrath, and Rachel travailed. She had hard labour. ¹⁷ When she was in hard labour, the midwife said to her, Don't be afraid, for now you will have another son. ¹⁸ It happened, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Benoni, but his father named him Benjamin. ¹⁹ Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath (the same is Bethlehem). ²⁰ Jacob set up

a pillar on her grave. The same is the Pillar of Rachel's grave to this day. ²¹ Israel travelled, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Eder. ²² It happened, while Israel lived in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine, and Israel heard of it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. ²³ The sons of Leah: Reuben (Jacob's firstborn), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. ²⁴ The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁵ The sons of Bilhah (Rachel's handmaid): Dan and Naphtali. ²⁶ The sons of Zilpah (Leah's handmaid): Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob, who were born to him in Paddan Aram. ²⁷ Jacob came to Isaac his father, to Mamre, to Kiriath Arba (which is Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac lived as foreigners. ²⁸ The days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. ²⁹ Isaac gave up the spirit, and died, and was gathered to his people, old and full of days. Esau and Jacob, his sons, buried him.

CHAPTER 36 Jan. 21

The Family of Esau

Now this is the history of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom). ² Esau took his wives from

God had given him. We are baptized into God's Name, and yet we too can doubt or forget the wonder of this, and likewise fail to identify ourselves as God identifies us.

35:11 Seeking to imitate God isn't always a recipe for an easy life now for us as humans. The Hebrew word translated "Almighty", *Shaddai*, is rooted in the word *shad*, meaning breast, and has the sense of fruitfulness. Thus "God said unto [Jacob], I am God Almighty [*shaddai*]: be fruitful [like me] and multiply". It seems Jacob sought to obey this by invitation to be like God by having a child in his old age by Rachel – and yet, perhaps due to her age, she died in that childbirth, in that seeking to imitate the Father.

36:2 It is again emphasized that Esau married outside of the family of faith. One rea-

the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon, the Hittite; and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, the Hivite; ³ and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebaioth. ⁴ Adah bore to Esau Eliphaz. Basemath bore Reuel. ⁵ Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the sons of Esau, who were born to him in the land of Canaan. ⁶ Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, with his livestock, all his animals, and all his possessions, which he had gathered in the land of Canaan, and went into a land away from the presence of his brother Jacob. ⁷ For their substance was too great for them to dwell together, and the land of their travels couldn't bear them because of their livestock. ⁸ Esau lived in the hill country of Seir. Esau is Edom. ⁹ This is the history of the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir: ¹⁰ these are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz, the son of Adah, the wife of Esau; and Reuel, the son of Basemath, the wife of Esau. ¹¹ The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz. ¹² Timna was concubine to Eliphaz, Esau's son; and she bore to Eliphaz Amalek. These

are the sons of Adah, Esau's wife. ¹³ These are the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. ¹⁴ These were the sons of Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: she bore to Esau Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. ¹⁵ These are the chiefs of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the firstborn of Esau: chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz, ¹⁶ chief Korah, chief Gatam, chief Amalek: these are the chiefs who came of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Adah. ¹⁷ These are the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah: these are the chiefs who came of Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. ¹⁸ These are the sons of Oholibamah, Esau's wife: chief Jeush, chief Jalam, chief Korah: these are the chiefs who came of Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife. ¹⁹ These are the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these are their chiefs. ²⁰ These are the sons of Seir the Horite, the inhabitants of the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ²¹ Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These are the chiefs who came of the Horites, the children of Seir in the

son for the extended genealogy of Esau in this chapter is perhaps to prove that, and to demonstrate that his children and descendants were also not in the family of faith (e.g. Edom, Amalek) – for some of the names here we encounter in later Scripture in a negative context.

36:6 The situation is similar to the division between Abraham and Lot for the same reasons (13:6). Esau should've learnt from that example, just as we should learn from Biblical precedent; for situations in our lives are so often a repetition of a situation which in essence has been recorded in the Bible.

land of Edom. ²² The children of Lotan were Hori and Heman. Lotan's sister was Timna. ²³ These are the children of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. ²⁴ These are the children of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah. This is Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness, as he fed the donkeys of Zibeon his father. ²⁵ These are the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah. ²⁶ These are the children of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. ²⁷ These are the children of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan. ²⁸ These are the children of Dishan: Uz and Aran. ²⁹ These are the chiefs who came of the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah, ³⁰ chief Dishon, chief Ezer, and chief Dishan: these are the chiefs who came of the Horites, according to their chiefs in the land of Seir. ³¹ These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the children of Israel. ³² Bela, the son of Beor, reigned in Edom. The name of his city was

Dinhabah. ³³ Bela died, and Jobab, the son of Zerah of Bozrah, reigned in his place. ³⁴ Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. ³⁵ Husham died, and Hadad, the son of Bedad, who struck Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. The name of his city was Avith. ³⁶ Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. ³⁷ Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth by the river, reigned in his place. ³⁸ Shaul died, and Baal Hanan, the son of Achbor reigned in his place. ³⁹ Baal Hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his place. The name of his city was Pau. His wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab. ⁴⁰ These are the names of the chiefs who came from Esau, according to their families, after their places, and by their names: chief Timna, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth, ⁴¹ chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, ⁴² chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, ⁴³ chief Magdiel, and chief Iram. These are the chiefs

36:31 The fact there were kings in neighbouring Edom before there were kings in Israel shows the accuracy of the later record that the Israelites wanted to have a human king so as to be like the nations around them (1 Sam. 8:5,20). Genesis 36 often mentions the various kings of the tribes surrounding the Israelites; it must've been unusual for a nation like Israel to have no king. The reason was that God was their true King. We too have no visible human leadership, the Lord Jesus is the head of the church and our God, the King of His people, is in Heaven and not on earth. But like the world around us, we can like Israel wish for a human, visible leadership. Yet this is a rejection of God as our true King.

36:33 Jobab is identified with the Job of the book of Job according to Jewish tradition. Several of the names we find here in Genesis 36 also occur in the book of Job. The books of the Bible aren't always in chronological order; it would seem that the book of Job is set in the times of the patriarchs. If the identification of Jobab with Job is correct, we can learn that even someone from an unspiritual background, a descendant of Esau, can still rise above it and become a believer, pleasing to God.

of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession. This is Esau, the father of the Edomites.

CHAPTER 37 Jan. 22

Joseph and His Dreams

Jacob lived in the land of his father's travels, in the land of Canaan. ² This is the history of the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. Joseph brought an evil report of them to their father. ³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age, and he made him a coat of many colours. ⁴ His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, and they hated him, and couldn't speak peaceably to him. ⁵ Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brothers, and they hated him all the more. ⁶ He said to them, Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: ⁷ for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves came around, and bowed down to my sheaf. ⁸ His brothers said to him, Will you indeed reign over us? Or

will you indeed have dominion over us? They hated him all the more for his dreams and for his words. ⁹ He dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brothers, and said, Behold, I have dreamed yet another dream: and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed down to me. ¹⁰ He told it to his father and to his brothers. His father rebuked him, and said to him, What is this dream that you have dreamed? Will I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves down to you to the earth? ¹¹ His brothers envied him, but his father kept this saying in mind.

Joseph's Brothers Try to Kill Him

¹² His brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. ¹³ Israel said to Joseph, Aren't your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them. He said to him, Here I am. ¹⁴ He said to him, Go now, see whether it is well with your brothers, and well with the flock; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. ¹⁵ A certain man found him, and behold, he was wandering delirious in the field. The man asked him, What are you looking for? ¹⁶ He said, I am

37:3 There seems to have been something unusual about the Lord's outer garment. The same Greek word *chiton* used in Jn. 19:23,24 is that used in the LXX here to describe Joseph's coat of many pieces. Josephus uses the word for the tunic of the High Priest, which was likewise not to be rent (Lev. 21:10).

37:9 It must have taken Joseph quite some courage to explain the dreams to his brothers; hence we read: "He dreamed... and told it". Jesus at age 30 must've had the same courage when He began His ministry. This is our struggle, to tell forth the things revealed to us.

searching for my brothers. Tell me, please, where they are feeding the flock. ¹⁷ The man said, They have left here, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan’. Joseph went after his brothers, and found them in Dothan. ¹⁸ They saw him afar off, and before he came near to them, they conspired against him to kill him. ¹⁹ They said one to another, Behold, this dreamer comes. ²⁰ Come now therefore and let’s kill him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, ‘An evil animal has devoured him’. We will see what will become of his dreams. ²¹ Reuben heard it, and delivered him out of their hand, and said, Let’s not take his life. ²² Reuben said to them, Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him—that he might deliver him out of their hand, to restore him to his father. ²³ It happened, when Joseph came to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his coat, the coat of many colours that was on him; ²⁴ and they took him and threw him into the pit. The pit was empty. There was no water in it. ²⁵ They sat down to eat bread, and they lifted

up their eyes and looked, and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing spices and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶ Judah said to his brothers, What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷ Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not let our hand be on him; for he is our brother, our flesh. His brothers listened to him. ²⁸ Midianites who were merchants passed by, and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. They brought Joseph into Egypt. ²⁹ Reuben returned to the pit; and saw that Joseph wasn’t in the pit; and he tore his clothes. ³⁰ He returned to his brothers and said, The child is no more; and I, where will I go?

Jacob’s Sons Deceive Him

³¹ They took Joseph’s coat, and killed a male goat, and dipped the coat in the blood. ³² They took the coat of many colours, and they sent it to their father, and said, We have found this. Examine it, please, whether it is your

37:18 “When the husbandmen saw the son [=Jesus], they said among themselves (i.e. conspired), This is the heir; come, let us kill him” (Mt. 21:38). Mt. 21:38 is quoting the LXX here. Joseph is a type of Jesus in so many ways.

37:22 At least two of his ten persecutors were unhappy about what they were doing, and said so (:22,26; 42:22). Perhaps the whole group egged each other on to adopt an attitude none were totally happy with in their conscience; this is how group dynamics work once sinful, jealous behaviour becomes acceptable to the group in principle.

37:28 So similar to Christ’s betrayal for pieces of silver.

37:30 What do you think Reuben said to Jacob at the time of :35, to comfort him over his ‘dead’ son whom Reuben knew not to be dead? Do we always have to tell the truth to people in grief, or are we justified in simply seeing things from their perspective in order to comfort them?

37:32 As Jacob in his youth had deceived his father, so now his sons do to him.

son's coat or not. ³³ He recognized it, and said, It is my son's coat. An evil animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces. ³⁴ Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵ All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. He said, For I will go down to Sheol to my son mourning. His father wept for him. ³⁶ The Midianites sold him into Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard.

CHAPTER 38 Jan. 23

Judah and His Sons

It happened at that time, that Judah went down from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. ² Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. He took her, and went in to her. ³ She conceived, and bore a son; and he named him Er. ⁴ She conceived again, and bore a son; and she named him Onan. ⁵ She yet again bore a son, and named him Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bore him. ⁶ Judah took a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. ⁷ Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of Yahweh. Yah-

weh killed him. ⁸ Judah said to Onan, Go in to your brother's wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her, and raise up seed to your brother. ⁹ Onan knew that the seed wouldn't be his; and it happened, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest he should give seed to his brother. ¹⁰ The thing which he did was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and He killed him also. ¹¹ Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, Remain a widow in your father's house, until Shelah, my son, is grown up; for he said, Lest he also die, like his brothers. Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

Judah and Tamar

¹² After many days, Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died. Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers to Timnah, he and his friend Hirah, the Adullamite. ¹³ It was told Tamar, saying, Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep. ¹⁴ She took off of her the garments of her widowhood, and covered herself with her veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gate of Enaim, which is by the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah

37:34 Jacob tore his clothes to connect with how Joseph, as he thought, had been torn (:33). This is a fine prefigurement of the (easily overlooked) pain of God the Father at the cross.

37:35 The Hebrew word *sheol* is translated in some Bibles as "hell", in others as "the grave". *Sheol* isn't a place where only bad people go after death – for Jacob and Joseph were believers, and are spoken of as being in *sheol*, simply meaning 'in the grave'.

38:1 Judah fell into sin whilst separate from his brothers. Keeping together with others in the family of faith is part of our armoury against sin.

38:10 Sins of omission are as bad as sins of commission.

was grown up, and she wasn't given to him as a wife. ¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he thought that she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. ¹⁶ He turned to her by the way, and said, Please come, let me come in to you, for he didn't know that she was his daughter-in-law. She said, What will you give me, that you may come in to me? ¹⁷ He said, I will send you a young goat from the flock. She said, Will you give me a pledge, until you send it? ¹⁸ He said, What pledge will I give you? She said, Your signet and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand. He gave them to her, and came in to her, and she conceived by him. ¹⁹ She arose, and went away, and put off her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. ²⁰ Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend, the Adullamite, to receive the pledge

from the woman's hand, but he didn't find her. ²¹ Then he asked the men of her place, saying, Where is the prostitute, that was at Enaim by the road? They said, There has been no prostitute here. ²² He returned to Judah, and said, I haven't found her; and also the men of the place said, 'There has been no prostitute here'. ²³ Judah said, Let her keep it, lest we be shamed. Behold, I sent this young goat, and you haven't found her. ²⁴ It happened about three months later, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has played the prostitute; and moreover, behold, she is with child by prostitution. Judah said, Bring her out, and let her be burnt. ²⁵ When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man, whose these are, I am with child. She also said, Examine, please, whose these are—the signet,

38:15 Tamar is listed in the New Testament genealogy of Jesus as one of His ancestors. Yet like many in His genealogy, she was somewhat non-standard – she had acted as a prostitute. The Lord Jesus had so many strange people in His gene bank, yet He never sinned. We can't therefore blame our sins on our ancestry or background situation.

38:19 Was Tamar right to have done this...?

38:24 Condemning others for sin when ourselves guilty is exactly what happened with David (2 Sam. 12:6). This phenomenon is because we realize on some level that we have sinned, and that sin must be punished. But if we don't admit our sin, we earnestly wish to punish that sin whenever it occurs in others. This explains the huge hypocrisy often observed in religious people. We can only guard against it by seriously confessing our sins, regularly, daily; and living a continually self-examined life.

38:25 Judah and his brothers sent Joseph's blood stained coat to Jacob. It's recorded that they invited their father to "Examine it, please, whether it is your son's coat or not. He recognized it..." (37:32,33). The very same Hebrew words are used in :25,26 in describing how Tamar *sent* to Judah saying "*Examine, please, whose these are...* And Judah *recognized* them and *said...*". The point of the similarities is to show how God sought to teach Judah how his father Jacob had felt. Note the parallels between the he-goat in 37:31 and the "kid of the goats" of :17-20; "and he refused to be comforted" of 37:35 is a designed contrast with how "Judah was comforted" (:12).

and the cords, and the staff. ²⁶ Judah recognized them and said, She is more righteous than I, because I didn't give her to Shelah, my son. He knew her again no more. ²⁷ It happened in the time of her travail that, behold, twins were in her womb. ²⁸ When she travailed, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, This came out first. ²⁹ It happened, as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out, and she said, Why have you made a breach for yourself? Therefore his name was called Perez. ³⁰ Afterward his brother came out, that had the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah.

CHAPTER 39 Jan. 24

Joseph and Potiphar

Joseph was brought down to Egypt. Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the hand of the Ishmaelites that had brought him down there. ² Yahweh was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man. He was in the house of his master the Egyptian. ³ His master saw that Yahweh was with him, and that Yahweh made all that he did prosper in his hand. ⁴ Joseph found favour in his sight.

He ministered to him, and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. ⁵ It happened from the time that he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that Yahweh blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of Yahweh was on all that he had, in the house and in the field. ⁶ He left all that he had in Joseph's hand. He didn't concern himself with anything, except for the food which he ate. Joseph was well-built and handsome. ⁷ It happened after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. ⁸ But he refused, and said to his master's wife, Behold, my master doesn't know what is with me in the house, and he has put all that he has into my hand. ⁹ He isn't greater in this house than I, neither has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? ¹⁰ As she spoke to Joseph day by day, he didn't listen to her, to lie by her, or to be with her. ¹¹ About this time, he went into the house to do his work, and there were none of the men of the house inside. ¹² She caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me! He left his garment in her hand, and ran

38:30 This is part of a theme in Genesis of the firstborn not enjoying the full status of being firstborn – all part of God's preference to work with the underling and the weak.

39:6 There is an undoubted link between sexuality and spirituality (witness the typical meaning of the Song of Solomon). The Hebrew text here could suggest that it was Joseph's spiritually attractive personality that mesmerized Potiphar's wife; and what good living, socially aloof Christian office worker has not experienced the attention this attracts from colleagues of the opposite sex?

outside. ¹³ When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and had run outside, ¹⁴ she called to the men of her house, and spoke to them, saying, Behold, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice. ¹⁵ It happened, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment by me, and ran outside. ¹⁶ She laid up his garment by her, until his master came home. ¹⁷ She spoke to him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought to us, came in to me to mock me, ¹⁸ and it happened, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment by me, and ran outside.

Joseph in Prison

¹⁹ It happened, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, This is what your servant did to me, that his wrath was kindled. ²⁰ Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were bound, and he was there in custody. ²¹ But Yahweh was with Joseph, and showed kindness to him, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. ²² The keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever they did there, he was responsible for it.

²³ The keeper of the prison didn't look after anything that was under his hand, because Yahweh was with him; and that which he did, Yahweh made it prosper.

CHAPTER 40 Jan. 24

The Dreams of the Butler and Baker

It happened after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord, the king of Egypt. ² Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. ³ He put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. ⁴ The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he took care of them. They stayed in prison many days. ⁵ They both dreamed a dream, each man his dream, in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were bound in the prison. ⁶ Joseph came in to them in the morning, and saw them, and saw that they were sad. ⁷ He asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, saying, Why do you look so sad today? ⁸ They said to him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. Joseph said to them, Don't interpretations belong to God? Please tell it to me. ⁹ The chief cup-

40:7 The sensitive reader will perceive that Joseph had a strong fatherly image, even from a young age (see too 41:43; 45:8). The Lord Jesus likewise; hence He referred to the disciples as His children when they were in the same peer group. This is understandable in that He is the supreme manifestation of *the* sovereign Father.

bearer told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was in front of me, ¹⁰ and in the vine were three branches. It was as though it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters produced ripe grapes. ¹¹ Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

Joseph Interprets the Dreams

¹² Joseph said to him, This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days. ¹³ Within three more days, Pharaoh will lift up your head, and restore you to your office. You will give Pharaoh's cup into his hand, the way you did when you were his cupbearer. ¹⁴ But remember me when it will be well with you, and please show kindness to me, and make mention of me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house. ¹⁵ For indeed, I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon. ¹⁶ When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, I also was in my dream, and behold, three baskets of white bread were on my head. ¹⁷ In the top basket there was all kinds of baked food for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head. ¹⁸ Joseph answered, This is its interpretation. The three baskets are three days. ¹⁹ Within three more days, Pharaoh will lift up your head from off you, and will hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from off you. ²⁰ It hap-

pened the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants, and he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. ²¹ He restored the chief cupbearer to his position again, and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand; ²² but he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. ²³ Yet the chief cupbearer didn't remember Joseph, but forgot him.

CHAPTER 41 Jan. 25

The Dreams of Pharaoh

It happened at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and behold, he stood by the river. ² Behold, there came up out of the river seven cattle, sleek and fat, and they fed in the marsh grass. ³ Behold, seven other cattle came up after them out of the river, ugly and thin, and stood by the other cattle on the brink of the river. ⁴ The ugly and thin cattle ate up the seven sleek and fat cattle. So Pharaoh awoke. ⁵ He slept and dreamed a second time: and behold, seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, healthy and good. ⁶ Behold, seven heads of grain, thin and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them. ⁷ The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy and full ears. Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. ⁸ It happened in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all of Egypt's magicians and wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh. ⁹ Then the

chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, I remember my sins today. ¹⁰ Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, me and the chief baker. ¹¹ We dreamed a dream in one night, I and he. We dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. ¹² There was with us there a young man, a Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard, and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams. To each man according to his dream he interpreted. ¹³ It happened, as he interpreted to us, so it was: he restored me to my office, and he hanged him.

Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams

¹⁴ Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon. He shaved himself, changed his clothing, and came in to Pharaoh. ¹⁵ Pharaoh said to Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it. ¹⁶ Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It isn't in me. God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace. ¹⁷ Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood on the brink of the river: ¹⁸ and behold, there came up out of the river seven cattle, fat and sleek. They fed in the marsh grass, ¹⁹ and behold, seven other cattle came up after them,

poor and very ugly and thin, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for ugliness. ²⁰ The thin and ugly cattle ate up the first seven fat cattle, ²¹ and when they had eaten them up, it couldn't be known that they had eaten them, but they were still ugly, as at the beginning. So I awoke. ²² I saw in my dream, and behold, seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, full and good: ²³ and behold, seven heads of grain, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them. ²⁴ The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads of grain. I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me. ²⁵ Joseph said to Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one. What God is about to do, He has declared to Pharaoh. ²⁶ The seven good cattle are seven years; and the seven good heads of grain are seven years. The dream is one. ²⁷ The seven thin and ugly cattle that came up after them are seven years, and also the seven empty heads of grain blasted with the east wind; they will be seven years of famine. ²⁸ That is the thing which I spoke to Pharaoh. What God is about to do, He has shown to Pharaoh. ²⁹ Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. ³⁰ There will arise after them seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, ³¹ and the plenty will

41:9 *Sins* – The chief butler felt he had committed a very serious sin in allowing the busyness of daily life and his demanding job to make him simply forget Joseph's need and tragedy. Perhaps an intensive plural is being used here – as if to mean 'my very great sin'. To forget others' need due to the busyness of our lives is a great sin.

not be known in the land by reason of that famine which follows; for it will be very grievous. ³² The dream was doubled to Pharaoh, because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. ³³ Now therefore let Pharaoh look for a discreet and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint overseers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt's produce in the seven plenteous years. ³⁵ Let them gather all the food of these good years that come, and lay up grain under the hand of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. ³⁶ The food will be for a store to the land against the seven years of famine, which will be in the land of Egypt; that the land not perish through the famine.

Joseph Is Exalted

³⁷ The thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. ³⁸ Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God? ³⁹ Pharaoh said to Joseph, Because God has shown you all of this, there is none so discreet and wise as you. ⁴⁰ You shall be over my house, and according to your word will all my people be ruled. Only in the throne I will be greater than you. ⁴¹ Pharaoh said to

Joseph, Behold, I have set you over all the land of Egypt. ⁴² Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand, and put it on Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in robes of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck, ⁴³ and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had. They cried before him, Tender father! He set him over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁴ Pharaoh said to Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without you shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁵ Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah; and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On as a wife. Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

Joseph Manages Egypt

⁴⁶ Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷ In the seven plenteous years the earth produced abundantly. ⁴⁸ He gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was around every city, he laid up in the same. ⁴⁹ Joseph laid up grain as the sand of the sea, very much, until he stopped counting, for it was without number. ⁵⁰ To Joseph were born

41:45 *Zaphnath-paaneah* – ‘Saviour of the world’, or ‘bread of life’. Christ was given a new name on ascension (Phil. 2:6-9; Rev. 3:12).

Joseph's wife had to forget all about her pagan past (:45 = Ps. 45:10 = Dt. 21:13), especially her father's house. Joseph alluded to what she had gone through when he spoke of how he too had forgotten all his past suffering and his father's house (:51). What a pair they were! Both had broken free of their pasts and were dedicated to the new life together. As such they typify the relationship between Christ and His bride.

two sons before the year of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore to him. ⁵¹ Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh, For, he said, God has made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. ⁵² The name of the second, he called Ephraim: For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction. ⁵³ The seven years of plenty, that were in the land of Egypt, came to an end. ⁵⁴ The seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. ⁵⁵ When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread, and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do. ⁵⁶ The famine was over all the surface of the earth. Joseph opened all the store houses, and sold to the Egyptians. The famine was severe in the land of Egypt. ⁵⁷ All countries came into Egypt, to Joseph, to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all the earth.

CHAPTER 42 Jan. 26

Jacob's Sons Meet Joseph in Egypt

Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to

his sons, Why do you look at one another? ² He said, Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there, and buy for us from there, so that we may live, and not die. ³ Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. ⁴ But Jacob didn't send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers; for he said, Lest perhaps harm happen to him. ⁵ The sons of Israel came to buy among those who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan. ⁶ Joseph was the governor over the land. It was he who sold to all the people of the land. Joseph's brothers came, and bowed themselves down to him with their faces to the earth. ⁷ Joseph saw his brothers, and he recognized them, but acted like a stranger to them, and spoke roughly with them. He said to them, Where did you come from? They said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. ⁸ Joseph recognized his brothers, but they didn't recognize him. ⁹ Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed about them, and said to them, You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land. ¹⁰ They said to him, No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹ We are all one man's sons; we are honest men. Your serv-

41:51 *God* (this is important) made Joseph forget all his "toil", his mental sufferings. This was a miracle; no amount of steel-willed suppression of his past could have made Joseph paper over all the pain. But God did a psychological miracle upon him. Has God done the same to Christ now in His glory, as He will to us one day soon (Rev. 21:4)? Yet Christ will be factually aware of His sacrifice and the associated pain. God presumably did not obliterate Joseph's memory cells, but He made him "forget" the pain. This is surely what God has done to Christ, and what He will do to us: take away the pain on a psychological level whilst still leaving a factual awareness. Even now, God is ready and willing to do this.

ants are not spies. ¹² He said to them, No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land! ¹³ They said, We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is no more. ¹⁴ Joseph said to them, It is like I told you, saying, ‘You are spies!’ ¹⁵ By this you shall be tested. By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go out from here, unless your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶ Send one of you, and let him get your brother, and you shall be bound, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you, or else by the life of Pharaoh surely you are spies. ¹⁷ He put them all together into custody for three days. ¹⁸ Joseph said to them the third day, Do this, and live, for I fear God. ¹⁹ If you are honest men, then let one of your brothers be bound in your prison; but you go, carry grain for the famine of your houses. ²⁰ Bring your youngest brother to me; so will your words be verified, and you won’t die. They did so. ²¹ They

said one to another, We are certainly guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he begged us, and we wouldn’t listen. Therefore this distress has come upon us. ²² Reuben answered them, saying, Didn’t I tell you, saying, ‘Don’t sin against the child’, and you wouldn’t listen? Therefore also, behold, his blood is required. ²³ They didn’t know that Joseph understood them; for there was an interpreter between them. ²⁴ He turned himself away from them, and wept. Then he returned to them, and spoke to them, and took Simeon from among them, and bound him before their eyes. ²⁵ Then Joseph gave a command to fill their bags with grain, and to restore each man’s money into his sack, and to give them food for the way. So it was done to them.

Jacob’s Sons Return to Canaan

²⁶ They loaded their donkeys with their grain, and departed from there. ²⁷ As one of them opened his sack to give his donkey food in the lodging

42:17 The brothers suffer in prison for three days to prod their conscience about Joseph – typical of a three year tribulation of Israel in the last days to bring them to accept Christ? We get the impression that Joseph changed his plans for them several times; he recalled them when already on their journey etc. Does this show that he hastened the day of revelation to them from purely emotional considerations – and will the Lord do the same with His Israel?

42:21 “The anguish of his soul” and pleas for deliverance were ignored by the brothers – typical of Christ’s ‘travail of soul’ (Is. 53:12), ignored by Israel (Is. 53:1-4).

42:24 Joseph wept (this is recorded seven times in the record). He must have found it hard to prolong the agony of not revealing himself to them immediately; he was motivated by a desire to make them see the enormity of their sin, for their spiritual good rather than his own vindication – Joseph as a type of Christ makes his story prophetic. This is a stunningly deep prophecy of the intensity of Christ’s feelings, as the mighty Son of God, towards His wayward people in the last days. He was a man of sorrow in his mortal life, and will still have an element of this characteristic in the future.

place, he saw his money. Behold, it was in the mouth of his sack. ²⁸ He said to his brothers, My money is restored! Behold, it is in my sack! Their hearts failed them, and they turned trembling one to another, saying, What is this that God has done to us? ²⁹ They came to Jacob their father, to the land of Canaan, and told him all that had happened to them, saying, ³⁰ The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly with us, and took us for spies of the country. ³¹ We said to him, ‘We are honest men. We are no spies. ³² We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan’. ³³ The man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I will know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, and take grain for the famine of your houses, and go your way. ³⁴ Bring your youngest brother to me. Then I will know that you are not spies, but that you are honest men. So I will deliver your brother to you, and you shall trade in the land’. ³⁵ It happened as they emptied their sacks, that behold, each man’s bundle of money was in his sack. When they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were afraid. ³⁶ Jacob, their father, said to them, You have bereaved me of my children! Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin away. All these things are against me. ³⁷ Reuben spoke to his father, saying, Kill my two sons, if I don’t bring him to you. Entrust him to my care, and I will bring him

to you again. ³⁸ He said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he only is left. If harm happens to him along the way in which you go, then you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.

CHAPTER 43 Jan. 26

Jacob’s Sons Go to Egypt Again

The famine was severe in the land. ² It happened, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said to them, Go again, buy us a little more food. ³ Judah spoke to him, saying, The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you’. ⁴ If you’ll send our brother with us, we’ll go down and buy you food, ⁵ but if you’ll not send him, we’ll not go down, for the man said to us, ‘You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you’. ⁶ Israel said, Why did you treat me so badly, telling the man that you had another brother? ⁷ They said, The man asked directly concerning ourselves, and concerning our relatives, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?’ We just answered his questions. Is there any way we could know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’ ⁸ Judah said to Israel, his father, Send the boy with me, and we’ll get up and go, so that we may live, and not die, both we, and you, and also our little ones. ⁹ I’ll be collateral for him. From my hand will you require him. If I don’t bring him to you, and set him before you, then

let me bear the blame forever,¹⁰ for if we hadn't delayed, surely we would have returned a second time by now.¹¹ Their father, Israel, said to them, If it must be so, then do this. Take from the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry down a present for the man, a little balm, a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts, and almonds;¹² and take double money in your hand, and take back the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight.¹³ Take your brother also, get up, and return to the man.¹⁴ May God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release to you your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.¹⁵ The men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and got up, went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.¹⁶ When Joseph saw

Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, Bring the men into the house, and slay an animal, and make ready; for the men will dine with me at noon.¹⁷ The man did as Joseph commanded, and the man brought the men to Joseph's house.¹⁸ The men were afraid, because they were brought to Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time, we're brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, attack us, and seize us as slaves, along with our donkeys.¹⁹ They came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they spoke to him at the door of the house,²⁰ and said, Oh my lord, we indeed came down the first time to buy food.²¹ When we came to the lodging place, we opened our sacks, and behold, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight. We have brought it back in

43:14 *God Almighty* – Jacob's perception of God was as very powerful, One who can give undeserved grace to men like Jacob's sinful sons. He uses a term he has not previously used: *El-Shaddai*, the Almighty El. Using new terms for God reveals a deepening of understanding of Him. We likewise will grow in our knowledge of Him through the trials of life.

43:14 In 35:11 God encourages Jacob, fearful he would lose all his family to attacks from neighbouring tribes, to be fruitful and multiply; because a nation "*shall* be from you, and kings *shall* come out of you". If he played his part, the promises would be fulfilled. But at the time it seems Jacob wanted to cut and run, forgetting about having any more children. "If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved" sounds more like depressive fatalism than firm faith in the promises that his seed would eternally fill the earth. Our faith in the implications of God's promises to us likewise goes up and down, crushed at times by the immediacy of circumstances.

43:16 Joseph celebrates their repentance with a meal together, at which they sit in their proper places – typical of the marriage supper of the lamb, with each in his proper place (Lk. 14:10; 22:30; Rev. 19:9).

Slay... and make ready for the meal. This is the basis of the prodigal son parable (45:14,15 = Lk. 15:20); the father = Christ; prodigal = repentant Jews, wanting to be servants and nothing else.

our hand. ²² We have brought down other money in our hand to buy food. We don't know who put our money in our sacks. ²³ He said, Peace be to you. Don't be afraid. Your God, and the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks. I received your money. He brought Simeon out to them. ²⁴ The man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet. He gave their donkeys fodder. ²⁵ They prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they should eat bread there.

Joseph Eats with His Brothers

²⁶ When Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves down to him to the earth. ²⁷ He asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he yet alive? ²⁸ They said, Your servant, our father, is well. He is still alive. They bowed down humbly. ²⁹ He lifted up his eyes, and saw Benjamin, his brother, his mother's son, and said, Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? He said, God be gracious to you, my son. ³⁰ Joseph hurried, for his heart yearned over his brother; and he sought a place to weep. He entered into his room, and wept there. ³¹ He washed his face,

and came out. He controlled himself, and said, Serve the meal. ³² They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians, that ate with him, by themselves, because the Egyptians don't eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. ³³ They sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth, and the men marvelled one with another. ³⁴ He sent portions to them from before him, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. They drank, and were merry with him.

CHAPTER 44 Jan. 27

Joseph Tries to Convict His Brothers of Their Sin

He commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in his sack's mouth. ² Put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, with his grain money. He did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. ³ As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. ⁴ When they had gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, Up, follow after the men. When you overtake them, ask them, 'Why have you rewarded evil

43:34 The desperate desire of Joseph for them to relax with him and accept his forgiveness led him to make them drunk so as to ease their relationship (so the Hebrew implies). This otherwise unethical act reveals the earnestness of his desire for them to be relaxed with him and open themselves to him. The Lord will have the same basic desire with us at the judgment.

44:5 As Joseph claimed to use his cup in order to discern people, so the Lord Jesus

for good? ⁵ Isn't this that from which my lord drinks, and by which he indeed divines? You have done evil in so doing'. ⁶ He overtook them, and he spoke these words to them. ⁷ They said to him, Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants that they should do such a thing! ⁸ Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again to you out of the land of Canaan. How then should we steal silver or gold out of your lord's house? ⁹ With whoever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondservants. ¹⁰ He said, Now also let it be according to your words: he with whom it is found will be my bondservant; and you will be blameless. ¹¹ Then they hurried, and each man took his sack down to the ground, and each man opened his sack. ¹² He searched, beginning with the eldest, and ending at the youngest. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ¹³ Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey, and returned to the city.

¹⁴ Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there. They fell on the ground before him. ¹⁵ Joseph said to them, What deed is this that you have done? Don't you know that such a man as I can indeed divine? ¹⁶ Judah said, What will we tell my lord? What will we speak? Or how will we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants. Behold, we are my lord's bondservants, both we, and he also in whose hand the cup is found. ¹⁷ He said, Far be it from me that I should do so. The man in whose hand the cup is found, he will be my bondservant; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.

Judah Pleads with Joseph

¹⁸ Then Judah came near to him, and said, Oh, my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears, and don't let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even as Pharaoh. ¹⁹ My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father, or a brother?' ²⁰ We said to my

uses His cup to know His people. Our attitude to Him at the breaking of bread service reflects us to Him. He closely watches our hearts as we take His cup.

44:13 The repetition of circumstance in our lives is not only to teach us, but to make sure that we learnt the lesson – for what teacher doesn't give pupils exercises to practice the theory they've learnt? It seems that Joseph, acting on God's behalf and as a type of Christ, manipulated circumstances so that his brothers would have *deja vu* experiences. Thus he sets things up to tempt them with freedom if they again betray their younger brother (Benjamin) and are thoughtless to their father's pain. The united, frank and open response of the brothers (:13,16,17) showed how they had indeed learnt their lesson.

44:18 "You are even as Pharaoh" reflects something of Christ's relationship with God. He isn't God Himself personally, but He performs all the functions of God. See on 50:19.

44:20 *Is dead* – The brothers had repeated that lie so many times that they came to believe it. This is the problem with lying and denial of sin – we end up believing it.

lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother; and his father loves him'.²¹ You said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him'.²² We said to my lord, 'The boy can't leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die'.²³ You said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will see my face no more'.²⁴ It happened when we came up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.²⁵ Our father said, 'Go again, buy us a little food'.²⁶ We said, 'We can't go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down: for we may not see the man's face, unless our youngest brother is with us'.²⁷ Your servant, my father, said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons:²⁸ and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I haven't seen him since.²⁹ If you take this one also from me, and harm happens to him, you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol'.³⁰ Now therefore when I come to your servant my father, and the

boy is not with us; since his life is bound up in the boy's life;³¹ it will happen, when he sees that the boy is no more, that he will die. Your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant, our father, with sorrow to Sheol.³² For your servant became collateral for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I don't bring him to you, then I will bear the blame to my father forever'.³³ Now therefore, please let your servant stay instead of the boy, a bondservant to my lord; and let the boy go up with his brothers.³⁴ For how will I go up to my father, if the boy isn't with me?—lest I see the evil that will come on my father.

CHAPTER 45 Jan. 27

Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers

Then Joseph couldn't refrain himself before all those who stood before him, and he cried, Cause everyone to go out from me! No one else stood with him, while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.² He wept aloud. The Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard.³ Joseph said to his brothers, I am Joseph! Does my father still

45:1 That Joseph could not refrain himself implies he planned to drag out the process of spiritually refining his brothers, but his love for them caused him to cut it short: "For the elects sake the days shall be shortened" by Christ (Mt. 24:22). The same Hebrew word is used in Is. 42:14 about how God can no longer refrain Himself in the last days. Joseph as a type of Christ means that his brothers also have significance. The brethren meeting Joseph at the end has many echoes of the judgment seat of Christ. The whole purpose of the painful process which led up to that meeting was for the benefit of the brethren, to make them realize the enormity of their sin and the greatness of Joseph's grace. Likewise the judgment is for our benefit; the outcome is known to God beforehand. Does the (emphasized) emotionalism of Joseph at this time indicate anything about Christ's attitude then?

live? His brothers couldn't answer him; for they were terrified at his presence. ⁴ Joseph said to his brothers, Come near to me, please. They came near. He said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ Now don't be grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are yet five years, in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. ⁷ God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance. ⁸ So now it wasn't you who sent me here, but God, and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹ Hurry, and go up to my father, and tell him, 'This is what your son Joseph says, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me. Don't wait. ¹⁰ You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you will be near to me, you, your children, your children's children, your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹ There I will nourish you; for there are yet five years of famine; lest you come to poverty, you,

and your household, and all that you have'. ¹² Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. ¹³ You shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. You shall hurry and bring my father down here. ¹⁴ He fell on his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. ¹⁵ He kissed all his brothers, and wept on them. After that his brothers talked with him.

The Plans to Bring Jacob to Egypt

¹⁶ The report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brothers have come. It pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. ¹⁷ Pharaoh said to Joseph, Tell your brothers, 'Do this. Load your animals, and go, travel to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸ Take your father and your households, and come to me, and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land'. ¹⁹ Now you are commanded: do this. Take wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. ²⁰ Also, don't concern yourselves

45:4 The brothers slunk away from Joseph's physical presence, as the rejected will at the final judgment (1 Jn. 2:28 Gk.). This suggests that those accepted at the judgment seat will go through all the emotions of the rejected; they will realize that rejection is what they deserve. Those who judge (condemn) themselves now in their self-examination will not be condemned then. No wonder both Joseph and the Lord Jesus will need to persuade their brethren that actually, it's all OK, God's love is greater than the barriers created by our sins.

45:7 *A great deliverance* – Heb. 2:3 “that great salvation” through Christ. Israel saved and all the surrounding world also blessed with deliverance from the famine – this scenario will be repeated in the last days. The judgments are to make Israel repent, but in that time of trouble the whole world suffers.

about your belongings, for the good of all of the land of Egypt is yours. ²¹ The sons of Israel did so. Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. ²² He gave each one of them changes of clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of clothing. ²³ He sent the following to his father: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and provision for his father by the way. ²⁴ So he sent his brothers away, and they departed. He said to them, See that you don't quarrel on the way. ²⁵ They went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan, to Jacob their father. ²⁶ They told him, saying, Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt. His heart fainted, for he didn't believe them. ²⁷ They told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them. When he saw the wagons which Joseph had

sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob, their father, revived. ²⁸ Israel said, It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.

CHAPTER 46 Jan. 28

Jacob and His Family Migrate to Egypt

Israel travelled with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father, Isaac. ² God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob! He said, Here I am. ³ He said, I am God, the God of your father. Fear not to go down into Egypt, for there I will make of you a great nation. ⁴ I will go down with you into Egypt. I will also surely bring you up again. Joseph will close your eyes. ⁵ Jacob rose up from Beersheba, and the sons of Israel carried Jacob, their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. ⁶ They took their livestock, and

45:20 The news that Joseph was alive and glorified was received rather like that of Christ's resurrection: initial disbelief, but then the family of Jacob who believed it, rose up and left all they had to go to be with Joseph; God's people in AD70 and the last days are likewise bidden leave their stuff and go to be with Christ (cp. Lk. 17:31), remembering the lesson of Lot's wife who was more concerned with her "stuff" than leaving it all once the day of the Lord finally came.

45:24 The wonder that was ahead of them should have made petty differences disappear. The same should be true within the family of God now.

46:3 Jacob's nervousness of going down into Egypt was due to his recollection of Abraham and Isaac's tales of spiritual woe concerning it. God appeared to Jacob concerning this, with the words: "Jacob, Jacob... fear not to go down into Egypt" (46:2,3). The double repetition of a name is usually a rebuke; but for what? Possibly for still being influenced in his spirituality by the specter of his forefathers, rather than personally reflecting on the implications of God's word to Abraham, that his seed would have to live in a Gentile land for a period before they could be led into the promised land (15:13).

their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt—Jacob, and all his seed with him, ⁷ his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and he brought all his seed with him into Egypt. ⁸ These are the names of the children of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn. ⁹ The sons of Reuben: Hanoch, Palu, Hezron, and Carmi. ¹⁰ The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. ¹¹ The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹² The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. ¹³ The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puvah, Iob, and Shimron. ¹⁴ The sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon, and Jahl-eel. ¹⁵ These are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan Aram, with his daughter Dinah. All the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty-three. ¹⁶ The sons of Gad: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. ¹⁷ The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and Serah their sister. The sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel. ¹⁸ These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah, his daughter, and these she bore to Jacob, even sixteen souls. ¹⁹ The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁰ To Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath,

the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore to him. ²¹ The sons of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard. ²² These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen. ²³ The son of Dan: Hushim. ²⁴ The sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem. ²⁵ These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel, his daughter, and these she bore to Jacob: all the souls were seven. ²⁶ All the souls who came with Jacob into Egypt, who were his direct descendants, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were sixty-six. ²⁷ The sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two souls. All the souls of the house of Jacob, who came into Egypt, were seventy.

Joseph Meets Jacob

²⁸ He sent Judah before him to Joseph, to show the way before him to Goshen, and they came into the land of Goshen. ²⁹ Joseph prepared his chariot, and went up to meet Israel, his father, in Goshen. He presented himself to him, and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. ³⁰ Israel said to Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive. ³¹ Joseph said to his brothers, and to his father's house, I will go up, and speak with Pharaoh, and will tell him, 'My brothers, and my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. ³² These men are shep-

46:29 At the end, Jacob as it were had come to repentance. Joseph falls on his neck and weeps for him, just as the Father does to the repentant prodigal.

herds, for they have been keepers of livestock, and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have'.³³ It will happen, when Pharaoh summons you, and will say, 'What is your occupation?'³⁴ that you shall say, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we, and our fathers:' that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.

CHAPTER 47 Jan. 28

Jacob's Family Settle in Egypt

Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brothers, with their flocks, their herds, and all that they own, have come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen.² From among his brothers he took five men, and presented them to Pharaoh.³ Pharaoh said to his brothers, What is your occupation? They said to Pharaoh, Your

servants are shepherds, both we, and our fathers.⁴ They said to Pharaoh, We have come to live as foreigners in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks. For the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.⁵ Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, Your father and your brothers have come to you.⁶ The land of Egypt is before you. Make your father and your brothers dwell in the best of the land. Let them dwell in the land of Goshen. If you know any able men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock.⁷ Joseph brought in Jacob, his father, and set him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.⁸ Pharaoh said to Jacob, How many are the days of the years of your life?⁹ Jacob said to Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred thirty years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of

47:9 Jacob speaks of his life as a "pilgrimage", using the same word used about Abraham and Isaac (17:8; 28:4; 36:7; 37:1). Thus he showed his connection with them; they became *in spiritual not just emotional terms* the centre of his thinking. Jacob speaking of how his life had been a "pilgrimage" shows that he realized that this life was only a series of temporary abodes. The same word is translated "stranger" with reference to the patriarchs' separation from the tribes around them (17:8; 28:4; 36:7; 37:1). Jacob's attitude that the things of this life were only temporary, that we are only passing through, is identified in Heb. 11:10-16 as an indicator that Jacob shared the faith of Abraham and Isaac

At 130, Jacob seems to have felt that the fact he had not lived as long as his father and grandfather had, indicated that he had not received so much blessing as they had; he saw length of years *in this life* as being significant, rather than allowing the prospect of future eternity make present longevity fade into insignificance. And yet in his final 17 years, he grew quickly; he was not spiritually idle in those last 17 years of retirement. For at the very end he could say that his blessings had exceeded the blessings of his ancestor (49:26).

my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. ¹⁰ Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the presence of Pharaoh. ¹¹ Joseph placed his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Raamses, as Pharaoh had commanded. ¹² Joseph nourished his father, his brothers, and all of his father's household, with bread, according to their families.

Joseph Wisely Manages the Famine

¹³ There was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. ¹⁴ Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. ¹⁵ When the money was all spent in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph, and said, Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For our money fails. ¹⁶ Joseph said, Give me your livestock; and I will give you food for your livestock, if your money is gone. ¹⁷ They brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, and for the flocks, and for the herds, and for the donkeys; and he fed them with bread in exchange for all their livestock for that year. ¹⁸ When that year was ended, they came to him the second year, and said to him, We will not hide from

my lord how our money is all spent, and the herds of livestock are my lord's. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands. ¹⁹ Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants to Pharaoh. Give us seed, that we may live, and not die, and that the land won't be desolate. ²⁰ So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe on them, and the land became Pharaoh's. ²¹ As for the people, he moved them to the cities from one end of the border of Egypt even to the other end of it. ²² Only he didn't buy the land of the priests, for the priests had a portion from Pharaoh, and ate their portion which Pharaoh gave them. That is why they didn't sell their land. ²³ Then Joseph said to the people, Behold, I have bought you and your land today for Pharaoh. Behold, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. ²⁴ It will happen at the harvests, that you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four parts will be your own, for seed of the field, for your food, for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. ²⁵ They said, You have saved our lives! Let us find favour in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. ²⁶ Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth. Only the land of the priests alone didn't become Pharaoh's.

Jacob's Desire to Be Buried in Canaan

²⁷ Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen; and they got themselves possessions therein, and were fruitful, and multiplied exceedingly. ²⁸ Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were one hundred forty-seven years. ²⁹ The time drew near that Israel must die, and he called his son Joseph, and said to him, If now I have found favour in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Please don't bury me in Egypt, ³⁰ but when I sleep with my fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place. He said, I will do as you have

said. ³¹ He said, Swear to me, and he swore to him. Israel bowed himself on the bed's head.

CHAPTER 48 Jan. 29

Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons

It happened after these things, that someone said to Joseph, Behold, your father is sick. He took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. ² Someone told Jacob, and said, Behold, your son Joseph comes to you, and Israel strengthened himself, and sat on the bed. ³ Jacob said to Joseph, God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, ⁴ and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful, and multiply you, and I will make of you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your

48:3 *God Almighty* – Jacob's perception of the power of God, this one Almighty *El*, is growing. Ex. 6:3 says that Yahweh appeared to Jacob "by the name of God Almighty", so presumably this Name was declared to Jacob at the vision in Bethel; for this, Jacob says, was when God primarily "appeared" to him. And yet he is only recorded as using this name 50 years later. It took 50 years for the fact that God really is *all* mighty to sink in, and for him to come out with this publicly.

48:4 Jacob's *personal* grasp of the wonder of the promises at the end is revealed here. God never actually said all this to Jacob; Jacob is quoting the promise to Abraham of 17:8 and *applying it to himself*. And with us too, a personal grasp of the wonder of it all, that it really applies to *me*, is a mark of that final maturity we aim to achieve.

He seems to have perceived the spiritual danger his children were in, living in the luxury of Egypt. The promises of being fruitful and being given a land were being fulfilled, in a primary sense, in Israel's experience in Egypt (cp. 47:27). Joseph was *given the land* of Egypt (41:41), using the same words as in 45:18 and here, concerning how the true *land* – of Canaan – had been *given* to Abraham's children. Jacob's children were given a *possession* in Egypt (47:11), and therefore Jacob emphasized that their *real* possession was the eternal inheritance of Canaan, not Egypt (:4; 49:30; 50:13). Thus Jacob at the end realized the importance of warning God's people against the world, against the temptation of feeling that God's present material blessing of us with a foretaste of His Kingdom means that in fact we lose our enthusiasm for the *true* Kingdom, in its real, material sense. Like Paul in his final flourish of 2 Timothy, Jacob saw the need to warn God's people, to point them away from the world, and towards the future Kingdom. Jacob saw that his people, like him in his earlier life, would be tempted to see God's promises on an altogether too human and material level.

seed after you for an everlasting possession'.⁵ Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you into Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh, even as Reuben and Simeon, will be mine.⁶ Your issue, whom you become the father of after them, will be yours. They will be called after the name of their brothers in their inheritance.⁷ As for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when there was still some distance to come to Ephrath, and

I buried her there in the way to Ephrath (the same is Bethlehem).⁸ Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these?⁹ Joseph said to his father, They are my sons, whom God has given me here. He said, Please bring them to me, and I will bless them.¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he couldn't see. He brought them near to him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.¹¹ Israel said to Joseph, I never thought I would see your face, and behold, God has let me see your seed also.¹² Joseph

48:5 At the very end, Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons as the firstborn is seen as an act of faith (Heb. 11:21). Yet on another level, Jacob was taking the blessings away from the firstborn who was the son of the wife he disliked, and giving those blessings to the son of his favourite wife, who was not the firstborn. This was quite contrary to the will of God as expressed in Dt. 21:17. At best we can say that God allowed one principle to be broken to keep another (although what other?). At worst, Jacob was simply showing favoritism, and yet at the same time he foresaw in faith the Messianic suggestions in Joseph's experience, and therefore made Joseph's sons the firstborn. God saw the good in Jacob at this time, and counted this to him, and recognized and worked with Jacob's decision to make "the son of the hated" the firstborn (1 Chron. 5:1), even though this may have been contrary to God's highest intentions. Likewise God worked through Jacob's pagan use of poplar rods and mandrakes. The way Jacob insisted on blessing Ephraim as the firstborn again seems to show some kind of favoritism and a desire to see his grandson living out his own experience, i.e. the younger son who fought his way up and received the blessings as opposed to the rightful heir. Ephraim becomes a code-name for apostate Israel throughout the prophets. And yet God accepted Jacob's preferential blessing of Ephraim and repeated this in Dt. 33:17. We learn from this at the very least that human motivations are sometimes hopelessly mixed.

48:8 There was a unity, a mutuality, between Jacob and God at the end. No longer did he see God as someone else's God, not even just his father's God. The lessons of Jacob's name change were finally learnt. Thus he asks Joseph to bring his sons to him, so that he may bless them; but when he gives the blessing, he states that this is God blessing them (48:8,9,15,16); he saw God working through him.

48:11 Jacob's final appreciation of God's grace, the way He does far above what our works should deserve, is indicated by his comment that "I never thought I would see your (Joseph's) face: and behold, God has let me see your seed also". The Hebrew word translated "thought" is 74 times translated "pray", and only once "thought"; the idea is surely: 'I never prayed to see you again, I didn't therefore have the faith in the resurrection which I should have done, just as I didn't believe your mother could be

brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. ¹³ Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near to him. ¹⁴ Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his

hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. ¹⁵ He blessed Joseph, and said, The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day, ¹⁶ the Angel who has ever redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads, and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac. Let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the

resurrected when you spoke of her coming to bow before you (37:10); but God in His grace has done exceeding abundantly above all I asked or didn't ask for, and showed me not only your face in this life, but also your children'. God likewise does for us abundantly more than we pray for or imagine (Eph. 3:20), and our generosity to others should have this feature to it.

48:15 At age 130, Jacob mumbled to Pharaoh: "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life", as if every day had dragged (47:9). But at the very end, 17 years later, he more positively speaks of the Angel that had redeemed him from all *evil*.

Jacob's reference to how Abraham and Isaac 'walked before' his God is a reference back to 17:1; 24:40. Jacob had meditated upon these records, in whatever form they were preserved, and now bubbled out with reference to them. Those same promises concerning the Lord Jesus and his Kingdom should become the centre of our thought as we reach spiritual maturity. "Let my name be named upon them (Joseph's children), and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac" (:16) indicates that he saw an equivalence between them and him; he saw they were "heirs of the same promise" (Heb. 11:9). Jacob came to realize that those promises made to them were the very basis of *his* faith too, as well as theirs, and he knew therefore that he would be resurrected with them into the glory of God's Kingdom. And so he wanted to be buried with them; he didn't reject them, but he came to understand that the promises were gloriously true for him on a personal level.

48:16 It is so easy to under-estimate the amount of work the Angels are doing in our lives; Jacob recognized that his Angel physically fed him all his days, and that it was not just at the crises in his life that the Angel had been present; he describes the Angel as "ever redeeming me", as if the whole process of life is one continual redeeming process by the Angel, as He designs trials for us which will perfect us in order to gain redemption, as well as physically redeeming us more times than we realize.

Redeemed me – At the end, Jacob spoke of God as his redeemer, which is the first Biblical reference to the concept of redemption. This was not the only area in which Jacob was a paradigm breaker (consider how he coined the word *abiyr* to describe God's mightiness). The Hebrew for "redeem" is taken from the idea of the nearest kinsman. Jacob at the end of his days is surely saying that now he saw God as closer than his family. We really have a lot to learn here. God comes before family. The new convert who sacrifices family ties for allegiance to Christ realizes this full well. God's Truth must never become a social and family affair, but rather a candlestick burning with the

earth. ¹⁷ When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him. He held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. ¹⁸ Joseph said to his father, Not so, my father; for this is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head. ¹⁹ His father refused, and said, I know, my son, I know. He also will become a people, and he also will be great. However, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his seed will become a multitude of nations. ²⁰ He blessed them that day, saying, In you will Israel bless, saying, 'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh'. He set Ephraim before Manasseh. ²¹ Israel said to Joseph, Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you, and bring you again to the land of your fathers. ²² Moreover I have given to you Shechem, one portion above your brothers, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

CHAPTER 49 Jan. 29

Jacob Blesses his Sons

Jacob called to his sons, and said: Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which will happen to you in the days to come. ² Assemble yourselves, and hear, you sons of Jacob. Listen to Israel, your father. ³ Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength; excelling in dignity, and excelling in power. ⁴ Boiling over as water, you shall not excel; because you went up to your father's bed, then defiled it. He went up to my couch. ⁵ Simeon and Levi are brothers. Their swords are weapons of violence. ⁶ My soul, don't come into their council. My glory, don't be united to their multitude; for in their anger they killed men. In their self-will they hamstrung cattle. ⁷ Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. ⁸ Judah, your broth-

fire of the Spirit. Christians mustn't merely follow parental expectation and the norms of their social network.

48:22 "*My sword and with my bow*" indicates that Jacob's old self-reliance was still not totally gone; he sensed that through his own effort he could bring about the fulfillment of God's promises for him. In this area, the weakness of Jacob remained. These very words are alluded to in Josh. 24:12 and Ps. 44:1-6, where the Spirit says that the land was given to Israel *not* on account of their bow and sword. Although Jacob can look forward to being in God's eternal Kingdom, he died with some weaknesses, just as we do; and we have to accept this fact in our coping with irritating or immature fellow believers. In some spiritual areas both they and we will never quite 'get there' in this life.

49:2 In 49:2,7,24 Jacob mentions his old and new names ('Jacob' and 'Israel') together, as if to show that now he finally accepted and believed the wondrous change that God had wrought in him. First of all, he doesn't seem to have accepted his name change, and needed God to remind him of it again (32:28; 35:10). It's difficult to really accept the Name we called upon ourselves at baptism (Acts 2:21; 9:14; 22:16; Rom. 10:12-14).

ers will praise you. Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies. Your father's sons will bow down before you. ⁹ Judah is a lion's cub. From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down, he crouched as a lion, as a lioness. Who will rouse him up? ¹⁰ The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs. To him will the obedience of the peoples be. ¹¹ Binding his foal to the vine, his donkey's colt to the choice vine; he has washed his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. ¹² His eyes will be red with wine, his teeth white with milk. ¹³ Zebulun will dwell at the haven of the sea. He will be for a haven of ships. His border will be on Sidon. ¹⁴ Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between the saddlebags. ¹⁵ He saw a resting place, that it was good, the land, that it was pleasant. He bows his shoulder to the burden, and becomes a servant doing forced labour. ¹⁶ Dan will judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. ¹⁷ Dan will be a serpent in the way, an adder in the path, That bites the horse's

heels, so that his rider falls backward. ¹⁸ I have waited for Your salvation, Yahweh. ¹⁹ A troop will press on Gad, but he will press on their heel. ²⁰ Asher's food will be rich. He will yield royal dainties. ²¹ Naphtali is a doe set free, who bears beautiful fawns. ²² Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine by a spring. His branches run over the wall. ²³ The archers have severely grieved him, shot at him, and persecuted him: ²⁴ But his bow remained strong. The arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, (from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), ²⁵ even by the God of your father, who will help you; by the Almighty, who will bless you, with blessings of the sky above, blessings of the deep that lies below, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb. ²⁶ The blessings of your father have prevailed above the blessings of your ancestors, above the boundaries of the ancient hills. They will be on the head of Joseph, on the crown of the head of him who was separated from his brothers. ²⁷ Benjamin is a ravenous wolf. In the

49:14 Jacob's achievement of a true humility is evident in his last words. The way he blessed his sons in Gen. 49 indicates this; he saw Isaachar's greatness in the fact he was a humble servant. He learnt the lesson of that night of wrestling; his natural strength was not to be gloried in, neither was this to be his true greatness.

49:18 Jacob's hope of the future Messiah was the hope of his life; 'Jehoshua', the Hebrew form of 'Jesus', means 'Yahweh's salvation'.

49:25 *God of your father* – Finally, Jacob got there. He says three times the same thing; God is my God, Yahweh will be *my* rock, *my* stone, yes, He is the personal God of your father Jacob, He is almighty to save. That promise made 70 years previously in semi-belief, he had now fulfilled. He had made Yahweh his God. He was not only the God of his father and grandfather. The God who can do all things, not only physically but more importantly (as Jacob now realized) *spiritually*, was now Jacob's very own God.

morning he will devour the prey. At evening he will divide the spoil.

Jacob's Burial Wishes

²⁸ All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them and blessed them. He blessed everyone according to his blessing. ²⁹ He instructed them, and said to them, I am to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰ in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as a burial place. ³¹ There they buried Abraham and Sarah, his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah, his wife, and there I buried Leah: ³² the field and the cave that is therein, which was purchased from the children of Heth. ³³ When Jacob made an end of charging his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the spirit, and was gathered to his people.

CHAPTER 50 Jan. 29

The Death and Burial of Jacob

Joseph fell on his father's face, wept on him, and kissed him. ² Joseph commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father; and the physicians embalmed Israel. ³ Forty

days were fulfilled for him, for that is how many days it takes to embalm. The Egyptians wept for him for seventy days. ⁴ When the days of weeping for him were past, Joseph spoke to the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found favour in your eyes, please speak in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, ⁵ 'My father made me swear, saying, Behold, I am dying. Bury me in my grave which I have dug for myself in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come again'. ⁶ Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury your father, just like he made you swear. ⁷ Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, all the elders of the land of Egypt, ⁸ all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. ⁹ There went up with him both chariots and horsemen. It was a very great company. ¹⁰ They came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and there they lamented with a very great and severe lamentation. He mourned for his father seven days. ¹¹ When the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning by the Egyptians.

50:10 *Seven days* – As in :3, it seems emphasized that the Egyptians mourned for Jacob longer than did Jacob's own sons [40 rather than 70 days]. Perhaps this shows that mourning, as all emotions, is counted by its intensity rather than its external appearance.

50:11 *The Egyptians* – The sons of Jacob weren't Egyptians, but sometimes the family of faith appears as the world, as Egyptians. Our separation from the world doesn't

Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan. ¹² His sons did to him just as he commanded them, ¹³ for his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field, for a possession of a burial site, from Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre. ¹⁴ Joseph returned into Egypt—he, and his brothers, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

Joseph's Brothers Fear Joseph's Revenge

¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, It may be that Joseph will hate us, and will fully pay us back for all of the evil which we did to him. ¹⁶ They sent a message to Joseph, saying, Your father commanded before he died, saying, ¹⁷ 'You shall tell Joseph, Now please forgive the disobedience of your brothers, and their sin, because they did evil to you'.

Now, please forgive the disobedience of the servants of the God of your father. Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ His brothers also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we are your servants. ¹⁹ Joseph said to them, Don't be afraid, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save many people alive. ²¹ Now therefore don't be afraid. I will nourish you and your little ones. He comforted them, and spoke kindly to them.

The Death of Joseph

²² Joseph lived in Egypt, he, and his father's house. Joseph lived one hundred ten years. ²³ Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third generation. The children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph's knees. ²⁴ Joseph said to his brothers, I am dying, but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land to the land which he

mean that we externally look different to them; faith in one sense is an internal matter visible only to God, who alone sees the heart.

50:14 This was a huge expense of effort, to bury Jacob in Canaan rather than Egypt. It shows that even if we have all the best of this world, as Israel had Goshen, our heart should be in the promised land which is yet to come and shall be eternally ours.

50:16 There's no record that Jacob ever said this. But instead of taking up the issue of dishonesty, Joseph instead concentrates on assuring his brothers of God's grace. We don't need to 'take up' every issue and establish an agreed version of events in order to forgive our brothers.

50:19 The Hebrew can also be rendered: "Fear not: for I am in the place of God". Joseph's relationship with God and with Pharaoh demonstrates how Jesus operates as God functionally, without being God Himself in person. See on 44:18.

50:20 Forgiving others doesn't mean that we justify or mitigate the real evil that has been done to us. This needs to be recognized, but we are to perceive that God works through the evil intentions of others, to do us good in our latter end.

swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. ²⁵ Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here. ²⁶ So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old, and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

50:25 Like his father, Joseph's heart was in the land of promise, even though he had spent the majority of his life in the wealth of Egypt.

EXODUS

CHAPTER 1 Jan. 30

The Israelites Are Abused

Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, who came into Egypt (every man and his household came with Jacob): ² Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, ³ Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, ⁴ Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. ⁵ All the souls who came out of Jacob's body were seventy souls, and Joseph was in Egypt already. ⁶ Joseph died, as did all his brothers, and all that generation. ⁷ The children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly and multiplied, and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them. ⁸ Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who didn't know Joseph. ⁹ He said to his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more numerous and mightier than we are. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal prudently with them, in case they multiply yet more and it happens that when any war breaks out, they also join themselves to our enemies, and fight against us, and escape out of the land. ¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. They built storage cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Raamses. ¹² But the

more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out. They were grieved because of the children of Israel. ¹³ The Egyptians ruthlessly made the children of Israel serve, ¹⁴ and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all kinds of service in the field; they ruthlessly made them serve in all their service.

The Plan to Kill All Baby Boys

¹⁵ The king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah, ¹⁶ and he said, When you perform the duty of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birth stool; if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live. ¹⁷ But the midwives feared God, and didn't do what the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the baby boys alive. ¹⁸ The king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said to them, Why have you done this thing, and have saved the boys alive? ¹⁹ The midwives said to Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women aren't like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous, and give birth before

1:5 *Souls* – The Hebrew word *nephesh* translated “soul” means a person, a body. It carries no idea of immortality.

1:7 The promises to Abraham of having numerous descendants have their main fulfilment in Christ and those baptized into Him (Gal. 3:16,27-29), but as in our lives too, God's Kingdom promises have an initial fulfilment even in this life.

1:19 This would be an example of lies being told as an act of faith, similar to Rahab's lie. We must be careful on one hand not to justify our behaviour all the time by thinking that we had no option but to do things which in most contexts would be sinful; yet

the midwife comes to them. ²⁰ God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied, and grew very mighty. ²¹ It happened, because the midwives feared God, that He made them families. ²² Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, You shall cast every son who is born into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.

CHAPTER 2 Jan. 30

Baby Moses Is Saved

A man of the house of Levi went and took a daughter of Levi as his wife. ² The woman conceived, and bore a son. When she saw that he was a child fair to God, she hid him three months. ³ When she could no longer hide him, she took a papyrus basket for him, and coated it with tar and with pitch. She put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank. ⁴ His sister stood far off, to see what would be done to him. ⁵ Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe at the river. Her maids walked along by the riverside. She saw the basket among the reeds, and sent her handmaid to get it. ⁶ She opened it,

and saw the child, and behold, the baby cried. She had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children! ⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, Should I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you? ⁸ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. The maiden went and called the child's mother. ⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Take this child away, and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages. The woman took the child, and nursed it. ¹⁰ The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water.

Moses Tries to Deliver the Israelites

¹¹ It happened in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brothers, and looked at their burdens. He saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of his brothers. ¹² He looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no one, he killed the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. ¹³ He went out

on the other hand, we need to understand that God calls us to live by principles rather than a literalistic obedience to a legal code.

1:16 The plan to kill all the baby boys around the time of Moses' birth is exactly what happened at the time of Christ (Mt. 2:16). This invites us to see Moses as a type of Christ.

1:21 It is God who gives and creates families; it is He who joins together husband and wife throughout the years of their relationship. These infertile women working as midwives must have longed for their own children more than many.

2:10 'Moses' meaning 'drawn out' suggests he is the prototype for every 'saint' – a called out one. As Moses was drawn out of the Nile and saved, so he later drew Israel out of Egypt. He could exactly enter into their feelings when they emerged from the Red Sea because he too had been drawn out of water to safety. Moses was a type of Christ, our representative who knows our feelings.

the second day, and behold, two men of the Hebrews were fighting with each other. He said to him who did the wrong, Why do you strike your fellow? ¹⁴ He said, Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you plan to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian? Moses was afraid, and said, Surely this thing is known. ¹⁵ Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and lived in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well.

Moses Flees Egypt

¹⁶ Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. ¹⁷ The shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. ¹⁸ When they came to Reuel, their father, he said,

How is it that you have returned so early today? ¹⁹ They said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and moreover he drew water for us, and watered the flock. ²⁰ He said to his daughters, Where is he? Why is it that you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread. ²¹ Moses was content to dwell with the man. He gave Moses Zipporah, his daughter. ²² She bore a son, and he named him Gershom, for he said, I have lived as a foreigner in a foreign land. ²³ It happened in the course of those many days, that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed because of the abuse, and they cried, and their cry came up to God because of the abuse. ²⁴ God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵ God saw the children of Israel, and God was concerned about them.

2:15 Visualize the scene when Moses was “full forty years old” (Acts 7:23). The Greek phrase could refer to Moses' birthday – perhaps it had been arranged that when Moses was 40, he would become Pharaoh. Heb. 11:24 says that he refused and chose to suffer affliction with God's people. Imagine Moses at the ceremony when he should have been declared as Pharaoh, the most powerful man in his world... standing up and saying, to a suddenly hushed audience, voice cracking with shame and stress and yet some sort of proud relief that he was doing the right thing: ‘I, whom you know in Egyptian as Meses, am Moshe, yes, Moshe the Israelite; and I decline to be Pharaoh’. Imagine his foster mother's pain and anger. And then in the end, the wonderful honour would have been given to another man, who became Pharaoh. Perhaps he or his son was the one to whom Moses was to come, 40 years later. After a nervous breakdown, stuttering, speaking with a thick accent, clearly having forgotten Egyptian... walking through the mansions of glory, along the corridors of power, to meet that man, to whom he had given the throne 40 years earlier. He had a choice between the riches of Egypt, the pleasures of sin for a season, and choosing rather to suffer affliction with God's people and thereby fellowship the reproach of Christ (Heb. 11:24-26). He probably had the chance to become the next Pharaoh, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter; but he consciously refused this, as a pure act of the will, as an expression of faith in the future recompense of the Kingdom.

CHAPTER 3 Jan. 31***God Appears to Moses at the Burning Bush***

Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to God's mountain, to Horeb. ² The angel of Yahweh appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. ³ Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. ⁴ When Yahweh saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses! Moses! He said, Here I am. ⁵ He said, Don't come close. Take your sandals off from your feet, for the place you are standing on is holy ground. ⁶ Moreover he said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look at God. ⁷ Yahweh said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. ⁸ I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and

to bring them up out of that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey; to the place of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. ⁹ Now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me. Moreover I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.

God's Plan to Deliver Israel from Egypt

¹⁰ Come now therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. ¹¹ Moses said to God, Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? ¹² He said, Certainly I will be with you. This will be the token to you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain. ¹³ Moses said to God, Behold, when I come to the children of Israel, and tell them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you;' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' What should I tell them? ¹⁴ God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM; and He said, You shall tell the children of Israel this: 'I

3:7 God looked on the sorrows of His people through the sensitivity of Moses, He saw and knew their struggles, their sense of being trapped, their desire to revive spiritually but their being tied down by the painful business of life and living; and He sent Moses to deliver them from this. But these very words are quoted about our deliverance through the 'coming down' of the Lord Jesus (3:7; 4:31 = Lk. 1:68).

3:11 Through Moses allowing himself to become part of God manifestation, he found a confidence to achieve that which felt impossible to him. He asks God: "Who am I...?" to do the great things God required... and the answer was "I am" (:11-13). Moses' sense of inadequacy was met by the principle of God's manifestation in him; and so will ours be, if we participate in it. We 'are not' as we would like to be, but God is.

AM has sent me to you'. ¹⁵ God said moreover to Moses, You shall tell the children of Israel this, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you'. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations. ¹⁶ Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and tell them, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt; ¹⁷ and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey'. ¹⁸ They will listen to your voice, and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt, and you shall tell him, 'Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Now please let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God'. ¹⁹ I know that the king of Egypt won't give you permission to go, no, not by a mighty hand. ²⁰ I will reach out My hand

and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst, and after that he will let you go. ²¹ I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, and it will happen that when you go, you shall not go empty-handed. ²² But every woman shall ask of her neighbour, and of her who visits her house, jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons, and on your daughters. You shall plunder the Egyptians.

CHAPTER 4 Jan. 31

Moses Doubts God

Moses answered, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor listen to my voice; for they will say, 'Yahweh has not appeared to you'. ² Yahweh said to him, What is that in your hand? He said, A rod. ³ He said, Throw it on the ground. He threw it on the ground, and it became a snake; and Moses ran away from it. ⁴ Yahweh said to Moses, Stretch out your hand, and take it by the tail. He stretched out his hand, and took hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand. ⁵ That they may believe that Yahweh, the God of their fathers, the God of

3:18 The concepts of being God manifest and also being representative of a sinful Israel come together in Moses in a wonderful way. The elders of Israel were to tell Pharaoh that "Yahweh has met with us". Yet Yahweh had only met with Moses. But because he was representative of Israel and also because he himself manifested Yahweh, the elders had met Yahweh when they met Moses. In this we see a superb prefigurement of the Lord Jesus. He was the supreme, faultless manifestation of God, and yet also the total, empathetic representative of sinful man.

3:20 Moses "supposed his brothers would have understood how that God *by his hand* would deliver them" (Acts 7:25); but God told Moses: "I will reach out *My hand*". Moses had yet to learn the meaning of God manifestation through men. We too must learn that our hand is to be replaced by God's hand.

Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you. ⁶ Yahweh said furthermore to him, Now put your hand inside your cloak. He put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. ⁷ He said, Put your hand inside your cloak again. He put his hand inside his cloak again, and when he took it out of his cloak, behold, it had turned again as his other flesh. ⁸ It will happen, if they will neither believe you nor listen to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. ⁹ It will happen, if they will not believe even these two signs, neither listen to your voice, that you shall take of the water of the river, and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take out of the river will become blood on the dry land. ¹⁰ Moses said to Yahweh, O Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before now, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a stammering tongue. ¹¹ Yahweh said to him, Who made man's mouth? Or who makes one mute, or

deaf, or seeing, or blind? Isn't it I, Yahweh? ¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you shall speak. ¹³ He said, Oh, Lord, please send someone else. ¹⁴ The anger of Yahweh was kindled against Moses, and He said, What about Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Also, behold, he comes out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. ¹⁵ You shall speak to him, and put the words in his mouth. I will be with your mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. ¹⁶ He will be your spokesman to the people; and it will happen, that he will be to you a mouth, and you will be to him as God. ¹⁷ You shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs.

Moses Leaves Midian

¹⁸ Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, Please let me go and return to my brothers who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive. Jethro

4:7 Both the snake and leprosy are symbols of sin. Moses felt he was unable to do God's work because of his own moral failures – but God was showing him that He has the power to deal with that, and that Moses could in fact grapple with sin if he let God use him. Moses had given the excuse that the people wouldn't believe God's word if he preached it to them (:1), but it seems this was really an excuse for his inner sense of unworthiness.

4:11 This verse is classic proof that disease is ultimately from God and not from any superhuman Devil or demons.

4:12 This is alluded to in Mt. 10:19,20 and Mk. 13:11 concerning how we too will be taught what to say when we come before the rulers of our world. In such moments of crisis, Moses, even in weakness as he was at this time, really is our living example.

4:16 Moses was "as God" to Aaron and Pharaoh (7:1), but he wasn't God Himself. Such language can be used about men, Angels and Christ – but it doesn't make them personally equal to God.

said to Moses, Go in peace. ¹⁹ Yahweh said to Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead. ²⁰ Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. Moses took God's rod in his hand. ²¹ Yahweh said to Moses, When you go back into Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your hand, but I will harden his heart and he will not let the people go. ²² You shall tell Pharaoh, 'Thus says Yahweh, Israel is My son, My firstborn, ²³ and I have said to you, Let My son go, that he may serve Me; and you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn'. ²⁴ It happened on the way at a lodging place, that Yahweh met Moses and wanted to kill him. ²⁵ Then Zipporah took a flint, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet; and she said, Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me. ²⁶ So He let him alone. Then

she said, You are a bridegroom of blood, because of the circumcision. ²⁷ Yahweh said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. He went, and met him on God's mountain, and kissed him. ²⁸ Moses told Aaron all the words of Yahweh with which He had sent him, and all the signs with which He had instructed him. ²⁹ Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. ³⁰ Aaron spoke all the words which Yahweh had spoken to Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. ³¹ The people believed, and when they heard that Yahweh had visited the children of Israel, and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.

CHAPTER 5 Feb. 1

Moses and Aaron Meet Pharaoh

Afterward Moses and Aaron came, and said to Pharaoh, This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says, 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the

4:24 God's intentions can be changed by the actions of a third party, in this case Moses' wife. Later, God intended to destroy all Israel, but Moses interceded for them, and God relented. Moses was inspired to do this by his experience at this time; and his Saviour was a Gentile woman [an unbeliever, or weak in the true faith] whom perhaps he should never have married. Moses was being taught that he too for all *his* weakness could be used by God to save others.

4:26 Zipporah was not one of the covenant people; she was the daughter of a pagan priest (18:11 implies Jethro thought Yahweh was only one of many gods); she did not circumcise their children. Should Moses have married her? The fact Moses did not bother circumcising his son shows he was not really serious about his relationship with God; God tried to kill him because of this, showing how serious this was in God's eyes. Zipporah was a Midianite, a descendant of Abraham through Keturah (Gen. 25:1-6). Circumcision was a sign of the covenant through Isaac, hence the resentment and bitterness of Zipporah over the circumcision issue; and it seems Moses capitulated to her on this. Their marriage is sure proof that fundamental spiritual differences at the start can only lead to anger and break up later on.

wilderness'.² Pharaoh said, Who is Yahweh, that I should listen to His voice to let Israel go? I don't recognize Yahweh, and moreover I will not let Israel go.³ They said, The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to Yahweh, our God, lest He fall on us with plague, or with the sword.⁴ The king of Egypt said to them, Why do you, Moses and Aaron, take the people from their work? Get back to your burdens!⁵ Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens.⁶ The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying,⁷ You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick, as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves.⁸ The number of the bricks, which they made before, you are to still require from them. You shall not diminish anything of it, for they are idle; therefore they cry, saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God'.⁹ Let heavier work be laid on the men, that

they may labour therein; and don't let them pay any attention to lying words.

The Israelites Abused Even More

¹⁰ The taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spoke to the people, saying, This is what Pharaoh says: 'I will not give you straw.¹¹ Go yourselves, get straw where you can find it, for nothing of your work shall be diminished'.¹² So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw.¹³ The taskmasters were urgent saying, Fulfil your work quota daily, as when there was straw!¹⁴ The officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, it was demanded of them, Why haven't you fulfilled your quota both yesterday and today, in making brick as before?¹⁵ Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, saying, Why do you deal this way with your servants?¹⁶ No straw is given to your servants, and they tell us, 'Make

5:3 *Lest He fall on us* – This isn't what God had threatened (3:18); Moses almost makes God out to be an unreasonable and draconian deity. It seems Moses added to God's word to make it sound more credible, rather like Adam added "... neither shall you touch it" when relating God's word to Eve. If we accept the Bible as God's inspired word, we must be careful never to add to it, even implicitly, in order to make the message sound better in human terms.

5:16 Three times in :15,16 the Israelites assure Pharaoh that they are *his* servants, whereas Yahweh had requested that His people be allowed to leave so that they might serve *Him* (4:23). We cannot serve two masters – and they chose to serve Pharaoh and not Yahweh, in the hope that their hard lives might be made a fraction lighter by doing so. There was no fire of devotion in them for Yahweh, no desire to make a radical revolt against their surrounding world; they were interested in the offer of a better life which Moses offered them (4:31), they believed it for a brief moment, but any short term suffering was enough to bring them back to serving Egypt.

brick!’ and behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people. ¹⁷ But he said, You are idle! You are idle! Therefore you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to Yahweh’. ¹⁸ Go therefore now, and work, for no straw shall be given to you, yet you shall deliver the same number of bricks! ¹⁹ The officers of the children of Israel saw that they were in trouble, when it was said, You shall not diminish anything from your daily quota of bricks!

Israelite Anger with Moses and Aaron

²⁰ They met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came out from Pharaoh: ²¹ and they said to them, May Yahweh look at you, and judge, because you have made us a stench to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us. ²² Moses returned to Yahweh and said, Lord, why have You brought evil on this people? Why is it that You have sent me? ²³ For since

I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has brought trouble on this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all.

CHAPTER 6 Feb. 1

God’s Message to Israel

Yahweh said to Moses, Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh, for by a strong hand he shall let them go, and by a strong hand he shall drive them out of his land. ² God spoke to Moses, and said to him, I am Yahweh; ³ and I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty; but by My name Yahweh was I not known to them? ⁴ I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their travels, in which they lived as aliens. ⁵ Moreover I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. ⁶ Therefore tell the children of Israel, ‘I am Yahweh, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the

5:22 *Brought evil* – God is the ultimate source of “evil” in the sense of disaster (Is. 45:5-7), not any superhuman Satan being.

Moses is presented as initially a very unwilling co-operator with God, all too willing to give up and go home when there wasn’t the expected response. Yet he developed very quickly.

6:3 God had revealed Himself as Yahweh to the patriarchs, e. g. at Yahweh-Yireh (Gen. 22:14). But Israel had forgotten the implications of believing that the one true God is He who will be whom He will be, is who He is, and has been who He has been. God states seven times [the number of completion] in :6-8 that He “will” be and do things for His people. He really will be who He has said He will be.

6:5 God heard Israel’s groaning, even though at that time they didn’t believe in Him and were lost in depression. God ‘hears’ situations as if they are prayers, even when the people concerned are too weak physically, mentally or spiritually to formally verbalize their situation in the form of a prayer to God.

Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments: ⁷ and I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, Who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸ I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for an inheritance: I am Yahweh'. ⁹ Moses spoke so to the children of Israel, but they didn't listen to Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage. ¹⁰ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹¹ Go in, speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. ¹² Moses spoke before Yahweh, saying, Behold, the children of Israel haven't listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, who am of uncircumcised lips? ¹³ Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, and gave them a command to the children of Israel, and to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

The Genealogy of Levi

¹⁴ These are the heads of their fathers' houses. The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel: Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; these are

the families of Reuben. ¹⁵ The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman; these are the families of Simeon. ¹⁶ These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari; and the years of the life of Levi were one hundred thirty-seven years. ¹⁷ The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, according to their families. ¹⁸ The sons of Kohath: Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel; and the years of the life of Kohath were one hundred thirty-three years. ¹⁹ The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their generations. ²⁰ Amram took Jochebed his father's sister to himself as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were a hundred and thirty-seven years. ²¹ The sons of Izhar: Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri. ²² The sons of Uzziel: Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Sithri. ²³ Aaron took Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Nahshon, as his wife; and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ²⁴ The sons of Korah: Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph; these are the families of the Korahites. ²⁵ Eleazar Aaron's son took

6:12 Yet God had promised Moses earlier that Israel *would* hear him (3:18). God solemnly told him to go and speak to Pharaoh, because God had told him to do so. But Moses has the cheek to say exactly the same words to God a second time. In a chapter which speaks much of Moses' reluctance, the record encourages us: "These are that Aaron and Moses... these are those who spake to Pharaoh... these are that Moses and Aaron" (:26,27) – as if the weakness of one as great as Moses should be encouragement to us who are so doubting and faltering in our service of God.

one of the daughters of Putiel as his wife; and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites according to their families. ²⁶ These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom Yahweh said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies. ²⁷ These are those who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These are that Moses and Aaron. ²⁸ It happened on the day when Yahweh spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, ²⁹ that Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, I am Yahweh. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I speak to you. ³⁰ Moses said before Yahweh, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh listen to me?

CHAPTER 7 Feb. 2

God Tells Moses How to Speak to Pharaoh

Yahweh said to Moses, Behold, I have made you as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. ² You shall speak all that I command you; and Aaron your brother shall speak to Pharaoh, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. ³ I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. ⁴ But Pharaoh will not listen to you, and I will lay My hand on Egypt, and bring out My armies and My people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. ⁵ The Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

6:30 *Uncircumcised lips* – This may refer to some speech impediment Moses came to suffer. Or it may be that Moses felt he had been so long away from the Israelites that he didn't feel himself as 'circumcised', or perhaps he had never been circumcised. But God used a man who keenly felt his physical and spiritual inadequacies for the great work he was asked to do. A feeling of insufficiency is vital if we are to be used by God, for He delights in using the weak and broken things of this world.

7:2 Although Aaron was intended to be Moses' spokesman, it seems Moses soon took over speaking directly to Pharaoh. This may mean that Aaron lost his nerve; or that Moses gained confidence and no longer considered his spiritual and physical impediments of "uncircumcised lips" (see on 6:30) to be a barrier to God using him.

7:4 It seems that each of the people of Israel had a guardian Angel – this seems to be implied by "bring out My armies and My people", implying that there were two armies leaving Egypt – one of Angels, another of their charges. Hence 12:41 "it happened, that *all* the armies of Yahweh (a phrase often used about the Angels – but here concerning the Israelites too) went out from the land of Egypt". We too each have a guardian Angel.

7:5 The rejected will not only see how they could have been in the Kingdom; judgment results in men knowing God's Name / character. When God's judgments had been poured out on Egypt, then they knew God's Name; but for those racing against the inevitable tide of death in the returning Red Sea, it was all too late. This will be the tragedy of those rejected at the day of final judgment; nobody will be indifferent in that day, all will earnestly perceive who God really is. The day to know Him is now.

The Miracle of Aaron's Rod

⁶ Moses and Aaron did so. As Yahweh commanded them, so they did. ⁷ Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh. ⁸ Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ⁹ When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Perform a miracle!' then you shall tell Aaron, 'Take your rod, and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it become a serpent'. ¹⁰ Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, as Yahweh had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. ¹¹ Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers. They also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same thing with their enchantments. ¹² For they each cast down their rods, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. ¹³ Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he didn't listen to them; as Yahweh had spoken.

Water Turned to Blood

¹⁴ Yahweh said to Moses, Pharaoh's heart is stubborn. He refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning. Behold, he goes out to the water; and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. ¹⁶ You shall

tell him, 'Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to you, saying, Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness, and behold, until now you haven't listened. ¹⁷ Thus says Yahweh, In this you shall know that I am Yahweh. Behold, I will strike with the rod that is in My hand on the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. ¹⁸ The fish that are in the river shall die, and the river shall become foul; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink water from the river'. ¹⁹ Yahweh said to Moses, Tell Aaron, 'Take your rod, and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their streams, and over their pools, and over all their ponds of water, that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone'. ²⁰ Moses and Aaron did so, as Yahweh commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. ²¹ The fish that were in the river died; and the river became foul, and the Egyptians couldn't drink water from the river; and the blood was throughout all the land of Egypt. ²² The magicians of Egypt did the same thing

7:7 The life of Moses was in three clear sections. Forty years in Egypt in the opulence of Pharaoh's court, forty years leading sheep in the wilderness, forty years leading Israel in the wilderness. Our lives too are arranged by God, although we only perceive it after many years.

7:17 The pronouns purposefully confuse God with Moses – our hand becomes God's hand when we put it to His work.

with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he didn't listen to them; as Yahweh had spoken. ²³ Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he didn't even take this to heart. ²⁴ All the Egyptians dug around the river for water to drink; for they couldn't drink of the water of the river. ²⁵ Seven days were fulfilled, after Yahweh had struck the river.

CHAPTER 8 Feb. 2

The Plague of Frogs

Yahweh spoke to Moses, Go in to Pharaoh, and tell him, This is what Yahweh says, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ² If you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your borders with frogs: ³ and the river shall swarm with frogs, which shall go up and come into your house, and into your bedroom, and on your bed, and into the house of your servants, and on your people, and into your ovens, and into your kneading troughs: ⁴ and the frogs shall come up both on you, and on your people, and on all your servants'. ⁵ Yahweh said to Moses, Tell Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your rod over the rivers, over the streams, and over the pools, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt'. ⁶ Aaron

stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. ⁷ The magicians did the same thing with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt. ⁸ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat Yahweh, that He take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to Yahweh. ⁹ Moses said to Pharaoh, I give you the honour of setting the time that I should pray for you, and for your servants, and for your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses, and remain in the river only. ¹⁰ He said, Tomorrow. He said, Be it according to your word, that you may know that there is none like Yahweh our God. ¹¹ The frogs shall depart from you, and from your houses, and from your servants, and from your people. They shall remain in the river only. ¹² Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to Yahweh concerning the frogs which He had brought on Pharaoh. ¹³ Yahweh did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courts, and out of the fields. ¹⁴ They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. ¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there

8:9 Was such sarcasm appropriate? We have 'the Truth' in comparison to the unbelieving world, but this is by grace alone, and no sense of superiority, arrogance or sarcasm should ever feature in our witness to them.

8:13 *According to the word of Moses* – The requests of prayer become almost a command to God if we really believe they are according to His will; by His grace, we will ask what we will and He will do it for us (Jn. 16:23). The Greek there implies a superior asking an inferior to do something. This is an essay in the humility of God. We shall decree a thing (in prayer) and it shall be established unto us (Job 22:28).

was a respite, he hardened his heart, and didn't listen to them, as Yahweh had spoken.

The Plague of Lice

¹⁶ Yahweh said to Moses, Tell Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt'. ¹⁷ They did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and struck the dust of the earth, and there were lice on man, and on animal; all the dust of the earth became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. ¹⁸ The magicians tried with their enchantments to produce lice, but they couldn't. There were lice on man, and on animal. ¹⁹ Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, This is the finger of God; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he didn't listen to them; as Yahweh had spoken.

The Plague of Beetles

²⁰ Yahweh said to Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand be-

fore Pharaoh; behold, he comes out to the water; and tell him, 'This is what Yahweh says, Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ²¹ Else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of beetles on you, and on your servants, and on your people, and into your houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of beetles, and also the ground whereon they are. ²² I will set apart in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of beetles shall be there; to the end you may know that I am Yahweh in the midst of the earth. ²³ I will put a division between My people and your people: by tomorrow shall this sign be'. ²⁴ Yahweh did so; and there came grievous swarms of beetles into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses: and in all the land of Egypt the land was corrupted by reason of the swarms of beetles. ²⁵ Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go, sacrifice to your God within the land! ²⁶ Mo-

8:16 The plagues were judgments against the gods of Egypt, whom Israel had likely come to believe in (12:12; 15:11). This plague targeted Seb, god of the dust of the earth; as the frogs had mocked Hekot, the goddess of magic who had a frog's head, and the Nile turning to blood showed the effective death of Hapi, the god of the spirit of the Nile.

8:21 Ra and the forerunner of Beelzebub were likened to beetles; much pagan Egyptian jewellery featured beetles.

8:22 Initially, God's people suffered the effects of the earlier plagues. But they didn't experience the later plagues. The plagues on Egypt are alluded to in the descriptions of the latter day judgments to come upon the earth just before Christ returns. It could be that the same will happen – those who are alive at that time may suffer the effects of the initial judgments, and then be somehow preserved as Israel were (Is. 26:20).

To the end – God's desire was to save even Pharaoh. We should never give up on seeking to convert anyone.

8:25 *Within the land* – Comparing :27, it required three days journey for God's people to leave Egypt. It's likely that we are to see here a reference to the three days Christ

ses said, It isn't appropriate to do so; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to Yahweh our God. Behold, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and won't they stone us? ²⁷ We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to Yahweh our God, as He shall command us. ²⁸ Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to Yahweh your God in the wilderness, only you shall not go very far away. Pray for me. ²⁹ Moses said, Behold, I go out from you, and I will pray to Yahweh that the swarms of beetles may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow; only don't let Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to Yahweh. ³⁰ Moses went out from Pharaoh, and prayed to Yahweh. ³¹ Yahweh did according to the word of Moses, and He removed the swarms of beetles from Pharaoh, from his servants, and

from his people. There remained not one. ³² Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he didn't let the people go.

CHAPTER 9 Feb. 3

The Plague on the Livestock

Then Yahweh said to Moses, Go in to Pharaoh, and tell him, 'This is what Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ² For if you refuse to let them go, and hold them still, ³ behold, the hand of Yahweh is on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks with a very grievous pestilence. ⁴ Yahweh will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt; and nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel'. ⁵ Yahweh appointed a set time, saying, Tomorrow Yahweh shall do this thing in the land. ⁶ Yahweh did that thing on

remained dead, before resurrecting to enable God's people to leave Egypt [the world] and embark for His Kingdom.

8:28 *Pray for me* sounds as if there might have been some recognition of Yahweh forming within Pharaoh. Hence God and Moses were seeking his repentance and even salvation, and the drawn out process of the plagues was part of that seeking, even though the more he hardened his heart against his spiritual possibilities, the more God had to confirm him in this.

9:3 *Is on* – Present tense. Yet the idea is clearly 'it will be on'. God's word is so certain that He can speak of things He has not yet done as if He has done them, or is now doing them (Rom. 4:17). We need to try to look at things like this; and see that the essence of future judgment and salvation are in fact working themselves out right now.

9:5 The plague upon cattle was clearly prophesied as going to happen at a specified time; but it was conditional upon Pharaoh refusing to let Israel go (:1,2). He *could* have complied, and therefore the plague wouldn't have happened. And yet the prophecy is so specific that it would seem that this conditionality just didn't exist. But it did. Bible prophecies often have a conditional element to them, because God's purpose is often open-ended, reflecting the colossal value He places upon our freewill decisions.

the next day; and all the livestock of Egypt died, but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died. ⁷ Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not so much as one of the livestock of the Israelites dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was stubborn, and he didn't let the people go.

The Plague of Boils

⁸ Yahweh said to Moses and to Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the sky in the sight of Pharaoh. ⁹ It shall become small dust over all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking out with boils on man and on animal, throughout all the land of Egypt. ¹⁰ They took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward the sky; and it became a boil breaking out with boils on man and on animal. ¹¹ The magicians couldn't stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boils were on the magicians, and on all the Egyptians. ¹² Yahweh hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he didn't listen to them, as Yahweh had spoken to Moses.

The Plague of Hail

¹³ Yahweh said to Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and tell him, 'This is what Yahweh, the God of the He-

brews, says: Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ¹⁴ For this time I will send all My plagues against your heart, against your officials, and against your people; that you may know that there is none like Me in all the earth. ¹⁵ For now I would have stretched out My hand, and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth; ¹⁶ but indeed for this cause I have raised you up: to show in you My power, and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth; ¹⁷ as you still exalt yourself against My people, that you won't let them go. ¹⁸ Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as has not been in Egypt since the day it was founded even until now. ¹⁹ Now therefore command that all of your livestock and all that you have in the field be brought into shelter. Every man and animal that is found in the field, and isn't brought home, the hail shall come down on them, and they shall die'. ²⁰ Those who feared the word of Yahweh among the servants of Pharaoh made their servants and their livestock flee into the houses. ²¹ Whoever didn't respect the word of Yahweh left his servants and his livestock in the field. ²² Yahweh said to Moses, Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be hail

9:14 The plagues were on Pharaoh's heart in that God was progressively confirming Pharaoh in the position he had himself adopted.

9:22 The great hail plague lead up to Israel's Passover deliverance, and yet this is the language of the last days (Rev. 16:21) – as if there will again be a Passover deliverance for God's people, heralded by the pouring out of plagues upon those who persecute them.

in all the land of Egypt, on man, and on animal, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. ²³ Moses stretched out his rod toward the heavens, and Yahweh sent thunder, hail, and lightning flashed down to the earth. Yahweh rained hail on the land of Egypt. ²⁴ So there was very severe hail, and lightning mixed with the hail, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. ²⁵ The hail struck throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and animal; and the hail struck every herb of the field, and broke every tree of the field. ²⁶ Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail. ²⁷ Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, I have sinned this time. Yahweh is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. ²⁸ Pray to Yahweh; for there has been enough of mighty thunderings and hail. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer. ²⁹ Moses said to him, As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands to Yahweh. The thunders shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that you may know that the earth is Yahweh's.

³⁰ But as for you and your servants, I know that you don't yet fear Yahweh God. ³¹ The flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was in bloom. ³² But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they had not grown up. ³³ Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands to Yahweh; and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured on the earth. ³⁴ When Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. ³⁵ The heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he didn't let the children of Israel go, just as Yahweh had spoken through Moses.

CHAPTER 10 Feb. 4

The Plague of Locusts

Yahweh said to Moses, Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I may show these My signs in their midst, ² and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your son's son, what things I have done to Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them; that you may know that I am Yahweh. ³ Mo-

9:29 Spreading out hands is a form of prayer, perhaps symbolizing our openness before God, or perhaps an expression meaning that we have nothing, but beg God for His grace.

9:31, 32 Are we to conclude that the Egyptians grew barley but the Hebrews preferred wheat?

9:35 The record speaks often of how Pharaoh hardened his heart ["his heart was stubborn" carries this idea], and yet also of how God hardened Pharaoh's heart (10:1). God confirms people in the mental attitude they adopt. He's not indifferent. Hence the colossal importance of human thought and action – God is waiting to confirm us in the way we choose to go.

ses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and said to him, This is what Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, says: 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ⁴ Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, ⁵ and they shall cover the surface of the earth, so that one won't be able to see the earth. They shall eat the residue of that which has escaped, which remains to you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which grows for you out of the field. ⁶ Your houses shall be filled, and the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; as neither your fathers nor your fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were on the earth to this day'. He turned himself about, and went out from Pharaoh. ⁷ Pharaoh's servants said to him, How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve Yahweh, their God. Don't you yet know that Egypt is destroyed? ⁸ Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, Go, serve Yahweh your God; but who are those who will go? ⁹ Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old; with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast to Yahweh. ¹⁰ He said to them, Yahweh be with you if I will let you

go with your little ones! See, evil is clearly before your faces. ¹¹ Not so! Go now you who are men, and serve Yahweh; for that is what you desire! They were driven out from Pharaoh's presence. ¹² Yahweh said to Moses, Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up on the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail has left. ¹³ Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and Yahweh brought an east wind on the land all that day, and all the night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. ¹⁴ The locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the borders of Egypt. They were very grievous. Before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. ¹⁵ For they covered the surface of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened, and they ate every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. There remained nothing green, either tree or herb of the field, through all the land of Egypt. ¹⁶ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and he said, I have sinned against Yahweh your God, and against you. ¹⁷ Now therefore please forgive my sin again, and pray to Yahweh your God, that He may also take away from me this death. ¹⁸ He went out from Pharaoh, and prayed to Yahweh. ¹⁹ Yahweh turned an

10:6 Turning around and storming out shows his anger and emotion; being easily provoked was one of Moses' characteristics (Num. 20:12; Ps. 106:32,33). And yet he was very humble (Num. 12:3). There's nothing wrong with emotion and passion in itself, and it's not irreconcilable with humility.

exceeding strong west wind, which took up the locusts, and drove them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the borders of Egypt. ²⁰ But Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he didn't let the children of Israel go.

The Plague of Darkness

²¹ Yahweh said to Moses, Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. ²² Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. ²³ They didn't see one another, neither did anyone rise from his place for three days; but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. ²⁴ Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, Go, serve Yahweh. Only let your flocks and your herds stay behind. Let your little ones also go with you. ²⁵ Moses said, You must

also give into our hand sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God. ²⁶ Our livestock also shall go with us. Not a hoof shall be left behind, for of it we must take to serve Yahweh our God; and we don't know with what we must serve Yahweh, until we come there. ²⁷ But Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he wouldn't let them go. ²⁸ Pharaoh said to him, Get away from me! Be careful to see my face no more; for in the day you see my face you shall die! ²⁹ Moses said, You have spoken well. I will see your face again no more.

CHAPTER 11 Feb. 5

God Predicts the Death of Egypt's Firstborn

Yahweh said to Moses, Yet one plague more will I bring on Pharaoh, and on Egypt; afterwards he will let you go. When he lets you go, he will surely thrust you out altogether

10:19 The wind casting the locusts into the Red Sea was similar to how God sent a wind to open and close the Red Sea, and the Egyptians were as it were cast into the Red Sea to their destruction. God was seeking to show Pharaoh what He was capable of, and how Pharaoh was just another locust. The Pharaohs had a locust crest on their crowns. God tries to give people warning of the judgment that will come upon them, in the hope they will repent.

10:22 The plague of darkness was clearly intended to imply the death of Ra, the Egyptian sun god. One by one, the major gods of Egypt were declared dead or powerless by the plagues. The Israelites should've learnt from this not to worship the Egyptian gods ever again; but they forgot the lesson.

10:23 Similar to how the Angel stood behind the Israelites as they crossed the Red Sea, giving them light and yet giving darkness to the pursuing Egyptians (14:20). Perhaps the Israelites had light but the Egyptians darkness because the Angel stood with them literally? God often gives notice of what He is planning to do, bringing about similar situations, in the hope that His people will repent.

10:25 God's demands upon Pharaoh grew – now he had to give them animals too. The further a person goes away from God, the harder God makes it for them – because He confirms people in the hardness or softness to Him which they choose.

er. ² Speak now in the ears of the people, and let them ask every man of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. ³ Yahweh gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people. ⁴ Moses said, This is what Yahweh says: 'About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt, ⁵ and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of livestock. ⁶ There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has not been, nor shall be any more. ⁷ But against any of the children of Israel a dog won't even bark or move its tongue, against man or animal; that you may know that Yahweh makes a distinction between the Egyptians and Israel. ⁸ All these your servants shall come down to me, and bow down themselves to me, saying, Get out, with all the people who follow you; and after that I will go out'. He went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. ⁹ Yahweh said to Moses, Pharaoh won't listen to you, that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. ¹⁰ Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he didn't let the children of Israel go out of his land.

ahoh in hot anger. ⁹ Yahweh said to Moses, Pharaoh won't listen to you, that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. ¹⁰ Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he didn't let the children of Israel go out of his land.

CHAPTER 12 Feb. 5

The Passover Is Commanded

Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ² This month shall be to you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you. ³ Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth day of this month, they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household; ⁴ and if the household is too little for a lamb, then he and his neighbour next to his house shall take one according to the number of the souls; according to what everyone can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: ⁶ and you shall keep it until the four-

11:3 *The man Moses was very great* – Yet it is also written that “the man Moses was very meek” (Num. 12:3). Putting the two passages together we have the clear lesson that he who humbles himself is made great; and in this, Moses was not only a type of Christ but also a pattern for all who would go through the pattern which the Lord Jesus set before us: of humbling ourselves now that we might be made great in due time.

11:8 *I will go out* – Moses saw himself as representative of all God's people, just as Christ is our representative.

12:5 *Without blemish* – quoted about Christ, whom the Passover lamb represented (1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:19). The animal was to be ‘taken out’ from the flock – it wasn't specially bred for the occasion. This prefigures how the Lord Jesus was to be of true human nature, one of us, identical by nature with the rest of the flock whom He died to save.

teenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at evening. ⁷ They shall take some of the blood, and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel, on the houses in which they shall eat it. ⁸ They shall eat the flesh in that night, roasted with fire, and unleavened bread. They shall eat it with bitter herbs. ⁹ Don't eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted with fire; with its head, its legs and its inner parts. ¹⁰ You shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; but that which remains of it until the morning you shall burn with fire. ¹¹ This is how you shall eat it: with your belt on your waist, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste: it is Yahweh's Passover. ¹² For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and animal. Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Yahweh. ¹³ The blood shall be to you for a token on the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and there shall no plague be on you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ This day shall be to you for a memorial, and you shall keep it a feast to Yahweh: throughout your genera-

tions you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.

Unleavened Bread

¹⁵ 'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; even the first day you shall put away yeast out of your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ In the first day there shall be to you a holy convocation, and in the seventh day a holy convocation; no kind of work shall be done in them, except that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you. ¹⁷ You shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this same day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations by an ordinance forever. ¹⁸ In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty first day of the month at evening. ¹⁹ There shall be no yeast found in your houses for seven days, for whoever eats that which is leavened, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a foreigner, or one who is born in the land. ²⁰ You shall eat nothing leavened. In all your habitations you shall eat unleavened bread'.

12:11 *Belt on your waist* – With their robes girded up. In a chapter full of Passover allusions, Peter quotes this phrase as painting a word picture of the intensity in which believers today should be living as they await the call to leave this present society [cp. Egypt] and go to be with the Lord (1 Pet. 1:13).

12:19 Searching their homes for yeast represents our searching of our lives for sin (1 Cor. 5:6-8). Sin is like yeast in that just a little bit of it leads to a huge influence in our lives and those of others – it spreads, unless it is thrown away.

The Death of the Firstborn

²¹ Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said to them, Draw out, and take lambs according to your families, and kill the Passover. ²² You shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. ²³ For Yahweh will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel, and on the two doorposts, Yahweh will pass over the door, and will not allow the Destroyer to come in to your houses to strike you. ²⁴ You shall observe this thing for an ordinance to you and to your sons forever. ²⁵ It shall happen when you have come to the land which Yahweh will give you, according as he has promised, that you shall keep this service. ²⁶ It will happen, when your children ask you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ ²⁷ that you shall say, ‘It is the sacrifice of Yahweh’s Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when

He struck the Egyptians, and spared our houses’. The people bowed their heads and worshiped. ²⁸ The children of Israel went and did so; as Yahweh had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. ²⁹ It happened at midnight, that Yahweh struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of livestock. ³⁰ Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. ³¹ He called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel; and go, serve Yahweh, as you have said! ³² Take both your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also! ³³ The Egyptians were urgent with the people, to send them out of the land in haste, for they said, We are all dead men. ³⁴ The people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their

12:22 *Hyssop* – We think of the use of hyssop in Christ’s crucifixion (Jn. 19:29).

12:23 ‘Pass over’ translates a Hebrew word meaning to hover over. One Angel would hover over the homes of the faithful Israelites to stop the ‘Destroyer’ Angel (1 Cor. 10:10) killing their firstborn.

12:29 *Midnight* – The second coming of Christ is figuratively said to be with a great cry at “midnight” (Mt. 25:6). A great cry went up at midnight on Passover night (:30). We who are awaiting the return of Christ are therefore in a similar position to Israel on Passover night, watching and waiting, under persecution of various types.

12:34 The Israelites also took with them the idols of Egypt (Ez. 20:7,8), even though the plagues had demonstrated those idols to be dead and powerless, and God had declared those idols condemned by the plagues (:12). The crossing of the Red Sea represents our baptism (1 Cor. 10:1,2), and we too mustn’t take any of this world’s idols with us when we spiritually leave this world.

clothes on their shoulders. ³⁵ The children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and clothing. ³⁶ Yahweh gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. They despoiled the Egyptians.

The Israelites Leave Egypt

³⁷ The children of Israel travelled from Raamses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot who were men, besides children. ³⁸ A mixed multitude went up also with them, with flocks, herds, and even very much livestock. ³⁹ They baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought out of Egypt; for it wasn't leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt, and couldn't wait, neither had they prepared for themselves any food. ⁴⁰ Now the time that the children of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred thirty years. ⁴¹ It happened at the end of four hundred thirty years, even the same day it happened, that all the

armies of Yahweh went out from the land of Egypt. ⁴² It is a night to be much observed to Yahweh for bringing them out from the land of Egypt. This is that night of Yahweh, to be much observed of all the children of Israel throughout their generations. ⁴³ Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the Passover. No foreigner shall eat of it, ⁴⁴ but every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then shall he eat of it. ⁴⁵ A foreigner and a hired servant shall not eat of it. ⁴⁶ In one house shall it be eaten; you shall not carry out anything of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall you break a bone of it. ⁴⁷ All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. ⁴⁸ When a stranger shall live as a foreigner with you, and will keep the Passover to Yahweh, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one who is born in the land: but no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. ⁴⁹ One law shall be to him who is born at home, and to the stranger who lives as a foreigner

12:37 If there were 600,000 men, excluding children, we can guess that there were around three million Israelites who left Egypt, in addition to the mixed multitude of :38. Jacob's family numbered 70 people when they entered Egypt 430 years previously (:41; Gen. 46:27). This is a huge growth rate; the promises to Abraham that his descendants would become many clearly received a major initial fulfilment. Through baptism, those same promises are made to us (Gal. 3:27-29), and in some way we may also experience an initial fulfilment of the promised blessing even in this life.

12:38 *Mixed multitude* – Egyptians who had come to side with Yahweh? Or does this refer to the offspring of relations between the Israelites and Egyptians (e.g. Lev. 24:10)?

12:42 The Passover was a memorial feast, to commemorate how God had saved His people. The equivalent for believers today is the breaking of bread meeting, rightly called by some 'the memorial meeting'. It's a celebration of what has been done for us through the slain lamb, the Lord Jesus.

among you. ⁵⁰ All the children of Israel did so. As Yahweh commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. ⁵¹ It happened the same day, that Yahweh brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

CHAPTER 13 Feb. 6

Passover Regulations Repeated

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Sanctify to me all of the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of animal. It is mine. ³ Moses said to the people, Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand Yahweh brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. ⁴ This day you go out in the month Abib. ⁵ It shall be, when Yahweh shall bring you into the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. ⁶ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to Yahweh. ⁷ Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven

days; and no leavened bread shall be seen with you, neither shall yeast be seen with you, in all your borders. ⁸ You shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'It is because of that which Yahweh did for me when I came out of Egypt'. ⁹ It shall be for a sign to you on your hand, and for a memorial between your eyes, that the law of Yahweh may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand Yahweh has brought you out of Egypt. ¹⁰ You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

The Redemption of the Firstborn

¹¹ It shall be, when Yahweh shall bring you into the land of the Canaanite, as He swore to you and to your fathers, and shall give it you, ¹² that you shall set apart to Yahweh all that opens the womb, and every firstborn which you have that comes from an animal. The males shall be Yahweh's. ¹³ Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck; and you shall redeem all the firstborn of man among your sons. ¹⁴ It shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' that you shall tell him, 'By strength of

13:8 *For me* – Subsequent generations were to see themselves as having been personally saved from Egypt, and many of the Psalms take comfort in what God did there as being a guarantee that He likewise will save *us* from our Egypt-like situations.

13:9 *A memorial* – All that Israel did with their hands or thought in their minds was to be influenced by the memory of the fact that they had been redeemed from Egypt. Our experience of redemption through the blood of our Passover lamb should have the same effect upon us. Some Jewish traditions literally fulfil this command by carrying jewellery on their wrist and forehead. For us it should be a mental awareness, which is physically articulated through the memorial meeting, breaking bread and drinking wine in memory of Christ's death which redeemed us from this world and its gods.

hand Yahweh brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage; ¹⁵ and it happened, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that Yahweh killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of animal. Therefore I sacrifice to Yahweh all that opens the womb, being males; but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem'. ¹⁶ It shall be for a sign on your hand, and for symbols between your eyes: for by strength of hand Yahweh brought us out of Egypt.

Israel Are Led Out of Egypt

¹⁷ It happened, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God didn't lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and they return to Egypt; ¹⁸ but God led the people around by the way of the wilderness by the Red

Sea; and the children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁹ Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the children of Israel swear, saying, God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones away from here with you. ²⁰ They took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. ²¹ Yahweh went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them on their way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, that they might go by day and by night: ²² the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, didn't depart from before the people.

CHAPTER 14 Feb. 6

The Egyptians Pursue the Israelites

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn back and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and

13:17 God is sensitive to our weaknesses in the path He chooses to lead us towards His promised land. The fact the people did later wish to return to Egypt (Num. 14:4) was therefore inexcusable; God did not test His people more than they could reasonably endure, just as He will not with us (1 Cor. 10:13).

13:21 The pillar of cloud is paralleled with an Angel in 14:19. Israel were led out of Egypt, through the desert to the promised land by an Angel who guided them – just as we are led by a guardian Angel. The cloud shielded them from the strong sun in the day, and the fire gave them warmth and light by night. In this we see God's sensitivity to us and provision of all our basic needs on our journey towards His Kingdom. An Angel in a cloud appears in Rev. 10:1 to announce that the journey of God's people is over, and they have entered His Kingdom.

13:22 The Angel was continually with the people, every day of their journey – including the days when they murmured against God, wanted to return to Egypt, made a golden calf. We too can become over familiar with God and with the fact that we are being led by an Angel towards God's Kingdom.

14:2 Geographically and tactically, this was a mistake in human terms – God led them into a dead end, surrounded by mountains and with their backs to the sea, with the Egyptians charging after them. We too are led by God at times into situations which

the sea, before Baal Zephon. You shall encamp opposite it by the sea. ³ Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, ‘They are entangled in the land. The wilderness has shut them in’. ⁴ I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will follow after them; and I will get honour over Pharaoh, and over all his armies; and the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh. They did so. ⁵ It was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled; and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was changed towards the people, and they said, What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us? ⁶ He prepared his chariot, and took his army with him; ⁷ and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over all of them. ⁸ Yahweh hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel; for the children of Israel went out with a high hand. ⁹ The Egyptians pursued after them: all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen, and his army; and overtook them encamping

by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baal Zephon. ¹⁰ When Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were very afraid. The children of Israel cried out to Yahweh. ¹¹ They said to Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you treated us this way, to bring us out of Egypt? ¹² Isn’t this the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, ‘Leave us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians?’ For it were better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. ¹³ Moses said to the people, Don’t be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of Yahweh, which He will work for you today: for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall never see them again. ¹⁴ Yahweh will fight for you, and you shall be still.

The Exodus through the Red Sea

¹⁵ Yahweh said to Moses, Why do you cry to me? Speak to the chil-

seem dead ends, with no human way out. But this is in order to show us the power of His salvation.

14:12 God wanted His people to leave Egypt in order to be *His* servants (7:16); but their response had been that they preferred to be Pharaoh’s servants. Moses brought them out of Egypt by *his* faith, not theirs (Acts 7:36,38; Heb. 11:28,29). In some ways, God drags us kicking and screaming out of the world and to be His people; this is what grace is all about.

14:13 *Whom you have seen* – The pursuing Egyptians were very close to the Israelites. God sometimes tests our faith to the very limit.

14:15 This was a rebuke of Moses by God. He had his crisis of faith, understandably – even though Moses calmly exhorted the people to have faith (:13). Yet by faith he brought them through the Red Sea (Heb. 11:28,29). Therefore as with his first exit from Egypt (he feared the wrath of the King, and then he didn’t, Heb. 11:27 cp. Ex. 2:14), his faith wavered, but came down on the right side.

dren of Israel, that they go forward. ¹⁶ Lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷ I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall go in after them: and I will get Myself honour over Pharaoh, and over all his armies, over his chariots, and over his horsemen. ¹⁸ The Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have gotten Myself honour over Pharaoh, over his chariots, and over his horsemen. ¹⁹ The angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them, and stood behind them. ²⁰ It came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud and the darkness, yet gave it light by night: and the one didn't come near the other all the night. ²¹ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and Yahweh caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. ²² The children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand, and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued, and went in after

them into the midst of the sea: all of Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. ²⁴ It happened in the morning watch, that Yahweh looked out on the Egyptian army through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and confused the Egyptian army. ²⁵ He took off their chariot wheels, and they drove them heavily; so that the Egyptians said, Let's flee from the face of Israel, for Yahweh fights for them against the Egyptians! ²⁶ Yahweh said to Moses, Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come again on the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen. ²⁷ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it. Yahweh overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned, and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even all Pharaoh's army that went in after them into the sea. There remained not so much as one of them. ²⁹ But the children of Israel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand, and on their left. ³⁰ Thus Yahweh saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the sea-

14:21 *Made... dry land... the waters were divided* – Language definitely reminiscent of the Genesis creation (Gen. 1:7). It's as if God was making a new creation for Israel. After our baptisms into Christ, we too become a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

14:22 1 Cor. 10:1,2 interprets crossing the Red Sea as prefiguring Christian baptism. Israel were baptized into Moses as we are into Christ, "in the cloud and in the sea". A cloud is water droplets. They had water on both sides of them and water above them – in this sense they were surrounded by water, just as baptism is a complete immersion in water.

shore. ³¹ Israel saw the great work which Yahweh did to the Egyptians, and the people feared Yahweh; and they believed in Yahweh, and in his servant Moses.

CHAPTER 15 Feb. 7

Moses' Song of Praise

Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to Yahweh, and said, I will sing to Yahweh, for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider He has thrown into the sea. ² Yah is my strength and song. He has become my salvation. This is my God, and I will praise Him; my father's God, and I will exalt Him. ³ Yahweh is a man of war. Yahweh is His name. ⁴ He has cast Pharaoh's chariots and his army into the sea. His chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea. ⁵ The deeps cover them. They went down into

the depths like a stone. ⁶ Your right hand, Yahweh, is glorious in power. Your right hand, Yahweh, dashes the enemy in pieces. ⁷ In the greatness of Your excellency, You overthrow those who rise up against You. You send forth Your wrath. It consumes them as stubble. ⁸ With the blast of Your nostrils, the waters were piled up. The floods stood upright as a heap. The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea. ⁹ The enemy said, 'I will pursue. I will overtake. I will divide the spoil. My desire shall be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them'. ¹⁰ You blew with Your wind. The sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. ¹¹ Who is like You, Yahweh, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? ¹² You stretched out Your right

15:1 The faithful believers will sing the Song of Moses when they enter God's Kingdom and all our troubled waters are permanently calm (Rev. 15:3). The Israelites are set up as our examples, and we should learn the lessons from their subsequent failures.

15:2 *My father's God* – Moses was only with his parents in babyhood and maybe very early childhood. They inculcated in him the faith of Yahweh at that early age. They likely died whilst he was still in the court of Pharaoh and looked like an ungrateful child who had gone the way of the world and forgotten his God and his people and their efforts to raise him in the faith. Moses here pays tribute to them. What a surprise awaits them in the Kingdom!

15:4 Pharaoh's men ran into the Sea themselves in hot pursuit of Israel; but God confirmed them in that desire, so in a sense He cast them into the Sea. There is strong emphasis on the image of God throwing or casting the Egyptians into the Red Sea (:1,21); God confirms people in the way they wish to go, in the heart they wish to have.

15:11 *Among the gods* – The Egyptian gods had been declared dead or powerless by the plagues. Israel enthusiastically sung of Yahweh's excellence above these gods; and yet they still carried the idols who represented those gods with them, and worshipped them (Ez. 20:7,8; Acts 7:42,43). It's one thing to enthusiastically sing of God's truths in the words of hymns and songs, but to live out those words in daily life is quite another.

hand. The earth swallowed them. ¹³ You, in Your grace, have led the people that You have redeemed. You have guided them in Your strength to Your holy habitation. ¹⁴ The peoples have heard. They tremble. Pangs have taken hold on the inhabitants of Philistia. ¹⁵ Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed. Trembling takes hold of the mighty men of Moab. All the inhabitants of Canaan are melted away. ¹⁶ Terror and dread falls on them. By the greatness of your arm they are as still as a stone—until Your people pass over, Yahweh, until the people pass over whom You have purchased. ¹⁷ You shall bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of your inheritance, the place, Yahweh, which You have made for yourself to dwell in; the sanctuary, Lord, which Your hands have established. ¹⁸ Yahweh shall reign forever and ever. ¹⁹ For the horses of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and Yahweh brought back the waters of the sea on them; but the children of Israel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea. ²⁰ Miriam the prophetess, the

sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dances. ²¹ Miriam answered them, Sing to Yahweh, for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider He has thrown into the sea.

Bitter Waters at Marah

²² Moses led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. ²³ When they came to Marah, they couldn't drink from the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore its name was called Marah. ²⁴ The people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? ²⁵ Then he cried to Yahweh. Yahweh showed him a tree, and he threw it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them; ²⁶ and He said, If you will diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, and will do that which is right in His eyes, and will pay attention to His commandments, and keep all

15:15 *Are melted away* – So the people enthusiastically sung, and so it was in reality, as reported by Rahab (Josh. 2:9-11). But when Israel came to enter Canaan, they preferred to believe that the people there hadn't melted away at all, but were far too strong for them (Num. 13:30-33). Israel's hearts "melted" for fear of those melting Canaanites (Josh. 14:8). Again, we can loudly sing of God's power over all that might be obstacles in our path to entering the Kingdom, but to live and feel this in continual daily life is something else.

15:22 Soon after their baptism at the Red Sea, God gave His people tests. This is often seen in the lives of those baptized into Christ.

15:24 *Murmured* – We are specifically told not to murmur as they did (1 Cor. 10:10). They soon lost the intensity of joyful faith they had when they sung the Song of Moses earlier in this chapter. We too struggle to keep the intensity of faith which we have at some specific moments.

His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you, which I have put on the Egyptians; for I am Yahweh who heals you. ²⁷ They came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water, and seventy palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

CHAPTER 16 Feb. 8

Israel Complain about Lack of Food

They took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. ² The whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness; ³ and the children of Israel said to them, We wish that we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots, when we ate our fill of bread, for you have

brought us out into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. ⁴ Then Yahweh said to Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from the sky for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law, or not. ⁵ It shall come to pass on the sixth day, that they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. ⁶ Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, At evening, then you shall know that Yahweh has brought you out from the land of Egypt; ⁷ and in the morning, then you shall see the glory of Yahweh; because He hears your murmurings against Yahweh. Who are we, that you murmur against us? ⁸ Moses said, Now Yahweh shall give you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to fully satisfy you; because Yahweh hears your murmurings which you murmur against Him. And who are we?

15:27 The Israelites in their twelve tribes must have marvelled at God's gracious providence when they came across twelve wells in the desert, one for each tribe. In our wilderness journeys we too at times are amazed by God's kind providence. The twelve wells enabled 70 palm trees to grow. Gen. 10 listed 70 Gentile nations as the descendants of Noah's sons after the flood, and the number 70 is associated with the Gentiles. The implication is that Israel's blessings were to be shared with the Gentile world. Abraham's seed was to be a blessing to the world, and we who are in Christ are likewise that seed, and aren't to be selfish with our spiritual blessings but share them with the surrounding world. Israel's spiritual elitism and isolationism was exactly the opposite of what God intended.

16:3 As Israel exaggerated in their minds how good it had been in Egypt, forgetting it was the land of their suffering and desperation, so we can look back to the world we left at baptism [cp. the Red Sea crossing] and imagine it was so far better than it was.

16:6 God had brought Israel out of Egypt, but the reality and wonder of it was subsequently lost on them, just as it can be on us.

16:8 It's twice emphasized in :8,12 that the manna would completely fill them. God's word as it is in Christ can alone fully satisfy us here in life's wilderness.

Your murmurings are not against us, but against Yahweh. ⁹ Moses said to Aaron, Tell all the congregation of the children of Israel, ‘Come near before Yahweh, for He has heard your murmurings’. ¹⁰ It happened, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of Yahweh appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹² I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, ‘At evening you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread: and you shall know that I am Yahweh your God’.

God Gives Manna

¹³ It happened at evening that quail came up and covered the camp; and in the morning the dew lay around the camp. ¹⁴ When the dew that lay had gone, behold, on the surface of the wilderness was a small round thing, small as the frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, What is it? For they didn’t know what it was. Moses said to them, It

is the bread which Yahweh has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is the thing which Yahweh has commanded: Gather of it everyone according to his eating; an omer a head, according to the number of your persons, you shall take it, every man for those who are in his tent. ¹⁷ The children of Israel did so, and gathered some more, some less. ¹⁸ When they measured it with an omer, he who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack. They gathered every man according to his eating. ¹⁹ Moses said to them, Let no one leave of it until the morning. ²⁰ Notwithstanding they didn’t listen to Moses, but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and became foul: and Moses was angry with them. ²¹ They gathered it morning by morning, everyone according to his eating. When the sun grew hot, it melted. ²² It happened that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one, and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. ²³ He said to them, This is that which Yahweh has spoken, ‘Tomorrow is a solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to Yahweh. Bake that

Not against us – What they said against Moses they said against God, in the sense that all God’s people represent Him, and our attitude to His people is our attitude to God – and will be the basis of our final judgment (Mt. 25:40).

16:18 Jewish tradition interpreted this as meaning that the stronger, fitter people gathered more and shared it with those who were weaker and couldn’t gather so much, resulting in them all having the same amount of manna. Paul quotes this tradition with approval in 2 Cor. 8:15, using it to argue that rich Christians should give to those who are poorer. Those who refused to obey this command found their manna was corrupted by morning – teaching that unless we share our manna or wealth (as 2 Cor.8:15 interprets it) before the morning of the Lord’s coming, we will incur His wrath.

16:19 They were given enough food only for each day. Jesus alluded to this when He asked us to pray that God will give us enough bread for today only (Mt. 6:11).

which you want to bake, and boil that which you want to boil; and all that remains over lay up for yourselves to be kept until the morning'.²⁴ They laid it up until the morning, as Moses asked, and it didn't become foul, neither was there any worm in it.²⁵ Moses said, Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to Yahweh. Today you shall not find it in the field.²⁶ Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day is the Sabbath. In it there shall be none.²⁷ It happened on the seventh day, that some of the people went out to gather, and they found none.²⁸ Yahweh said to Moses, How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?²⁹ Behold, because Yahweh has given you the Sabbath, therefore He gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days. Everyone stay in his place. Let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.³⁰ So the people rested on the seventh day.³¹ The house of Israel called its name Manna, and it was like coriander seed, white; and its taste was like wafers with honey.³² Moses said, This is the thing which Yahweh has commanded, 'Let an omer-full of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth

from the land of Egypt'.³³ Moses said to Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer-full of manna in it, and lay it up before Yahweh, to be kept throughout your generations.³⁴ As Yahweh commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept.³⁵ The children of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land. They ate the manna until they came to the borders of the land of Canaan.³⁶ Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.

CHAPTER 17 Feb. 9

Water from the Rock

All the congregation of the children of Israel travelled from the wilderness of Sin, by their journeys, according to Yahweh's commandment, and encamped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink.² Therefore the people quarrelled with Moses, and said, Give us water to drink. Moses said to them, Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test Yahweh?³ The people were thirsty for water there; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Why have you brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us, our children, and our livestock with thirst?⁴ Moses cried to Yahweh, saying, What shall I do with these people?

16:27 The manna represented the word of God and the salvation which comes through its revelation in Christ (Jn. 6:48,63). Israel could gather it on six days of the week, but not on the seventh. The seventh day represents the Millennium / Kingdom (cp. how the manna ceased as soon as they entered Canaan, representing the Kingdom). Yet on the seventh day Israel sought to collect manna but found none – as the foolish virgins of the new Israel will seek the oil of the word when it is no longer available. Nobody will be indifferent in the day of judgment. All will want to gather the manna, to be filled with the oil. Now is the day to do so.

They are almost ready to stone me. ⁵ Yahweh said to Moses, Walk on before the people, and take the elders of Israel with you, and take the rod in your hand with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb. You shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink. Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ He called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because the children of Israel quarrelled, and because they put Yahweh to the test, saying, Is Yahweh among us, or not?

The Battle with Amalek

⁸ Then Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. ⁹ Moses said to Joshua, Choose men for us, and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with God's rod in my hand. ¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses had told him, and fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ It happened, when

Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side. His hands were steady until sunset. ¹³ Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. ¹⁴ Yahweh said to Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under the sky. ¹⁵ Moses built an altar, and called its name Yahweh our Banner. ¹⁶ He said, Yah has sworn: 'Yahweh will have war with Amalek from generation to generation'.

CHAPTER 18 Feb. 9

Jethro Visits Moses

Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, how that Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt.

17:6 The rock that was struck represented Christ (1 Cor. 10:4) – water came out of His side when He was 'struck' in crucifixion. Paul says that the rock followed them – in the sense that the water from the smitten rock followed them as a gushing river. This speaks of the constant refreshment and life available from Christ in our wilderness journeys. Yet despite the wonder of that provision, the people still murmured, made a golden calf, wanted to return to Egypt – they failed to perceive the wonder of God's constant presence, just as we can.

17:11 Uplifted hands represent intense prayer (Lam. 2:19; 2 Chron. 6:12,13; Ezra 9:5; Ps. 28:2; 141:2; 1 Tim. 2:8). The Bible is always teaching us the power of just one person – when Moses didn't pray so fervently, Israelite lives were lost. Others' wellbeing and final victory partially depends upon our prayer for them, hence Paul's example of and exhortation to pray for others continually.

17:12 Moses with his arms held above his head with men both side of him until the sun went down invites comparison with Christ on the cross, where He intensely prayed for the final victory of us God's people.

² Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, received Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her away, ³ and her two sons. The name of one son was Gershom, for Moses said, I have lived as a foreigner in a foreign land. ⁴ The name of the other was Eliezer, for he said, My father's God was my help and delivered me from Pharaoh's sword. ⁵ Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses into the wilderness where he was encamped, at the Mountain of God. ⁶ He said to Moses, I, your father-in-law Jethro, have come to you with your wife, and her two sons with her. ⁷ Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and bowed and kissed him. They asked each other of their welfare, and they came into the tent. ⁸ Moses told his father-in-law all that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardships that had come on them on the way, and how Yahweh delivered them. ⁹ Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which Yahweh had done to Israel, in that He had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians. ¹⁰ Jethro said, Blessed be Yahweh, who has delivered you

out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. ¹¹ Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all gods because of the thing in which they dealt arrogantly against them. ¹² Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God. Aaron came with all of the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

An Administrative System Put in Place

¹³ It happened on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from the morning to the evening. ¹⁴ When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that you do for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning to evening? ¹⁵ Moses said to his father-in-law, Because the people come to me to inquire of God. ¹⁶ When they have a matter, they come to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbour, and I make them know the statutes of God, and

18:2 Moses "sent away" this woman – the Septuagint uses the same Greek word translated to "divorce" in 1 Cor. 7:11-13. Moses allowed divorce for the hardness of Israel's hearts (Mt. 19:8) and yet he himself appears to have divorced her – for the hardness of his heart?

18:3 Moses' children had names which showed his recognition he was a stranger in the land where he was living; he lived as a foreigner in Midian. Few people live in a country for 40 years without feeling they belong to it. We who are the Israel of God are to live as foreigners and pilgrims in this land which in fact is our eternal inheritance (Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11).

18:15 Again we see the degree to which Moses was functionally God to the people, although he wasn't God Himself in person. The same can be said of Jesus.

His laws. ¹⁷ Moses' father-in-law said to him, The thing that you do is not good. ¹⁸ You will surely wear away, both you, and this people that is with you; for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to perform it yourself alone. ¹⁹ Listen now to my voice. I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You represent the people before God, and bring the causes to God. ²⁰ You shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and shall show them the way in which they must walk, and the work that they must do. ²¹ Moreover you shall provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God: men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. ²² Let them judge the people at all times. It shall be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they shall judge themselves. So shall it be easier for you, and they shall share the load with you. ²³ If you will do this thing, and God commands you so, then you will be able to endure, and all of these people also will go to their place in peace. ²⁴ So Moses

listened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. ²⁵ Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. ²⁶ They judged the people at all times. They brought the hard causes to Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves. ²⁷ Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way into his own land.

CHAPTER 19 Feb. 10

God Proposes a Covenant

In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that same day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ² When they had departed from Rephidim, and had come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mountain. ³ Moses went up to God, and Yahweh called to him out of the mountain, saying, This is what you shall tell the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴ 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. ⁵ Now

18:18 Moses accepts Jethro's advice on the basis that he would otherwise "wear away"; even though his natural strength never abated (Dt. 34:7). Was that because he followed Jethro's advice – or because God blessed him anyway, making Jethro's advice irrelevant?

18:21 As with the New Testament qualifications for leadership amongst God's people, birth, education, charisma and social standing were irrelevant. Spiritual qualifications were to decide who was chosen for leadership – a concept unheard of in any other religion.

19:4 The eagle tries to teach its young to fly independently by casting them out of the nest and flying beneath them to catch them if they fall, as well as the draft from its own wings keeping them in motion. God wants His people to fly independently, not just be carried by Him.

therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice, and keep My covenant, then you shall be My very own possession from among all peoples; for all the earth is Mine; ⁶ and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation'. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel. ⁷ Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Yahweh commanded him. ⁸ All the people answered together, and said, All that Yahweh has spoken we will do. Moses reported the words of the people to Yahweh. ⁹ Yahweh said to Moses, Behold, I come to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever. Moses told the words of the people to Yahweh. ¹⁰ Yahweh said to Moses, Go to the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments, ¹¹ and be ready against the third day; for on the third day Yahweh will come down in the sight of all the people on Mount Sinai. ¹² You shall set bounds to the people all around, saying, 'Be careful that you don't go up onto the mountain,

or touch its border. Whoever touches the mountain shall be surely put to death. ¹³ No hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether it is animal or man, he shall not live'. When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come up to the mountain.

The Need to Respect God's Holiness

¹⁴ Moses went down from the mountain to the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. ¹⁵ He said to the people, Be ready by the third day. Don't have sexual relations with a woman. ¹⁶ It happened on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain, and the sound of an exceedingly loud trumpet; and all the people who were in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the lower part of the mountain. ¹⁸ Mount Sinai, all of it, smoked, because Yahweh descended on it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. ¹⁹ When

19:6 We in Christ are His Kingdom of priests (1 Pet. 2:9). The priests were from the tribe of Levi, and the kings from Judah. But God's intention was that all His people should be priests, rather than giving the responsibility for spiritual care and welfare to a select group of specialists. Nearly all religions delegate spiritual care to some group of specialists, but amongst God's true people we are all intended to be priests. Although Christ was from the kingly tribe of Judah, He is a priest too (Heb. 7:11-13) – and we who are in Him can therefore be a Kingdom of priests even now, and in the future be king-priests who shall reign eternally on earth (Rev. 5:10). Whilst the full physical manifestation of God's Kingdom is yet to come at Christ's return, we who are under the Kingship and dominion of God are in that sense His kingdom in embryo, in the sense that the people ruled over by a king are his 'kingdom'.

the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice.²⁰ Yahweh came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. Yahweh called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.²¹ Yahweh said to Moses, Go down, warn the people, lest they break through to Yahweh to gaze, and many of them perish.²² Let the priests also, who come near to Yahweh, sanctify themselves, lest Yahweh break forth on them.²³ Moses said to Yahweh, The people can't come up to Mount Sinai, for you warned us, saying, 'Set bounds around the mountain, and sanctify it'.²⁴ Yahweh said to him, Go down and you shall bring Aaron up with you, but don't let the priests and the people break through to come up to Yahweh, lest He break forth on them.²⁵ So Moses went down to the people, and told them.

CHAPTER 20 Feb. 10

Ten Commandments Given

God spoke all these words, saying,² I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.³ You shall have no other gods before Me.⁴ You shall not make for yourselves an idol, nor any image of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:⁵ you shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and on the fourth generation of those who hate Me,⁶ and showing loving kindness to thousands of those who love Me and keep my commandments.⁷ You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes His

19:19 According to Heb. 12:18-29, Moses was very frightened by the earthquake and sound of the voice. That passage draws a comparison with the voice of the blood of Christ, which is yet more powerful – having the power to shake all things to their very core.

19:24 God judges people in a manner appropriate to their sin – if the people 'broke through' to gaze at Yahweh, He would 'break through' in judgment against them.

20:4 Israel weren't to worship any appearance of God or anything which claimed to be a representation of Him – He wanted them to worship Him directly, facing the utter reality of the fact that we can have direct contact with Him.

20:5 *Jealous* – The more love someone shows to someone, the more they are going to be jealous about them, especially when the beloved one has agreed to accept that love. God's love for us is colossal, epitomized in the gift of His Son to die for us in demonstration of His love. He is therefore jealous over us, our thoughts, actions, feelings – for He sees all. It is painful for Him beyond words when we turn away to other gods – and it must be thrilling for Him to see us eagerly wanting to respond to Him, in a world which for the most part has refused His love or treats it as something ordinary.

20:7 *His Name in vain* – We take the Name to ourselves by baptism into that Name; baptism is a calling upon ourselves the Lord's Name (Acts 15:17; 22:16). We aren't to do this "in vain", for nothing, but to appreciate the wonder of it.

name in vain. ⁸ Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ You shall labour six days, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God. You shall not do any work in it, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your livestock, nor your stranger who is within your gates; ¹¹ for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day, and made it holy. ¹² Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which Yahweh your God gives you. ¹³ You shall not murder. ¹⁴ You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵ You shall not steal. ¹⁶ You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour. ¹⁷ You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbour's.

The People Are Fearful

¹⁸ All the people perceived the thunders, the lightnings, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking. When the people saw it, they trembled, and stayed at a distance. ¹⁹ They said to Moses, Speak with us yourself, and we will listen; but don't let God speak with us, lest we die. ²⁰ Moses said to the people, Don't be afraid, for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, that you won't sin. ²¹ The people stayed at a distance, and Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. ²² Yahweh said to Moses, This is what you shall tell the children of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. ²³ You shall most certainly not make alongside Me gods of silver, or gods of gold for yourselves. ²⁴ You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your cattle. In every place where I record My name

20:17 *Not covet* – God's law differs from human laws in that it criminalizes internal attitudes. It was impossible to prove the sin of covetousness, nor enforce the law against it – because it's invisible to others. Yet the God who sees all stands in judgment upon our innermost thoughts and desires.

20:19 People prefer not to have a direct relationship with God, hence the hierarchies and pyramid structure of many churches. But God wants to have a direct personal relationship with us as individuals. They failed to see that Divine words given through another person really are the voice of God to us personally. Perhaps our difficulty with appreciating an inspired Bible is similar; we know the theory, but do we really see the wonder of the fact that what we read is the awesome voice of God Himself to us?

20:24 We are made from the dust of the earth. God doesn't want beautiful externalities, He wants us to worship Him from the heart, accepting us as we are. The Law of Moses recognizes so often that Israel wouldn't be fully obedient, hence the next verse goes on to speak of how *if* they still insisted on building not an earth altar but a stone one, then even if they make use of God's concession to human weakness, they must still abide by His principles.

I will come down to you and I will bless you. ²⁵ If you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of cut stones; for if you lift up your tool on it, you have polluted it. ²⁶ Neither shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed to it’.

CHAPTER 21 Feb. 11

Regulations about Servants

Now these are the ordinances which you shall set before them. ² If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years and in the seventh he shall go out free without paying anything. ³ If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself. If he is married, then his wife shall go out with him. ⁴ If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself. ⁵ But if the servant shall plainly say, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children. I will not go out free;’ ⁶ then his master shall

bring him to the *elohim*, and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever. ⁷ If a man sells his daughter to be a female servant, she shall not go out as the male servants do. ⁸ If she doesn’t please her master, who has married her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her. ⁹ If he marries her to his son, he shall deal with her as a daughter. ¹⁰ If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marital rights. ¹¹ If he doesn’t do these three things for her, she may go free without paying any money.

Regulations about Violent Behaviour

¹² One who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death, ¹³ but not if it is unintentional, but God allows it to happen: then I will

I will come down to you and I will bless you – “You” is you singular in the Hebrew here. Wherever an ordinary Israelite offered sacrifice, God would come to them personally. Yet this is the very language of God coming unto Moses on the top of Sinai (19:20 “came down”) – as if to imply that the very pinnacle of Moses’ relationship with God, meeting Him on the top of the mount, is just as attainable for each of God’s people who truly sacrifices to Him.

21:6 *Elohim* – The word literally means ‘mighty ones’, and is usually translated “God”; but it can refer to Angels and also to men; in this case, to the elders or judges of Israel.

This custom is alluded to in Ps. 40:6, and applied to Christ in Heb. 10:5-10. For love of us, the wife whom He was given by God His “master” (:4), Christ chose to stay in the Father’s house for ever. The nailing of the ear to a piece of wood is understood in Hebrews 10 as prophetic of Christ’s nailing to the cross. The ear represented obedient listening to the Master’s word. Christ on the cross was ultimately obedient to God’s word – for our sakes. That we are seen as His wife should inspire us to the utmost faithfulness and support of His cause in this world.

appoint you a place where he shall flee. ¹⁴ If a man schemes and comes presumptuously on his neighbour to kill him, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die. ¹⁵ Anyone who attacks his father or his mother shall be surely put to death. ¹⁶ Anyone who kidnaps someone and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. ¹⁷ Anyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. ¹⁸ If men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone, or with his fist, and he doesn't die, but is confined to bed; ¹⁹ if he rises again and walks around with his staff, then he who struck him shall be cleared: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall provide for his healing until he is thoroughly healed. ²⁰ If a man strikes his servant or his maid with a rod, and he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. ²¹ Notwithstanding, if he gets up after a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his property. ²² If men fight and hurt a pregnant woman so that she gives birth prematurely, and yet no harm follows, he shall be surely fined as much as the woman's husband demands and the judges allow. ²³ But if

any harm follows, then you must take life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burning for burning, wound for wound, and bruise for bruise. ²⁶ If a man strikes his servant's eye, or his maid's eye, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. ²⁷ If he strikes out his male servant's tooth, or his female servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake. ²⁸ If a bull gores a man or a woman to death, the bull shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the bull shall not be held responsible. ²⁹ But if the bull had a habit of goring in the past, and it has been testified to its owner, and he has not kept it in, but it has killed a man or a woman, the bull shall be stoned, and its owner shall also be put to death. ³⁰ If a ransom is laid on him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is laid on him. ³¹ Whether it has gored a son or has gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. ³² If the bull gores a male servant or a female servant, thirty shekels of silver shall be given to their master, and the ox shall be stoned. ³³ If a man opens a pit, or if

21:14 The altar represented Christ (Heb. 13:10). He is the place of refuge whither we may flee, who like the man of :13 have committed sins worthy of death and yet against our deepest will. Whilst we cannot justify all our sins by blaming them on circumstances, within some kind of 'situational ethic', it is also true that God recognizes that at times and in some ways we sin without deeply intending to.

21:17 To deal with a person as if they are an object is judged by God as bad as murder. The value and meaning of the human person is paramount with God, and is reflected in His law.

21:20 A slave was to be respected as a person no less than anyone else. A person's social or economic standing can never excuse abusing them.

a man digs a pit and doesn't cover it, and a bull or a donkey falls into it, ³⁴ the owner of the pit shall make it good. He shall give money to its owner, and the dead animal shall be his. ³⁵ If one man's bull injures another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live bull, and divide its price; and they shall also divide the dead animal. ³⁶ Or if it is known that the bull was in the habit of goring in the past, and its owner has not kept it in, he shall surely pay bull for bull, and the dead animal shall be his own.

CHAPTER 22 Feb. 12

Regulations about Theft and Loss

If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kills it, or sells it; he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. ² If the thief is found breaking in, and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt of bloodshed for him. ³ If the sun has risen on him, guilt of bloodshed shall be for him; he shall make restitution. If he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. ⁴ If the stolen property is found in his hand alive, whether it is ox, donkey, or sheep, he shall pay double. ⁵ If a man causes a field or vineyard to be eaten, and lets his animal loose, and it grazes in another man's

field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field, and from the best of his own vineyard. ⁶ If fire breaks out, and catches in thorns so that the stacks of grain, or the standing grain, or the field are consumed; he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution. ⁷ If a man delivers to his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it is stolen out of the man's house; if the thief is found, he shall pay double. ⁸ If the thief isn't found, then the master of the house shall come near to God, to find out if he hasn't put his hand to his neighbour's goods. ⁹ For every matter of trespass, whether it be for ox, for donkey, for sheep, for clothing, or for any kind of lost thing, about which one says, 'This is mine', the cause of both parties shall come before God. He whom God condemns shall pay double to his neighbour. ¹⁰ If a man delivers to his neighbour a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep, and it dies or is injured, or driven away, no man seeing it; ¹¹ the oath of Yahweh shall be between them both, whether he hasn't put his hand to his neighbour's goods; and its owner shall accept it, and he shall not make restitution. ¹² But if it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to its

21:33 *Doesn't cover it* – As the punishment for not keeping in an animal known to be dangerous (:29). These laws were seeking to inculcate sensitivity to others. We too should live our lives thinking about the possible consequence to others of our actions, both in what we commit and what we omit to do.

22:7 *Pay double* – But Zacchaeus paid back four times what he had stolen (Lk. 19:8). The existence of God's law shouldn't inculcate a spirit of minimalism in us, doing the letter of the law and no more. Rather if we perceive the principles behind it, we will do far over and above what the letter of the law requires.

22:10 'God' here refers to the judges or elders; to come before God's representative is to come before God.

owner. ¹³ If it is torn in pieces, let him bring it for evidence. He shall not make good that which was torn. ¹⁴ If a man borrows anything of his neighbour's, and it is injured, or dies, its owner not being with it, he shall surely make restitution. ¹⁵ If its owner is with it, he shall not make it good. If it is a leased thing, it came for its lease.

Regulations Teaching Sensitivity to Others

¹⁶ If a man entices a virgin who isn't pledged to be married, and lies with her, he shall surely pay a dowry for her to be his wife. ¹⁷ If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins. ¹⁸ You shall not allow a sorceress to live. ¹⁹ Whoever has sex with an animal shall surely be put to death. ²⁰ He who sacrifices to any god, except to Yahweh only, shall be utterly destroyed. ²¹ You shall not wrong an alien, neither shall you oppress him, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. ²² You shall not take advantage of any widow or fa-

therless child. ²³ If you take advantage of them at all, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; ²⁴ and My wrath will grow hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless. ²⁵ If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be to him as a creditor; neither shall you charge him interest. ²⁶ If you take your neighbour's garment as guarantee of a loan, you shall restore it to him before the sun goes down, ²⁷ for that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What would he sleep in? It will happen, when he cries to Me, that I will hear, for I am gracious. ²⁸ You shall not blaspheme God, nor curse a ruler of your people. ²⁹ You shall not delay to offer from your harvest and from the outflow of your presses. You shall give the firstborn of your sons to Me. ³⁰ You shall do likewise with your cattle and with your sheep. Seven days it shall be with its mother, then on the eighth day you shall give it to Me. ³¹ You shall be holy men to Me, therefore

22:21 Israel were to be motivated in kindness to others by the recollection that they had been redeemed from Egypt; the memory of our redemption through the waters of baptism [cp. the Red Sea] should have the same effect upon us.

22:25 Israelites weren't to lend to each other for interest. Yet Jesus tells the rejected man that he should've done at least this (Mt. 25:7) – as if to say that the man should've done *at least something* with what God had given him, even if it wasn't the ideal, and even if it technically infringed God's law. Indifference and selfish laziness with God's gifts is therefore highlighted as being so reprehensible to Jesus.

22:31 This command wasn't only for hygienic reasons. God wished to encourage His people to have a healthy work ethic, not taking short cuts, but eating animals they had raised themselves for that purpose. We live in a society where laziness and trying to live for free has become almost an art form. We cannot ultimately get around the curse, that we shall eat only as a result of the sweat of our own labour. We have to

you shall not eat any flesh that is torn by animals in the field. You shall cast it to the dogs.

CHAPTER 23 Feb. 13

Principles of Judgment

You shall not spread a false report. Don't join your hand with the wicked to be a malicious witness. ² You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; neither shall you testify in court to side with a multitude to pervert justice; ³ neither shall you show partiality to a poor man in his legal case. ⁴ If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. ⁵ If you see the donkey of him who hates you fallen down under his burden, don't leave him, you shall surely help him with it. ⁶ You shall not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits. ⁷ Keep far from a false charge, and don't kill the innocent and righteous:

for I will not justify the wicked. ⁸ You shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds those who have sight and perverts the words of the righteous. ⁹ You shall not oppress an alien, for you know the heart of an alien, since you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

Principles of Agricultural Ethics

¹⁰ For six years you shall sow your land, and shall gather in its increase, ¹¹ but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the animals of the field shall eat. In the same way, you shall deal with your vineyard and with your olive grove. ¹² Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your handmaid, and the alien may be refreshed. ¹³ Be careful to do all things that I have said to you;

accept our humanity and our fallen condition, looking for the lifting of the curse in God's future Kingdom.

23:2 We go astray "like sheep" (Is. 53:6) – we tend to sin because of others' influence, because we're not as strongly individualistic and independent as we like to think we are.

23:4, 5 These are further examples of how God's law differs from human laws in that it criminalizes internal attitudes. It was impossible to prove the sin of omitting to help your enemy's animal, nor enforce the law against it – because it would've been invisible to others. Yet the God who sees all stands in judgment upon our innermost thoughts and desires. Note too that sins of omission are just as bad as sins of commission; the man who refused to help the animal could've returned to his home that day feeling he hadn't actually committed anything wrong. But his sin of omission would've been noticed by God.

23:12 God's sensitivity to animals shines through the Law – the fact even animals are living beings and not mere machines should be felt by us too. God's intention was to inculcate an all round spirit of sensitivity to others in human life, and that included animals.

23:13 They were not to even mention the names of idols – a principle alluded to in Eph. 5:3, where we are told that we shouldn't even name or talk about immorality and evil. For these are the idols of our age. We aren't to sin vicariously, by watching, reading and speaking about sinful things whilst not physically doing them ourselves.

and don't invoke the name of other gods, neither let them be heard out of your mouth. ¹⁴ You shall observe a feast to Me three times a year. ¹⁵ You shall observe the feast of unleavened bread. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Abib (for in it you came out from Egypt), and no one shall appear before me empty. ¹⁶ And the feast of harvest, the first fruits of your labours, which you sow in the field: and the feast of harvest, at the end of the year, when you gather in your labours out of the field. ¹⁷ Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord Yahweh. ¹⁸ You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread, neither shall the fat of My feast remain all night until the morning. ¹⁹ The first of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of Yahweh your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

The Exclusive Nature of the Covenant

²⁰ Behold, I send an angel before you, to keep you by the way, and

to bring you into the place which I have prepared. ²¹ Pay attention to him, and listen to his voice. Don't provoke him, for he will not pardon your disobedience, for My name is in him. ²² But if you indeed listen to his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies, and an adversary to your adversaries. ²³ For My angel shall go before you, and bring you in to the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Canaanite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite; and I will cut them off. ²⁴ You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor follow their practices, but you shall utterly overthrow them and demolish their pillars. ²⁵ You shall serve Yahweh your God, and He will bless your bread and your water, and I will take sickness away from your midst. ²⁶ No one will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will fulfil the number of your days. ²⁷ I will send My terror before you, and will confuse all the people to whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. ²⁸ I will send the hornet before you, which will drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before

23:21 God's Name being carried by the Angel explains how Moses later is recorded as talking with Yahweh face to face, even though we are also told that He cannot ever be seen by humans. Moses spoke with the Angel who carried the Yahweh Name, and who was therefore functionally as God to men. The same principle explains how men, and especially Christ, can be spoken of as God because they carried His Name, without this making them God Himself in person.

23:23 This happened invisibly, with the Angel working through circumstances to weaken those tribes. But the Israelites failed to believe this verse, feeling that those tribes were far too strong for them (Num. 13:30-33).

23:28 The sending of hornets ahead of Israel parallels the sending of the Angel ahead of them (:23). The reference may be to literal hornets devastating and weakening the Canaanites; or it could refer instead to Egyptian tribes or the Philistines, some of

you. ²⁹ I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the animals of the field multiply against you. ³⁰ Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and inherit the land. ³¹ I will set your border from the Red Sea even to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. ³² You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. ³³ They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me, for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.

CHAPTER 24 Feb. 14

God Enters Covenant with Israel

He said to Moses, Come up to Yahweh, you, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship from a

distance. ² Moses alone shall come near to Yahweh, but they shall not come near, neither shall the people go up with him. ³ Moses came and told the people all the words of Yahweh, and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which Yahweh has spoken will we do. ⁴ Moses wrote all the words of Yahweh, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the mountain, and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ He sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of cattle to Yahweh. ⁶ Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. ⁷ He took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people, and they said, All that Yahweh has spoken will we do, and be obedient. ⁸ Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on

whom had hornets on their armour, attacking and weakening the Canaanite tribes just before the Israelites arrived. This situation was providentially arranged by the Angel who went before Israel. The obstacles to our possessing the Kingdom seem huge and strong, but in fact they have been significantly weakened by God's providence. Invisible to us, the Angels likewise are potentially preparing our way to enter the Kingdom. **23:29** The God who is so far away from this earth foresees the situations we will face in life, and like a true Father, arranges things so that they will not be too great for us to overcome. His sensitivity to us is amazing.

24:7 Moses could read – for he had been raised with the best of the Egyptian education system (Acts 7:22).

24:8 *Blood of the covenant* – It wasn't that the blood *was* the covenant, but the death of the slain animal represented the confirmation and certainty of the covenant. Christ's death confirmed the new covenant which was made in the promises to Abraham (Rom. 15:8; Gal. 3:15-19). Believers take the cup of the new covenant in the breaking of bread service (1 Cor. 11:25), as a token of the absolute certainty of God's basic promises to us who have had those same covenant promises made to us through baptism (Gal. 3:27-29). We will eternally inherit the earth – and the blood of Christ confirmed that to us.

the people, and said, Look, this is the blood of the covenant, which Yahweh has made with you concerning all these words. ⁹ Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up. ¹⁰ They saw the God of Israel. Under His feet was like a paved work of sapphire stone, like the skies for clearness. ¹¹ He didn't lay His hand on the nobles of the children of Israel. They saw God, and ate and drank. ¹² Yahweh said to Moses, Come up to me on the mountain, and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and the commands that I have written, that you may teach them.

Moses Ascends Mount Sinai

¹³ Moses rose up with Joshua, his servant, and Moses went up onto God's Mountain. ¹⁴ He said to the elders, Wait here for us, until we come again to you. Behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. Whoever is involved in a dispute can go to them. ¹⁵ Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶ The glory of Yahweh settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. The seventh day He

called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷ The appearance of the glory of Yahweh was like devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. ¹⁸ Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up on the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

CHAPTER 25 Feb. 14

Preparations to Make the Tabernacle

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Speak to the children of Israel, that they take an offering for Me. From everyone whose heart makes him willing you shall take My offering. ³ This is the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, brass, ⁴ blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goats' hair, ⁵ rams' skins dyed red, sea cow hides, acacia wood, ⁶ oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense, ⁷ onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod and for the breastplate. ⁸ Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. ⁹ According to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of

24:11 To eat and drink with the Lord is a sign He accepts us and does not wish to destroy us. This is the comfort of doing so at the breaking of bread meeting.

24:12 Yahweh wrote the Law. Yet the Lord Jesus speaks of *Moses* writing the precepts of the Law (Mk. 10:5). "The book of the law of Moses" is parallel with "the book of the law of Yahweh" (Neh. 8:1; 2 Chron. 17:9); it was "the book of the law of Yahweh given by Moses" (2 Chron. 34:14). God was so strongly manifest in Moses, without making Moses to be God Himself in person.

25:2 Willing hearted giving to God is important – the giving must never be from a sense of unavoidable obligation. In appealing for generosity to our poorer brethren, Paul uses this idea – speaking of how a willing heart in a cheerful giver is so loved by God (2 Cor. 8:19; 9:7).

all of its furniture, even so you shall make it.

The Ark

¹⁰ They shall make an ark of acacia wood. Its length shall be two and a half cubits, its breadth a cubit and a half, and a cubit and a half its height. ¹¹ You shall overlay it with pure gold. You shall overlay it inside and outside, and you shall make a gold moulding around it. ¹² You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in its four feet. Two rings shall be on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. ¹³ You shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. ¹⁴ You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry the ark. ¹⁵ The poles shall be in the rings of the ark. They shall not be taken from it. ¹⁶ You shall put the testimony which I shall give you into the ark. ¹⁷ You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. Two and a half cubits shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth.

¹⁸ You shall make two cherubim of hammered gold. You shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. ¹⁹ Make one cherub at the one end, and one cherub at the other end. You shall make the cherubim on its two ends of one piece with the mercy seat. ²⁰ The cherubim shall spread out their wings upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces toward one another. The faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat. ²¹ You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I will give you. ²² There I will meet with you, and I will tell you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the testimony, all that I command you for the children of Israel.

The Table of Shewbread

²³ You shall make a table of acacia wood. Two cubits shall be its length, and a cubit its breadth, and one and

25:21 The blood of atonement was sprinkled each year upon the top of the ark, the place known as “the mercy seat” or ‘atonement cover’. This blood represented the blood of Christ. The Angel cherubim shadowed the blood on the cover, representing how the Angels watched over Christ in His sacrifice and especially upon the cross. Hence His temptation to call Angels to deliver Him from it (Mt. 26:53). Peter alludes to this in saying that the Angels intently look down upon the things of the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:12). Pagan religions typically had a throne in their temples, on which their God sat. The throne of the true God was empty – there was a “mercy seat”, but no god or idol sat upon it. Faith is about believing in the God who cannot be seen (Heb. 11:1,2), and whose saving mercy to us is confirmed in the blood of His Son.

25:22 God meets with us over the blood of Christ, and from there His voice is heard. Hence Heb. 12:18-29 likens the blood of Christ to a huge voice; we cannot imagine Him there on the cross and be passive, we hear, as it were, God’s voice for us. This is why we must regularly remember Christ on the cross, replaying the scene continually before our eyes. For there we hear God’s voice and we have our meeting with Him. The breaking of bread service is a practical help to this end.

a half cubits its height. ²⁴ You shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a gold moulding around it. ²⁵ You shall make a rim of a handbreadth around it. You shall make a golden moulding on its rim around it. ²⁶ You shall make four rings of gold for it, and put the rings in the four corners that are on its four feet. ²⁷ The rings shall be close to the rim, for places for the poles to carry the table. ²⁸ You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be carried with them. ²⁹ You shall make its dishes, its spoons, its ladles, and its bowls to pour out offerings with. You shall make them of pure gold. ³⁰ You shall set bread of the presence on the table before me always.

The Lampstand

³¹ You shall make a lampstand of pure gold. Of hammered work shall the lampstand be made, even its base, its shaft, its cups, its buds, and its flowers, shall be of one piece with it. ³² There shall be six branches going out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of its one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of its other side; ³³ three cups made like almond blossoms in one branch, a bud and a flower; and three

cups made like almond blossoms in the other branch, a bud and a flower, so for the six branches going out of the lampstand; ³⁴ and in the lampstand four cups made like almond blossoms, its buds and its flowers; ³⁵ and a bud under two branches of one piece with it, and a bud under two branches of one piece with it, and a bud under two branches of one piece with it, for the six branches going out of the lampstand. ³⁶ Their buds and their branches shall be of one piece with it, all of it one beaten work of pure gold. ³⁷ You shall make its lamps seven, and they shall light its lamps to give light to the space in front of it. ³⁸ Its snuffers and its snuff dishes shall be of pure gold. ³⁹ It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these accessories. ⁴⁰ See that you make them after their pattern, which has been shown to you on the mountain.

CHAPTER 26 Feb. 15

The Curtains of the Tabernacle

Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains; of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim. By the work of the skilful workman you shall make them. ² The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits,

25:36 The candlestick represents the assembly of believers (Rev. 1:20). It was made of beaten work, representing how all those in the true church will be beaten into a shape through which they can be lights for God.

25:38 Gold wasn't the strongest or most practical material for these instruments. But it represents faith (1 Pet. 1:7). We aren't the best instruments for God to use in His house, but He prefers to use the soft and those who aren't humanly qualified for His work – because He works by faith in us, and by our faith in Him rather than our human strength.

and the breadth of each curtain four cubits: all the curtains shall have one measure. ³ Five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and the other five curtains shall be coupled one to another. ⁴ You shall make loops of blue on the edge of the one curtain from the edge in the coupling; and likewise you shall make in the edge of the curtain that is outmost in the second coupling. ⁵ You shall make fifty loops in the one curtain, and you shall make fifty loops in the edge of the curtain that is in the second coupling. The loops shall be opposite one to another. ⁶ You shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains one to another with the clasps: and the tabernacle shall be one. ⁷ You shall make curtains of goats' hair for a covering over the tabernacle. You shall make them eleven curtains. ⁸ The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits: the eleven curtains shall have one measure. ⁹ You shall couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shall double

over the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tent. ¹⁰ You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain which is outmost in the second coupling. ¹¹ You shall make fifty clasps of brass, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. ¹² The overhanging part that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. ¹³ The cubit on the one side, and the cubit on the other side, of that which remains in the length of the curtains of the tent, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it. ¹⁴ You shall make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of sea cow hides above.

The Boards of the Tabernacle

¹⁵ You shall make the boards for the tabernacle of acacia wood, standing up. ¹⁶ Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and one and a half cubits

26:6 The tabernacle was “one”, joined together in such a way by the interlocking parts that it taught the lesson of unity. The spiritual tabernacle, the believers, was “pitched” by the Lord Jesus – translating a Greek word which suggests ‘crucifixion’ (Heb. 8:2). Through the cross, the one, united tabernacle was pitched. To tear down that structure by disuniting the body is to undo the work of the cross.

26:10 The tabernacle represents God’s dwelling place. He now no longer lives in any physical structure, but in the hearts of His people, who between them comprise His new dwelling place. We can however learn lessons from the principles behind the tabernacle construction. Great emphasis was placed on how the components were all interlocking – the curtains coupled together, the boards were joined by bars etc. It is by our unity and connection with each other that God will dwell amongst us. Christianity can’t be lived in isolation – we need each other.

26:14 They were dyed red to represent how the blood of Christ is the covering for God’s people.

the breadth of each board. ¹⁷ There shall be two tenons in each board, joined to one another: thus you shall make for all the boards of the tabernacle. ¹⁸ You shall make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side southward. ¹⁹ You shall make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for its two tenons, and two sockets under another board for its two tenons. ²⁰ For the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, twenty boards, ²¹ and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. ²² For the far part of the tabernacle westward you shall make six boards. ²³ You shall make two boards for the corners of the tabernacle in the far part. ²⁴ They shall be double beneath, and in the same way they shall be whole to its top to one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners. ²⁵ There shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. ²⁶ You shall make bars of acacia wood: five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, ²⁷ and

five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the far part westward. ²⁸ The middle bar in the midst of the boards shall pass through from end to end. ²⁹ You shall overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and you shall overlay the bars with gold. ³⁰ You shall set up the tabernacle according to the way that it was shown to you on the mountain.

The Veil

³¹ You shall make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cherubim. The work of the skilful workman shall it be made. ³² You shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold; their hooks shall be of gold, on four sockets of silver. ³³ You shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil: and the veil shall separate the holy place from the most holy for you. ³⁴ You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. ³⁵ You shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand over against the table on

26:31 The veil represents Christ in His humanity (Heb. 10:20). His character was complexly woven and beautiful, with the white linen of righteousness (Rev. 19:8) running as a thread through His entire character. Weaving complex strands and patterns therefore speaks of how God worked to develop the character of Christ, and He likewise weaves in our lives too, if we are open to His working.

26:33 The veil screened off the Most Holy Place, where the very presence of God was. When Christ died, this veil was torn down (Mt. 26:51), from top to bottom – indicating it was done by God and not men. Through His death, anyone who believes in Him can do continually what the High Priest could do only once per year – come right into the very presence of God Himself.

the side of the tabernacle toward the south; and you shall put the table on the north side. ³⁶ You shall make a screen for the door of the Tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer. ³⁷ You shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold: their hooks shall be of gold; and you shall cast five sockets of brass for them.

CHAPTER 27 Feb. 16

The Altar

You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be four-square: and its height shall be three cubits. ² You shall make its horns on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it; and you shall overlay it with brass. ³ You shall make its pots to take away its ashes, its shovels, its basins, its flesh hooks, and its fire pans: all its vessels you shall make of brass. ⁴ You shall make a grating for it of network of brass: and on the net you shall make four bronze rings in its four corners. ⁵ You shall put it under the ledge around the altar beneath, that the net may reach halfway up the altar. ⁶ You shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay

them with brass. ⁷ Its poles shall be put into the rings, and the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar, when carrying it. ⁸ You shall make it with hollow planks. They shall make it as it has been shown you on the mountain.

The Court

⁹ You shall make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen one hundred cubits long for one side; ¹⁰ and its pillars shall be twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. ¹¹ Likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings one hundred cubits long, and its pillars twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. ¹² For the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits; their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. ¹³ The breadth of the court on the east side eastward shall be fifty cubits. ¹⁴ The hangings for the one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. ¹⁵ For the other side shall be hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. ¹⁶ For

27:1 *Acacia wood* – This was plentiful in the wilderness, but it is little more than brushwood; a surprising choice of material to be used in God’s dwelling place. But His choice of *us* with all our weakness and dysfunction, the common, weak stuff of the wilderness, is no less surprising. The choice of acacia wood for constructing the tabernacle is one of several points in the whole enterprise where it seems a less than ideal material was chosen, from a construction point of view. This aspect emphasizes that God prefers to work with the soft, weak and broken in order to do His work (as also in Ez. 15:2-5).

the gate of the court shall be a screen of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer; their pillars four, and their sockets four. ¹⁷ All the pillars of the court around shall be filleted with silver; their hooks of silver, and their sockets of brass. ¹⁸ The length of the court shall be one hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty everywhere, and the height five cubits, of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. ¹⁹ All the instruments of the tabernacle in all its service, and all its pins, and all the pins of the court, shall be of brass. ²⁰ You shall command the children of Israel, that they bring to you pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually. ²¹ In the Tent of Meeting, outside the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep it in order from evening to morning before Yahweh: it shall be a statute forever throughout their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

CHAPTER 28 Feb. 17

The Clothing of the Priests

Bring Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, near to you from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me in the priest's of-

fice, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. ² You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. ³ You shall speak to all who are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to sanctify him, that he may minister to Me in the priest's office. ⁴ These are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash; and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, and his sons, that he may minister to Me in the priest's office. ⁵ They shall take the gold, and the blue, and the purple, and the scarlet, and the fine linen.

The Ephod and Breastplate

⁶ They shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the skilful workman. ⁷ It shall have two shoulder straps joined to the two ends of it, that it may be joined together. ⁸ The skilfully woven belt band which is on it, that is to be put on him, shall be like its work and of the same piece; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. ⁹ You shall take two onyx stones,

27:20 The lampstand is used as a symbol of the ecclesia in the visions of Revelation 2 and 3. The purpose of the ecclesia is to enable the oil of the Spirit to be burnt, to turn it into light. We are to keep our own personal light burning continually, day and night. Jesus had this in mind when He likened us to women waiting for the bridegroom to come at night, whose oil lamps should not be allowed to go out (Mt. 25:8).

28:3 The wise were given wisdom, in keeping with God's principle of confirming people in the way in which they themselves choose to go.

28:6 The ephod was a kind of waistcoat, onto which the breastplate was attached.

and engrave on them the names of the children of Israel: ¹⁰ six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the six that remain on the other stone, in the order of their birth. ¹¹ With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, you shall engrave the two stones, according to the names of the children of Israel: you shall make them to be enclosed in settings of gold. ¹² You shall put the two stones on the shoulder straps of the ephod, to be stones of memorial for the children of Israel; and Aaron shall bear their names before Yahweh on his two shoulders for a memorial. ¹³ You shall make settings of gold, ¹⁴ and two chains of pure gold; you shall make them like cords of braided work: and you shall put the braided chains on the settings. ¹⁵ You shall make a breastplate of judgment, the work of the skilful workman; like the work of the ephod you shall make it; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, you shall make it. ¹⁶ It shall be square and folded double; a span shall be its length of it, and a span its breadth. ¹⁷ You shall set in it settings of stones, four rows of stones: a row of ruby, topaz, and beryl shall be the first row; ¹⁸ and the second row a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald; ¹⁹ and the third row

a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; ²⁰ and the fourth row a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be enclosed in gold in their settings. ²¹ The stones shall be according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names; like the engravings of a signet, each one according to his name, they shall be for the twelve tribes. ²² You shall make on the breastplate chains like cords, of braided work of pure gold. ²³ You shall make on the breastplate two rings of gold, and shall put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. ²⁴ You shall put the two braided chains of gold in the two rings at the ends of the breastplate. ²⁵ The other two ends of the two braided chains you shall put on the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in its forepart. ²⁶ You shall make two rings of gold, and you shall put them on the two ends of the breastplate, on its edge, which is toward the side of the ephod inward. ²⁷ You shall make two rings of gold, and shall put them on the two shoulder straps of the ephod underneath, in its forepart, close by its coupling, above the skilfully woven band of the ephod. ²⁸ They shall bind the breastplate by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be on the skilfully

28:12 This is symbolic of how Christ, our High Priest, carries the names of all God's people on His shoulders and over His heart (:29) as He stands for us in God's presence. The preciousness of the stones reflects our high value in God's sight.

28:17 The faithful believers are likened to a stone with a unique name written on it (Rev. 2:17). We are each called to uniquely reflect and refract the light of God's glory in a way slightly different to anyone else, just as the stones on the breastplate all glimmered with their own unique beauty. Unity isn't the same as uniformity.

woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate may not swing out from the ephod. ²⁹ Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment on his heart, when he goes in to the holy place, for a memorial before Yahweh continually. ³⁰ You shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be on Aaron's heart, when he goes in before Yahweh; and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel on his heart before Yahweh continually. ³¹ You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. ³² It shall have a hole for the head in its midst: it shall have a binding of woven work around its hole, as it were the hole of a coat of mail, that it not be torn. ³³ On its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, around its hem; and bells of gold between and around them: ³⁴ a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, around the hem of the robe. ³⁵ It shall be on Aaron to minister; and his sound shall be heard when he goes in to the holy place

before Yahweh, and when he comes out, so that he will not die.

The Plate and Coats

³⁶ You shall make a plate of pure gold, and engrave on it, like the engravings of a signet, 'HOLY TO YAHWEH'. ³⁷ You shall put it on a lace of blue, and it shall be on the sash; on the front of the sash it shall be. ³⁸ It shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall make holy in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always on his forehead, that they may be accepted before Yahweh. ³⁹ You shall weave the coat in chequer work of fine linen, and you shall make a turban of fine linen, and you shall make a sash, the work of the embroiderer. ⁴⁰ You shall make coats for Aaron's sons, and you shall make sashes for them and you shall make headbands for them, for glory and for beauty. ⁴¹ You shall put them on Aaron your brother, and on his sons with him, and shall anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they

28:35 "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16) may be Paul alluding to how the High Priest had to have bells so that "his sound shall be heard... so that he will not die". This idea of the sound being heard is picked up in Ps. 19:3 concerning the spread of the Gospel.

28:39 That the Priest's crown was to be made of linen rather than solid gold or some other precious metal could appear some kind of anticlimax – most leaders of other religions had something solid on their heads. White linen represents righteousness (Rev. 19:8); it's as if the intention was to highlight the fact that simple righteousness is of such great value and power in God's sight rather than any visible ostentation.

28:41 Jesus died that He might "sanctify" us to God (Jn. 17:17,19). This is the word used here by the Septuagint to describe the consecration of the priests to service of the body of Israel. If we reject the call to priesthood today, wanting to leave it all to others, we reject the point of the Lord's saving suffering for us.

may minister to Me in the priest's office. ⁴² You shall make them linen breeches to cover the flesh of their nakedness; from the waist even to the thighs they shall reach. ⁴³ They shall be on Aaron, and on his sons, when they go in to the Tent of Meeting, or when they come near to the altar to minister in the holy place; that they don't bear iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute forever to him and to his descendants after him.

CHAPTER 29 Feb. 18

Consecrating Aaron and His Sons

This is the thing that you shall do to them to make them holy, to minister to Me in the priest's office: take one young bull and two

rams without blemish, ² unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil: you shall make them of fine wheat flour. ³ You shall put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bull and the two rams. ⁴ You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the Tent of Meeting, and shall wash them with water. ⁵ You shall take the garments, and put on Aaron the coat, the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and clothe him with the skilfully woven band of the ephod; ⁶ and you shall set the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban. ⁷ Then you shall take the anointing oil, and pour it on his head,

28:43 *Bear iniquity* is therefore an idiom for being personally guilty. Yet the idiom is used about Christ in His bearing of our iniquity on the cross (Is. 53:11). The Lord Jesus was our sin bearer and yet personally guiltless. This is the paradox which even He struggled with, leading to His feeling of having been forsaken by God (Mt. 27:46). This means that although Christ never sinned, He knows the feelings of sinners, because His identity with us was so deep and complete.

29:1 'To make holy' or to 'sanctify' is something Jesus often spoke of in discussing the meaning of His death. He makes many allusions to the language of the High Priest in His prayer of John 17, e.g. "for their sakes I sanctify Myself so that they also may be sanctified" (Jn. 17:19). We are all called to be part of a new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5,9); Christ's death sanctified us, prepared us for service in God's house. Spiritually serving others is therefore not something just for a specialist minority, but for *all* who are in Christ, 'the anointed one', anointed just as the priests were anointed to serve (:21). The unblemished animals which were sacrificed in order to sanctify the priests therefore represent the sacrifice of Jesus.

29:7 The Septuagint word used for 'anointing' here occurs in the New Testament only in 1 Jn. 2:20,27, where we read that we have each been anointed. The idea of anointing was to signal the initiation of someone as they began a specific calling or work. When we are baptized into Christ, *the* anointed One, we too are anointed in a sense (2 Cor. 1:21). We're given a specific mission and purpose. "The anointing that you received" in 1 Jn. 2 would therefore refer to our commissioning at baptism. It seems to imply a one time act of being anointed / commissioned / inaugurated for service. Baptism isn't therefore merely an initiation into a community; it's a specific commissioning for active service, in ways which are unique to us. We do well to bring this point out to those we prepare for baptism.

and anoint him. ⁸ You shall bring his sons, and put coats on them. ⁹ You shall clothe them with belts, Aaron and his sons, and bind headbands on them; and they shall have the priesthood by a perpetual statute; and you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons. ¹⁰ You shall bring the bull before the Tent of Meeting; and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the bull. ¹¹ You shall kill the bull before Yahweh, at the door of the Tent of Meeting. ¹² You shall take of the blood of the bull, and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger; and you shall pour out all the blood at the base of the altar. ¹³ You shall take all the fat that covers the innards, the cover of the liver, the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, and burn them on the altar. ¹⁴ But the flesh of the bull, and its skin, and its dung, you shall burn with fire outside of the camp: it is a sin offering. ¹⁵ You shall also take the one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram. ¹⁶ You shall kill the ram, and you shall take its blood, and sprinkle it around on the altar. ¹⁷ You shall cut the ram into its pieces, and wash its innards, and its legs, and put them with its pieces, and with its head. ¹⁸ You shall burn the whole ram on the altar: it is a burnt offering to Yahweh; it is a pleasant aroma, an offering made by fire to Yahweh. ¹⁹ You shall take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram. ²⁰ Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood, and put it on the tip of the right ear of

Aaron, and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, and on the thumb of their right hand, and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood around on the altar. ²¹ You shall take of the blood that is on the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron, and on his garments, and on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he shall be made holy, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him. ²² Also you shall take some of the ram's fat, the fat tail, the fat that covers the innards, the cover of the liver, the two kidneys, the fat that is on them, and the right thigh (for it is a ram of consecration), ²³ and one loaf of bread, one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of unleavened bread that is before Yahweh. ²⁴ You shall put all of this in Aaron's hands, and in his sons' hands, and shall wave them for a wave offering before Yahweh. ²⁵ You shall take them from their hands, and burn them on the altar on the burnt offering, for a pleasant aroma before Yahweh: it is an offering made by fire to Yahweh. ²⁶ You shall take the breast of Aaron's ram of consecration, and wave it for a wave offering before Yahweh; and it shall be your portion. ²⁷ You shall sanctify the breast of the wave offering, and the thigh of the wave offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons; ²⁸ and it shall be for Aaron and his sons as their portion forever from the children of Israel;

for it is a wave offering; and it shall be a wave offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifices of their peace offerings, even their wave offering to Yahweh.

Offerings for Consecration

²⁹ The holy garments of Aaron shall be for his sons after him, to be anointed in them, and to be consecrated in them. ³⁰ Seven days shall the son who is priest in his place put them on, when he comes into the Tent of Meeting to minister in the holy place. ³¹ You shall take the ram of consecration, and boil its flesh in a holy place. ³² Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, at the door of the Tent of Meeting. ³³ They shall eat those things with which atonement was made, to consecrate and sanctify them, but a stranger shall not eat of it, because they are holy. ³⁴ If anything of the flesh of the consecration, or of the bread, remains to the morning, then you shall burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy. ³⁵ You shall do so to Aaron, and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded you. You shall consecrate them seven

days. ³⁶ Every day you shall offer the bull of sin offering for atonement; and you shall cleanse the altar, when you make atonement for it; and you shall anoint it, to sanctify it. ³⁷ Seven days you shall make atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and the altar shall be most holy: whatever touches the altar shall be holy. ³⁸ Now this is that which you shall offer on the altar: two lambs a year old day by day continually. ³⁹ The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at evening; ⁴⁰ and with the one lamb a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour mixed with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil, and the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering. ⁴¹ The other lamb you shall offer at evening, and shall do to it according to the meal offering of the morning, and according to its drink offering, for a pleasant aroma, an offering made by fire to Yahweh. ⁴² It shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the Tent of Meeting before Yahweh, where I will meet with you, to speak there to you. ⁴³ There I will meet with the children of Israel; and the place shall be sanctified by My glory. ⁴⁴ I will sanctify

29:33 Eating the things with which the atonement was made points forward to the breaking of bread service. We can see in this echoes of the consecration of the priests; and we should realize each time we do it that we have been sanctified in order to proactively serve in God's house.

29:42 Although we are a great multitude of redeemed, yet the communication of the Father and Son to us are still amazingly unique, even though we all hear and read the same actual words, and reflect upon the same facts. Right back at the beginning of God's relationship with Israel He made the point that "I will meet you [plural] to speak there to you [singular]" [the KJV reflects the Hebrew grammar by making a distinction between you plural and 'thee', you singular].

the Tent of Meeting and the altar: Aaron also and his sons I will sanctify, to minister to Me in the priest's office. ⁴⁵ I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. ⁴⁶ They shall know that I am Yahweh their God, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them: I am Yahweh their God.

CHAPTER 30 Feb. 19

The Altar of Incense

You shall make an altar to burn incense on. You shall make it of acacia wood. ² Its length shall be a cubit, and its breadth a cubit. It shall be square, and its height shall be two cubits. Its horns shall be of one piece with it. ³ You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top, its sides around it,

and its horns; and you shall make a gold moulding around it. ⁴ You shall make two golden rings for it under its moulding; on its two ribs, on its two sides you shall make them; and they shall be for places for poles with which to bear it. ⁵ You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. ⁶ You shall put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with you. ⁷ Aaron shall burn incense of sweet spices on it every morning. When he tends the lamps, he shall burn it. ⁸ When Aaron lights the lamps at evening, he shall burn it, a perpetual incense before Yahweh throughout your generations. ⁹ You shall offer no strange incense on it, nor burnt offering, nor meal offering;

29:45 *I will dwell... will be their God* – Rev. 21:3 understands this as coming true when Christ returns to earth, seeing that God's intention for this to happen with Israel didn't materialize. And yet, having prophesied that He *will be* their God, He says that He is right now their God (:46). This could mean that even if God's people choose not to have Him as their God, yet He keeps His side of the covenant; He is their God. In this we see God's hopefulness for us, His earnest desire to have a relationship with His people.

29:46 Often we read this two fold intention of God – to bring His people out from the world [Egypt], and then to do something positive with them. Our separation from the world isn't therefore negative; for 'holiness' means both separation *from* and separation *unto*.

30:8 *Perpetual incense* – The continual burning of incense, night and day, was a reminder that prayer (cp. incense, Rev. 8:3,4) was a way of life, not only specific statements. David's references to making constant prayer (e.g. Ps. 88:1) may allude to the constant rising up of the incense. We cannot be literally praying all the time, but our basic spirit of life can rise up as a prayer to God constantly. Our lives are, in a sense, our prayer.

30:9 The Law seems to have foreseen the difference between real and apparent prayer by warning that the true incense was to be burnt [representing prayer], but not any other kind of incense, or incense comprised of other kinds of ingredients. We must ask ourselves whether our prayers are the real thing, or just one part of our brain talking to another part of our brain which we call 'God'.

and you shall pour no drink offering on it. ¹⁰ Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once in the year: with the blood of the sin offering of atonement once in the year he shall make atonement for it throughout your generations. It is most holy to Yahweh.

The Atonement Money

¹¹ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹² When you take a census of the children of Israel, according to those who are numbered among them, then each man shall give a ransom for himself to Yahweh, when you number them; that there be no plague among them when you number them. ¹³ They shall give this, everyone who passes over to those who are numbered: half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs); half a shekel for an offering to Yahweh. ¹⁴ Everyone who passes over to those who are numbered, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the offering to Yahweh. ¹⁵ The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when they give the offering of Yahweh, to make atonement

for your souls. ¹⁶ You shall take the atonement money from the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the Tent of Meeting that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before Yahweh, to make atonement for your souls.

The Brass Basin

¹⁷ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁸ You shall also make a basin of brass, and its base of brass, in which to wash. You shall put it between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it. ¹⁹ Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in it. ²⁰ When they go into the Tent of Meeting, they shall wash with water, that they not die; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to Yahweh. ²¹ So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they not die; and it shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his descendants throughout their generations.

The Anointing Oil

²² Moreover Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ Also take fine spices: of liquid myrrh, five hundred shek-

30:18 This may represent the need for the washing of baptism in order to come to Christ, the altar (Heb. 13:10). This was required if they didn't want to die (:20).

30:20 Tit. 3:5-7 implies that the priests washing in the brass basin typified baptism. Baptism is related to salvation. All God's people are priests (1 Pet. 2:5,9); the washing of baptism is an absolute necessity before we can be God's priestly people.

30:21 There are many allusions to the language of priesthood in the New Testament, both as major statements and also in passing. The idea of baptism as a washing suggests that we afterwards enter into priestly service; we're not declared by baptism to be merely members of a denomination, hobby level theologians who now agree to a set of doctrines. We instead, in a very real sense, are cleansed and consecrated into the service of God, ministering to His people, doing His work.

els; and of fragrant cinnamon half as much, even two hundred and fifty; and of fragrant cane, two hundred and fifty; ²⁴ and of cassia five hundred, after the shekel of the sanctuary; and a hin of olive oil. ²⁵ You shall make it a holy anointing oil, a perfume compounded after the art of the perfumer: it shall be a holy anointing oil. ²⁶ You shall use it to anoint the Tent of Meeting, the ark of the testimony, ²⁷ the table and all its articles, the lampstand and its accessories, the altar of incense, ²⁸ the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin with its base. ²⁹ You shall sanctify them, that they may be most holy. Whatever touches them shall be holy. ³⁰ You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and sanctify them, that they may minister to Me in the priest's office. ³¹ You shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. ³² It shall not be poured on man's flesh, neither shall you make any like it, according to its composition: it is holy. It shall be holy to you. ³³ Whoever compounds any like it, or whoever puts any of it on a stranger, he shall be cut off from his people'.

³⁴ Yahweh said to Moses, Take to yourself sweet spices, gum resin, and onycha, and galbanum; sweet spices with pure frankincense: there shall be an equal weight of each; ³⁵ and you shall make incense of it, a perfume after the art of the perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure and holy: ³⁶ and you shall beat some of it very small, and put some of it before the testimony in the Tent of Meeting, where I will meet with you. It shall be to you most holy. ³⁷ The incense which you shall make, according to its composition you shall not make for yourselves: it shall be to you holy for Yahweh. ³⁸ Whoever shall make any like that, to smell of it, he shall be cut off from his people.

CHAPTER 31 Feb. 20

The Use of Bezalel

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Behold, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; ³ and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all kinds of workmanship, ⁴ to devise skilful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, ⁵ and in cutting

30:35 Incense is a symbol of prayer (Rev. 8:3,4). Whilst there is a place for instantaneous and emotional prayers, this doesn't mean that we should overlook the fact that another kind of prayer should be prayer that is carefully prepared, just as the incense was.

Seasoned with salt – Our speech, Paul says, should be “seasoned with salt” (Col. 4:6). He's alluding here, perhaps with the idea that the way we speak generally should be in the same manner as we pray to God, like the incense.

30:36 *Very small* – If incense is like prayer, this may refer to how we shouldn't be afraid nor ashamed to pray to God about the smallest things. Nothing is outside of His control, indeed, God is so often in the details.

of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all kinds of workmanship. ⁶ I, behold, I have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the heart of all who are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded you: ⁷ the Tent of Meeting, the ark of the testimony, the mercy seat that is on it, all the furniture of the Tent, ⁸ the table and its vessels, the pure lampstand with all its vessels, the altar of incense, ⁹ the altar of burnt offering with all its vessels, the basin and its base, ¹⁰ the finely worked garments—the holy garments for Aaron the priest—the garments of his sons to minister in the priest’s office, ¹¹ the anointing oil, and the incense of sweet spices for the holy place, according to all that I have commanded you they shall do.

The Sabbath

¹² Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹³ Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, ‘Most certainly you shall keep my Sabbaths: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that you may know

that I am Yahweh who sanctifies you. ¹⁴ You shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵ Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to Yahweh. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death. ¹⁶ Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷ It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed’. ¹⁸ When He finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave to Moses the two tablets of the testimony, stone tablets, written with God’s finger.

CHAPTER 32 Feb. 20

The Israelites Make a Golden Calf

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron, and

31:6 The wise were made more wise – an idea we often encounter in the opening chapters of Proverbs. God confirms men and women in the way they wish to go; if they wish to do His work and build up His dwelling place, He will confirm them in their natural talents and give them new ones.

31:17 How are we to understand the ‘language of limitation’ which Scripture abounds with – e.g. Gen. 2:2; Ex. 31:17; Dt. 32:20,27? God is almighty and doesn’t need refreshment. One explanation is that such language refers to God’s manifestation through His Angels, who aren’t almighty although they are sinless (Mt. 24:36).

Heb. 4:10 understands the Sabbath to teach that as God ceased from His works, so those in Christ should cease from trusting in their own works and live their whole lives in the spirit of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is defined here as a sign between God and the people of Israel; those in Christ don’t need to observe it today (Col. 2:14-17).

said to him, Come, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what has become of him. ² Aaron said to them, Take off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them to me. ³ All the people took off the golden rings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. ⁴ He received what they handed him, and fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made it a molten calf; and they said, These are your gods, Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt. ⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation, and said, Tomorrow shall be a feast to Yahweh. ⁶ They rose up early on the next day, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. ⁷ Yahweh spoke to Moses, Go, get down; for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves! ⁸ They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it, and have sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt'.

Moses Persuades God Not to Destroy Israel

⁹ Yahweh said to Moses, I have seen these people, and behold, they are a stiff-necked people. ¹⁰ Now therefore

leave Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of you a great nation. ¹¹ Moses begged Yahweh his God, and said, Yahweh, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, that you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'He brought them forth for evil, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the surface of the earth?' Turn from Your fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Your people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your seed as the stars of the sky, and all this land that I have spoken of I will give to your seed, and they shall inherit it forever'. ¹⁴ Yahweh changed His mind of the evil which He said He would do to His people. ¹⁵ Moses turned, and went down from the mountain, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand; tablets that were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other they were written. ¹⁶ The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tables. ¹⁷ When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, There is the noise of war in the camp.

Moses Descends from the Mountain and Judges Israel

¹⁸ He said, It isn't the voice of those who shout for victory, neither is it

the voice of those who cry for being overcome; but the noise of those who sing that I hear. ¹⁹ It happened, as soon as he came near to the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing; and Moses' anger grew hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mountain. ²⁰ He took the calf which they had made, and burnt it with fire, ground it to powder, and scattered it on the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. ²¹ Moses said to Aaron, What did these people do to you, that you have brought a great sin on them? ²² Aaron said, Don't let the anger of my lord grow hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. ²³ For they said to me, 'Make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what has become of him'. ²⁴ I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them take it off;' so they gave it to me; and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf. ²⁵ When Moses saw that the people were naked, (for Aaron had made them naked, for a shame among their enemies), ²⁶ then Moses stood in the

gate of the camp, and said, Whoever is on Yahweh's side, come to me! All the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. ²⁷ He said to them, Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, 'Every man put his sword on his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate throughout the camp, and every man kill his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour'. ²⁸ The sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. ²⁹ Moses said, Consecrate yourselves today to Yahweh, yes, every man against his son, and against his brother; that He may bestow on you a blessing this day.

Moses Intercedes with God

³⁰ It happened on the next day, that Moses said to the people, You have sinned a great sin. Now I will go up to Yahweh. Perhaps I shall make atonement for your sin. ³¹ Moses returned to Yahweh, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made themselves gods of gold. ³² Yet now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out of

32:32 Moses loved the people so intensely, despite their rebellion. He was prepared to give his place in the Kingdom so that they might enter; he *prayed* God for 40 days to accept his offer. He knew that atonement could only be by sacrifice of blood (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22; cp. Num. 25:8,13); and yet he climbed the Mount with the intent of making atonement himself for Israel's sin (:30); he intended to give his life for them. And he didn't make such a promise in hot blood, as some men might. He made the statement, and then made the long climb to the top of the mount. And during that climb, it seems he came to an even higher spiritual level; he was prepared not only to offer his physical life, but also his place in the Kingdom; God's "book" is His book of life, of those who will ultimately be saved (Ez. 13:9; Dan. 12:2; Lk. 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 20:12). The love of Moses for Israel typifies the love of Christ towards

Your book which You have written. 33 Yahweh said to Moses, Whoever has sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book. 34 Now go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My angel shall go before you. Nevertheless in the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin. 35 Yahweh

struck the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

CHAPTER 33 Feb. 21

The Tent of Meeting

Yahweh spoke to Moses, Depart, go up from here, you and the people that you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of

us. At the end of his life he recounts how God had threatened to destroy the people (Dt. 9:15), but he doesn't record his 40 days of pleading with the Father, and how he turned down the offer of having himself made into a great nation. In this we see his humility. Note how Moses argues with God against God's stated intention, and persuades God otherwise. He is open to dialogue with us His people; hence the intensity we can experience in prayer, and the element of wrestling there is in it. To be blotted out of the book may have been understood by Moses as asking for him to be excluded from an inheritance in the promised land; for later, a 'book' was written describing the various portions (Josh. 18:9). The connection is made explicit in Ez. 13:9 – to be blotted out of the book meant to not enter the land. God had just spoken of 'blotting out' Israel from before Him (Dt. 9:14), and making a nation of Moses; but now Moses is asking to share in their condemnation rather than experience salvation without them. This was the extent of his devotion. In Dt. 9:18 he says that his prayer of Ex. 32:32 *was heard* – in that he was not going to enter the land, but they would. Hence his urging of them to go ahead and enter the land – to experience what his self-sacrifice had enabled. In this we see the economy of God, and how He works even through sin. On account of Moses' temporary rashness of speech, he was excluded; Moses didn't enter the land. And yet by this, his prayer was heard. But ultimately he did what he intended – he gave his place in the Kingdom / land so that they might enter [although of course he will be in the future Kingdom]. This is why Moses stresses at the end of his life that he wouldn't enter the land *for Israel's sake* (Dt. 1:37; 3:26; 4:21; Ps. 106:32). He saw that his sin had been worked through, and the essential reason for him not entering was because of the offer he had made. In all this, Moses was typifying the death of Jesus. Is. 53:8 describes His cross as being "cut off [Heb. 'excluded'] from the land of the living" (s.w. 'the congregation' – of Israel), for the transgression of His people. The Lord died the death of a sinner, He chose like Moses to suffer affliction with us, that we might be saved.

32:33 God didn't accept Moses' offer to die as a *substitute* for Israel, for each must be judged for their own sins. But He did accept Moses as a *representative* of Israel and accepted his mediation for their salvation on this basis; just as He accepted the work of Christ on the same basis. Paul learnt the lesson when he says that he *could wish* himself condemned and Israel saved (Rom. 9:1-3); but he recognized God didn't accept Moses' offer of dying for them as a substitute.

33:1 The manifestation of God in a person leads to a mutuality between them. Here God says that *Moses* brought up Israel out of Egypt; but in 32:11, Moses says [as fre-

which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your seed’. ² I will send an angel before you; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: ³ to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in the midst of you, for you are a stiff-necked people, lest I consume you in the way. ⁴ When the people heard this evil news, they mourned; and no one put on his jewellery. ⁵ Yahweh said to Moses, Tell the children of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go up into your midst for one moment, I would consume you. Therefore now take off your jewellery from you, that I may know what to do to you’. ⁶ The children of Israel stripped themselves of their jewellery from Mount Horeb onward. ⁷ Now Moses used to take the tent and to pitch it outside the camp, far away from the camp, and he called it The Tent of Meeting. It happened that everyone who sought Yahweh went out to the Tent of Meeting, which was outside the camp. ⁸ It happened that when Moses went out

to the Tent, that all the people rose up, and stood, each one at their tent door, and watched Moses, until he had gone into the Tent. ⁹ It happened, when Moses entered into the Tent, that the pillar of cloud descended, stood at the door of the Tent, and spoke with Moses. ¹⁰ All the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the Tent, and all the people rose up and worshiped, everyone at their tent door. ¹¹ Yahweh spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. He turned again into the camp, but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, didn’t depart out of the Tent.

Moses Asks to Feel God’s Presence

¹² Moses said to Yahweh, Behold, You tell me, ‘Bring up this people’ and yet You haven’t let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight’. ¹³ Now therefore, if I have found grace in Your sight, please show me now Your ways, that I may know You, so that I may find grace in Your sight; and consider that this

quently] that *God* brought Israel out of Egypt. And we too can experience this mutuality in relationship with the Father.

33:5 God told Moses that because Israel were stiff-necked, therefore He could not go up with them. Moses agrees the people are stiff-necked, but he knows God well enough to ask Him to still go up in the midst of them (34:9). And God did! He acted according to how broad was Moses’ conception of God’s grace. If Abraham’s conception of grace had been even broader, perhaps Sodom would’ve been saved...

33:13 God assures Moses that he has found grace in His eyes, and yet Moses doubts this... as if the voice of God telling him wasn’t enough! And maybe there is even the implication that he mistakenly thought that he needed more *knowledge* of God before he could find that grace... as if it depended upon his own mental faculties. And yet God patiently assures Moses yet again: “I *will be gracious* to whom I will be gracious” (:19) was said specifically to Moses, given the context of Moses’ doubts about

nation is Your people. ¹⁴ He said, My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest. ¹⁵ He said to Him, If Your presence doesn't go with me, don't carry us up from here. ¹⁶ For how would people know that I have found favour in Your sight, I and Your people? Isn't it in that You go with us, so that we are separated, I and Your people, from all the people who are on the surface of the earth? ¹⁷ Yahweh said to Moses, I will do this thing also that you have spoken; for you have found favour in My sight, and I know you by name. ¹⁸ He said, Please show me Your glory. ¹⁹ He said, I will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of Yahweh before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰ He said, You cannot see My face, for man may not see Me and live. ²¹ Yahweh also said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. ²² It will happen, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and will

cover you with My hand until I have passed by; ²³ then I will take away My hand, and you will see My back; but My face shall not be seen.

CHAPTER 34 Feb. 21

Moses Again Ascends Mount Sinai

Yahweh said to Moses, Chisel two stone tablets like the first; and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. ² Be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain. ³ No one shall come up with you; neither let anyone be seen throughout all the mountain; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mountain. ⁴ He chiselled two tablets of stone like the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up to Mount Sinai, as Yahweh had commanded him, and took in his hand two stone tablets. ⁵ Yahweh descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Yahweh. ⁶ Yahweh passed by before him, and proclaimed, Yahweh!

his receipt of God's grace. The coming down of Yahweh to pronounce His Name was, in the context, to show how far God would go to assure Moses that yes, His grace towards Moses was real. We too struggle with really believing God's grace, it seems too good news; and we too are given, also by grace, this undeserved assurance upon assurance.

I will give you rest – But they did not enter that rest (Heb. 4:8,10). “Rest” was defined as the land being subdued before God with all the tribes driven out (Josh. 1:13,15; Num. 32:21,22; 1 Chron. 22:18). This being conditional on Israel's faithfulness, we conclude that when the Angel said “I will give you rest” He was speaking of what was possible in prospect; so much peace, victory and salvation have been prepared for us in prospect.

34:6 God's Name is essentially His characteristics and personality; this declaration of the Name is in response to the request to reveal His glory (33:18). How we pronounce or transliterate God's Name isn't so important; the essence of God's Name is who

Yahweh! A merciful and gracious God, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness and truth, ⁷ keeping loving kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and disobedience and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the children's children, on the third and on the fourth generation. ⁸ Moses hurried and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. ⁹ He said, If now I have found favour in Your sight, Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us; although this is a stiff-necked people; pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Your inheritance.

The Exclusive Nature of Covenant with God

¹⁰ He said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been worked in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among which you are shall see the work of Yahweh; for it is an awesome thing that I do with you. ¹¹ Observe that which I command you this day. Behold, I drive out before you the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. ¹² Be

careful, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be for a snare in the midst of you: ¹³ but you shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and you shall cut down their Asherim; ¹⁴ for you shall worship no other god; for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. ¹⁵ Don't make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, lest they play the prostitute after their gods, and sacrifice to their gods, and one call you and you eat of his sacrifice; ¹⁶ and you take of their daughters to your sons, and their daughters play the prostitute after their gods, and make your sons prostitute themselves to their gods. ¹⁷ You shall make no cast idols for yourselves. ¹⁸ You shall keep the feast of unleavened bread. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Abib; for in the month Abib you came out from Egypt. ¹⁹ All that opens the womb is Mine; and all your livestock that is male, the firstborn of cow and sheep. ²⁰ The firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb: and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. No one shall ap-

He is and what He does by grace in the lives of people. Jesus alludes here when He predicted that His death would be a declaration of God's Name; in the cross we see the quintessence of God's mercy, grace, judgment etc. (Jn. 17:26). We are baptized into the Name, whereby all God's perfect character is counted to us.

34:9 Moses makes this request after the clear statement in 33:3 "I will not go up in the midst of you". So let us not be afraid to ask God to change what seems like His purpose in our lives, no matter how hard it seems, if we truly feel that another way would give Him more glory. Moses would not have tried if he did not think success in that prayer was possible. But he not only tried, he succeeded.

pear before Me empty. ²¹ Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest: in ploughing time and in harvest you shall rest. ²² You shall observe the feast of weeks with the first fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of harvest at the year's end. ²³ Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord Yahweh, the God of Israel. ²⁴ For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither shall any man desire your land when you go up to appear before Yahweh your God three times in the year. ²⁵ You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the Passover be left to the morning. ²⁶ You shall bring the first of the first fruits of your ground to the house of Yahweh your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. ²⁷ Yahweh said to Moses, Write you these words; for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel. ²⁸ He was there with Yahweh forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread, nor drank water. He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

Moses Talks with the People

²⁹ It happened, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mountain, that Moses didn't know that the skin of his face shone by reason of His speaking with him. ³⁰ When Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses spoke to them. ³² Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them all of the commandments that Yahweh had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. ³³ When Moses was done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. ³⁴ But when Moses went in before Yahweh to speak with Him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and he came out, and spoke to the children of Israel that which he was commanded. ³⁵ The children of Israel saw Moses' face, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

34:28 The Old Covenant is defined here and elsewhere as the ten commandments, which include the Sabbath. The New Testament teaches that the Old Covenant has been replaced by the New Covenant in Christ – and He never commanded us to keep the Sabbath.

34:29 We are described in 2 Cor. 3:18 as also like Moses beholding the glory of God, in terms of His moral perfection as it is in the face of Jesus (see on :6), and as the physical glory reflected off Moses' face, so the more we are in the presence of Jesus, meditating upon His character, the more that glory in a moral sense will increasingly shine off our faces. Paul uses the metaphor of looking in a mirror, until we find that the image in the mirror is no longer our face but the face of Jesus.

CHAPTER 35 Feb. 22**Materials Gathered for****Constructing the Tabernacle**

Moses assembled all the congregation of the children of Israel, and said to them, These are the words which Yahweh has commanded, that you should do them. ² Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of solemn rest to Yahweh: whoever does any work in it shall be put to death. ³ You shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the Sabbath day'. ⁴ Moses spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which Yahweh commanded, saying, ⁵ 'Take from among you an offering to Yahweh. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, Yahweh's offering: gold, silver, brass, ⁶ blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goats' hair, ⁷ rams' skins dyed red, sea cow hides, acacia wood, ⁸ oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense, ⁹ onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod and for

the breastplate. ¹⁰ Let every wise-hearted man among you come, and make all that Yahweh has commanded: ¹¹ the tabernacle, its outer covering, its roof, its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; ¹² the ark, and its poles, the mercy seat, the veil of the screen; ¹³ the table with its poles and all its vessels, and the show bread; ¹⁴ the lampstand also for the light, with its vessels, its lamps, and the oil for the light; ¹⁵ and the altar of incense with its poles, the anointing oil, the sweet incense, the screen for the door, at the door of the tabernacle; ¹⁶ the altar of burnt offering, with its grating of brass, its poles, and all its vessels, the basin and its base; ¹⁷ the hangings of the court, its pillars, their sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; ¹⁸ the pins of the tabernacle, the pins of the court, and their cords; ¹⁹ the finely worked garments, for ministering in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office'. ²⁰ All the congregation of the

35:5 Paul wanted the Corinthians to think themselves into Israel's shoes. For then they would realize that as Israel had to have a willing heart to give back to God the wealth of Egypt which He had given them, so they were to have a willing heart in being generous to their poorer brethren (35:5 = 2 Cor. 8:12). And they would have realized that as "last year" they had made this offer (2 Cor. 8:10 Gk.), so the year before, Israel had received Egypt's wealth with a similar undertaking to use it for the Lord's cause. As Moses had to remind them a second time of their obligations in Ex. 35, so Paul had to bring it again before Corinth. And if they had seen these similarities, they would have got the sense of Paul's lament that there was not one wise hearted man amongst them – for the "wise hearted" were to convert Israel's gold and silver into tools for Yahweh's service (35:10 = 1 Cor. 6:5; 2 Cor. 10:12).

35:6-9 These were the things which Israel had taken with them from Egypt (12:36); we likewise should use whatever resources we have taken from this world [cp. Egypt] in order to do God's work and build and enhance His dwelling place amongst His people.

children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. ²¹ They came, everyone whose heart stirred him up, and everyone whom his spirit made willing, and brought Yahweh's offering, for the work of the Tent of Meeting, and for all of its service, and for the holy garments. ²² They came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought brooches, earrings, signet rings, and armlets, all jewels of gold; even every man who offered an offering of gold to Yahweh. ²³ Everyone, with whom was found blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, and sea cow hides, brought them. ²⁴ Everyone who offered an offering of silver and brass brought Yahweh's offering; and everyone, with whom was found acacia wood for any work of the service, brought it. ²⁵ All the women who were wise-hearted spun with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, the blue, the purple, the scarlet, and the fine linen. ²⁶ All the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun the goats' hair. ²⁷ The rulers brought the onyx stones, and the stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breastplate; ²⁸ and the spice, and the oil for the light, for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. ²⁹ The children of Israel brought a freewill offering to Yahweh; every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all the work, which Yahweh

had commanded to be made by Moses.

Bezalel and Oholiab

³⁰ Moses said to the children of Israel, Behold, Yahweh has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³¹ He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of workmanship; ³² and to make skilful works, to work in gold, in silver, in brass, ³³ in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all kinds of skilful workmanship. ³⁴ He has put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. ³⁵ He has filled them with wisdom of heart, to work all kinds of workmanship, of the engraver, of the skilful workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of those who do any workmanship, and of those who make skilful works.

CHAPTER 36 Feb. 23

Enthusiastic Response to the Work

Bezalel and Oholiab shall work with every wise-hearted man, in whom Yahweh has put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all the work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that Yahweh has commanded. ² Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab, and eve-

35:31 These men could have refused to do what God asked them. This passage appears to be the basis upon which Paul tells us that each of us have "good works" which God has in mind for us to do, and we must exercise our freewill to perceive them and go do them (Eph. 2:10).

ry wise-hearted man, in whose heart Yahweh had put wisdom, even everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to the work to do it; ³ and they received from Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, with which to make it. They brought yet to him freewill offerings every morning. ⁴ All the wise men, who performed all the work of the sanctuary, each came from his work which they did, ⁵ and they spoke to Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which Yahweh commanded to make. ⁶ Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make anything else for the offering for the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. ⁷ For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.

Making the Curtains and Boards

⁸ All the wise-hearted men among those who did the work made the tabernacle with ten curtains; of fine twined linen, blue, purple, and scarlet, with cherubim, the work of the skilful workman, they made them. ⁹ The length of each curtain was twenty-eight cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits. All the curtains had one measure. ¹⁰ He cou-

pled five curtains to one another, and the other five curtains he coupled one to another. ¹¹ He made loops of blue on the edge of the one curtain from the edge in the coupling. Likewise he made in the edge of the curtain that was outmost in the second coupling. ¹² He made fifty loops in the one curtain, and he made fifty loops in the edge of the curtain that was in the second coupling. The loops were opposite one to another. ¹³ He made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains one to another with the clasps: so the tabernacle was a unit. ¹⁴ He made curtains of goats' hair for a covering over the tabernacle. He made them eleven curtains. ¹⁵ The length of each curtain was thirty cubits, and four cubits the breadth of each curtain. The eleven curtains had one measure. ¹⁶ He coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. ¹⁷ He made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that was outmost in the coupling, and he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain which was outmost in the second coupling. ¹⁸ He made fifty clasps of brass to couple the tent together, that it might be a unit. ¹⁹ He made a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of sea cow hides above. ²⁰ He made the boards for the tabernacle of acacia wood, standing up. ²¹ Ten cubits was the length of a board, and a cubit and a half

36:6 Israel were extremely generous to God's work, whilst at the same time carrying with them the idols of Egypt and in their hearts wanting to return there (Ez. 20:7,8; Acts 7:42,43). We too can be externally supportive of God's work whilst in our hearts being far from Him; this is the nature of our human condition which we must battle against. God above all seeks our hearts and not our external works.

the breadth of each board. ²² Each board had two tenons, joined one to another. He made all the boards of the tabernacle this way. ²³ He made the boards for the tabernacle: twenty boards for the south side southward. ²⁴ He made forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for its two tenons, and two sockets under another board for its two tenons. ²⁵ For the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, he made twenty boards, ²⁶ and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. ²⁷ For the far part of the tabernacle westward he made six boards. ²⁸ He made two boards for the corners of the tabernacle in the far part. ²⁹ They were double beneath, and in the same way they were all the way to its top to one ring. He did this to both of them in the two corners. ³⁰ There were eight

boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; under every board two sockets. ³¹ He made bars of acacia wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, ³² and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle for the hinder part westward. ³³ He made the middle bar to pass through in the midst of the boards from the one end to the other. ³⁴ He overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings of gold for places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold. ³⁵ He made the veil of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cherubim. He made it the work of a skilful workman. ³⁶ He made four pillars of acacia for it, and overlaid them with gold. Their hooks were of gold. He cast four sockets of silver for them. ³⁷ He made a screen for the door of the tent, of blue, purple, scarlet, and

36:31 *He made...*— There is an exact symmetry between the commands to make the tabernacle items – e.g. “You shall make bars...” (26:26) – and the record of the fulfillment of the work: “He made... bars”. This is to demonstrate how strictly obedient Moses was to all the commands, hence the comment that he was faithfully obedient in all the work of God’s house (Heb. 3:2,5). In all this, Moses was a type of the perfect obedience of Christ to God. However, we also note that earlier in his life, Moses tended to argue back with God and find every reason *not* to be obedient. As he grew spiritually, he became more naturally and enthusiastically obedient to God’s demands rather than trying to find ways around them, and as such he becomes a pattern for our spiritual growth too.

36:35 The veil symbolized the flesh of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 10:20); and yet into it was woven scarlet, a symbol of His blood and sacrifice which permeated His mortal life. The lesson is that the cross is a daily way of life. The Lord taught this when He asked us to take up the cross daily: to live each day in the exercise of the same principles which He lived and died by. Let’s not see spiritual life as a survival of a few crises, as and when they present themselves. It’s a way of life, and the principles which lead us to the little victories (when we scald ourselves with hot water, when we dirty a newly washed shirt...) will give us the greater ones also, when (e.g.) we stand before a tribunal, or face death in whatever form.

fine twined linen, the work of an embroiderer; ³⁸ and the five pillars of it with their hooks. He overlaid their capitals and their fillets with gold, and their five sockets were of brass.

CHAPTER 37 Feb. 24

Making the Ark

Bezael made the ark of acacia wood. Its length was two and a half cubits, and its breadth a cubit and a half, and a cubit and a half its height. ² He overlaid it with pure gold inside and outside, and made a moulding of gold for it around it. ³ He cast four rings of gold for it, in its four feet; even two rings on its one side, and two rings on its other side. ⁴ He made poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold. ⁵ He put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. ⁶ He made a mercy seat of pure gold. Its length was two and a half cubits, and a cubit and a half its breadth. ⁷ He made two cherubim of gold. He made them of beaten work, at the two ends of the mercy seat; ⁸ one cherub at the one end, and one cherub at the other end. He made the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at its two ends. ⁹ The cherubim spread out their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces toward one another. The faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy

seat. ¹⁰ He made the table of acacia wood. Its length was two cubits, and its breadth was a cubit, and its height was a cubit and a half. ¹¹ He overlaid it with pure gold, and made a gold moulding around it. ¹² He made a border of a handbreadth around it, and made a golden moulding on its border around it. ¹³ He cast four rings of gold for it, and put the rings in the four corners that were on its four feet. ¹⁴ The rings were close by the border, the places for the poles to carry the table. ¹⁵ He made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold, to carry the table. ¹⁶ He made the vessels which were on the table, its dishes, its spoons, its bowls, and its pitchers with which to pour out, of pure gold.

Making the Lampstand

¹⁷ He made the lampstand of pure gold. He made the lampstand of beaten work. Its base, its shaft, its cups, its buds, and its flowers were of one piece with it. ¹⁸ There were six branches going out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of its one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of its other side; ¹⁹ three cups made like almond blossoms in one branch, a bud and a flower, and three cups made like almond blossoms in the other branch, a bud and a flower: so for the six

37:19 Israel was one nation under God; they were represented by one seven-branched candlestick. But in the New Testament vision of Rev. 1:20, each church is represented by an individual candlestick, and the body of Christ as a whole is represented by seven candlesticks, seven being the number of completion. This suggests that each local congregation is seen as autonomous by Christ; no other candlestick can dictate to another what they should do. If they fail to give light as they should, then this is dealt

branches going out of the lampstand. ²⁰ In the lampstand were four cups made like almond blossoms, its buds and its flowers; ²¹ and a bud under two branches of one piece with it, and a bud under two branches of one piece with it, and a bud under two branches of one piece with it, for the six branches going out of it. ²² Their buds and their branches were of one piece with it. The whole thing was one beaten work of pure gold. ²³ He made its seven lamps, and its snuffers, and its snuff dishes, of pure gold. ²⁴ He made it of a talent of pure gold, with all its vessels.

Making the Incense Altar

²⁵ He made the altar of incense of acacia wood. It was square: its length was a cubit, and its breadth a cubit. Its height was two cubits. Its horns were of one piece with it. ²⁶ He overlaid it with pure gold, its top, its sides around it, and its horns. He made a gold moulding around it. ²⁷ He made two golden rings for it under its moulding crown, on its two ribs, on its two sides, for places for poles with which to carry it. ²⁸ He made the poles of acacia wood, and

overlaid them with gold. ²⁹ He made the holy anointing oil and the pure incense of sweet spices, after the art of the perfumer.

CHAPTER 38 Feb. 25

Making the Altar of Burnt Offering and Brass Basin

He made the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood. It was square. Its length was five cubits, its breadth was five cubits, and its height was three cubits. ² He made its horns on its four corners. Its horns were of one piece with it, and he overlaid it with brass. ³ He made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, the shovels, the basins, the forks, and the fire pans. He made all its vessels of brass. ⁴ He made for the altar a grating of a network of brass, under the ledge around it beneath, reaching halfway up. ⁵ He cast four rings for the four ends of brass grating, to be places for the poles. ⁶ He made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with brass. ⁷ He put the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar, with which to carry it. He made it hollow with planks. ⁸ He made the basin of brass, and its base of brass,

with by Christ Himself, the One who walks amongst the seven candlesticks and is in their midst (Rev. 1:13); He alone can remove a candlestick (Rev. 2:5).

37:21 The language of buds, flowers and branches invites us to see the candlestick as a tree of life giving light in the darkness of the tabernacle, which had no natural light. The candlestick represents the local church in our times (Rev. 1:20); we as communities of believers are to be as the tree of life, offering eternity to a dark world; hence Prov. 11:30 likens the fruit of the righteous to the tree of life, which results in winning people for eternity.

37:22 *One beaten work* – The fact the candlestick was made from one piece of gold is emphasized; it speaks of the unity of the local church, achieved through much patient beating out of the material which comprises it.

out of the mirrors of the ministering women who ministered at the door of the Tent of Meeting.

Making the Court

⁹ He made the court: for the south side southward the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, one hundred cubits; ¹⁰ their pillars were twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. ¹¹ For the north side one hundred cubits, their pillars twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. ¹² For the west side were hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. ¹³ For the east side, eastward fifty cubits. ¹⁴ The hangings for the one side were fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three; ¹⁵ and so also for the other side: on this hand and that hand by the gate of the court were hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. ¹⁶ All the hangings around the court were of fine twined linen. ¹⁷ The sockets for the pillars were of brass.

The hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver; and the overlaying of their heads, of silver; and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver. ¹⁸ The screen for the gate of the court was the work of the embroiderer, of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen. Twenty cubits was the length, and the height in the breadth was five cubits, like to the hangings of the court. ¹⁹ Their pillars were four, and their sockets four, of brass; their hooks of silver, and the overlaying of the heads, and their fillets, of silver. ²⁰ All the pins of the tabernacle, and around the court, were of brass.

The Amount of Material Used for the Tabernacle

²¹ This is the amount of material used for the tabernacle, even the Tabernacle of the Testimony, as they were counted, according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest. ²² Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that Yahweh commanded Moses. ²³ With him was Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of

38:8 Perhaps this suggests that their devotion to God led them to no longer be so concerned with their own image and appearance.

38:18 This describes the curtain over the door of the tabernacle in similar language to how the veil hiding the Most Holy is described. Christ is the door of the tabernacle through which we enter at our conversion and baptism (Jn. 10:9). By doing so we also enter, in prospect, through the veil into the Most Holy of eternity and Divine nature. The height of the curtains was such that a man would have to bow his head in order to pass underneath it, teaching the humility required to approach God's presence.

38:23 This seems to imply that Aholiab was already a master craftsman; but he could only do the work because God blessed and developed the 'natural' talent which Aholiab was willing to present to God's service. God sometimes gives us the opportunity

the tribe of Dan, an engraver and a skilful workman, and an embroiderer in blue, in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen. ²⁴ All the gold that was used for the work in all the work of the sanctuary, even the gold of the offering, was twenty-nine talents, and seven hundred thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. ²⁵ The silver of those who were numbered of the congregation was one hundred talents, and one thousand seven hundred seventy-five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: ²⁶ a beka a head, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for each one who passed over to those who were numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty men. ²⁷ The one hundred talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the veil; one hundred sockets for the one hundred talents, a talent for a socket. ²⁸ From the one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels he made hooks for the pillars, overlaid their capitals, and made fillets for them. ²⁹ The brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand four hundred shekels. ³⁰ From this he made the sockets to the door of the Tent of Meeting, the bronze altar, the bronze grating for it, all the

vessels of the altar, ³¹ the sockets around the court, the sockets of the gate of the court, all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins around the court.

CHAPTER 39 Feb. 26

Making the Priestly Garments

Of the blue, purple, and scarlet, they made finely worked garments, for ministering in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as Yahweh commanded Moses. ² He made the ephod of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen. ³ They beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, in the purple, in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, the work of the skilful workman. ⁴ They made shoulder straps for it, joined together. At the two ends it was joined together. ⁵ The skilfully woven band that was on it, with which to fasten it on, was of the same piece, like its work; of gold, of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen; as Yahweh commanded Moses. ⁶ They worked the onyx stones, enclosed in settings of gold, engraved with the engravings of a signet, according to the names of the children of Israel. ⁷ He put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod, to be stones of memorial for the children of Israel, as Yahweh command-

to develop our 'natural' talents for use in His service – other times, He asks us to do that which is for us a taking up on the cross.

38:29 God remembers to this day how much everyone gave of what material, and has preserved the record in His written word. This is encouragement to us that no sacrifice for God's house is ever forgotten, but He eternally remembers it.

39:7 *Stones of memorial* – The idea wasn't that God might forget His people and so He needed to be reminded by the Priest wearing these stones with their names on;

ed Moses. ⁸ He made the breastplate, the work of a skilful workman, like the work of the ephod; of gold, of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen. ⁹ It was square. They made the breastplate double. Its length was a span, and its breadth a span, being double. ¹⁰ They set in it four rows of stones: a row of ruby, topaz, and beryl was the first row; ¹¹ and the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald; ¹² and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; ¹³ and the fourth row, a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. They were enclosed in gold settings. ¹⁴ The stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names; like the engravings of a signet, everyone according to his name, for the twelve tribes. ¹⁵ They made on the breastplate chains like cords, of braided work of pure gold. ¹⁶ They made two settings of gold, and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. ¹⁷ They put the two braided chains of gold in the two rings at the ends of the breastplate. ¹⁸ The other two ends of the two braided chains they put on the two settings, and put

them on the shoulder straps of the ephod, in its front. ¹⁹ They made two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, on its edge, which was toward the side of the ephod inward. ²⁰ They made two rings of gold, and put them on the two shoulder straps of the ephod underneath, in its front, close by its coupling, above the skilfully woven band of the ephod. ²¹ They bound the breastplate by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it might be on the skilfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate might not come loose from the ephod, as Yahweh commanded Moses. ²² He made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. ²³ The opening of the robe in its midst was like the opening of a coat of mail, with a binding around its opening, that it should not be torn. ²⁴ They made on the skirts of the robe pomegranates of blue, purple, scarlet, and twined linen. ²⁵ They made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates around the skirts of the robe, between the pomegranates; ²⁶ a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, around the

rather they were a reminder to Israel that they were each personally remembered by God all the time.

39:9 A span was about 22 cm. or 9 inches. The breastplate was quite small, compared to the grandiose religious clothing of other religions.

39:23 Christ died as the supreme High Priest, and the soldiers decided not to rend His garment but instead to throw dice to see which of them should get it (Jn. 19:24). As He hung on the cross, looking down and noticing what they were doing, He would have remembered this teaching about the High Priest's garment, and taken encouragement that He was indeed doing the High Priestly work to its ultimate term. His blood stained, dirty outer garment – perhaps woven by his social outcast of a mother – was equivalent of the High Priest's robe of "glory and beauty" (28:2).

skirts of the robe, to minister in, as Yahweh commanded Moses. ²⁷ They made the coats of fine linen of woven work for Aaron, and for his sons, ²⁸ and the turban of fine linen, and the linen headbands of fine linen, and the linen breeches of fine twined linen, ²⁹ and the sash of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, the work of the embroiderer, as Yahweh commanded Moses. ³⁰ They made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote on it a writing, like the engravings of a signet: HOLY TO YAHWEH. ³¹ They tied to it a lace of blue, to fasten it on the turban above, as Yahweh commanded Moses.

The Tabernacle Components Are Completed

³² Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting was finished. The children of Israel did according to all that Yahweh commanded Moses; so they did. ³³ They brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent, with all its furniture, its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, ³⁴ the covering of rams' skins dyed red, the covering of sea cow hides, the veil of the screen, ³⁵ the ark of the testimony with its poles, the mercy seat, ³⁶ the table, all its vessels, the show bread,

³⁷ the pure lampstand, its lamps, even the lamps to be set in order, all its vessels, the oil for the light, ³⁸ the golden altar, the anointing oil, the sweet incense, the screen for the door of the Tent, ³⁹ the bronze altar, its grating of brass, its poles, all of its vessels, the basin and its base, ⁴⁰ the hangings of the court, its pillars, its sockets, the screen for the gate of the court, its cords, its pins, all the instruments of the service of the tabernacle, for the Tent of Meeting, ⁴¹ the finely worked garments for ministering in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office. ⁴² According to all that Yahweh commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work. ⁴³ Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it as Yahweh had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.

CHAPTER 40 Feb. 26

The Tabernacle Is Erected

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² On the first day of the first month you shall raise up the tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting. ³ You shall put the ark of the testimony in it, and you shall screen the ark with the veil. ⁴ You shall bring in

39:43 When Moses looked with pleasure upon the completed tabernacle and blessed Israel, he was imitating God's inspection and blessing of the completed natural creation (Gen. 1:31); as if now a new creation had been begun in the lives of Israel, just as it is in us through baptism into Christ (cp. the Red Sea crossing) – 2 Cor. 5:17.

40:3 *Ark of the testimony* – The “testimony” refers to the tables of the covenant, the ten commandments, which were within the ark; the connection between the ark and the “testimony” is very strong in the record. The ark was symbolic of Christ, in whom dwelt the word and covenant of God.

the table, and set in order the things that are on it. You shall bring in the lampstand, and light its lamps. ⁵ You shall set the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the screen of the door to the tabernacle. ⁶ You shall set the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting. ⁷ You shall set the basin between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and shall put water therein. ⁸ You shall set up the court around it, and hang up the screen of the gate of the court. ⁹ You shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is in it, and shall make it holy, and all its furniture; and it will be holy. ¹⁰ You shall anoint the altar of burnt offering, with all its vessels, and sanctify the altar; and the altar will be most holy. ¹¹ You shall anoint the basin and its base, and sanctify it. ¹² You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the Tent of Meeting, and shall wash them with water. ¹³ You shall put on Aaron the holy garments; and you shall anoint him, and sanctify him, that he may minister to Me in the priest's office. ¹⁴ You shall bring his sons, and put

coats on them. ¹⁵ You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me in the priest's office. Their anointing shall be to them for an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations. ¹⁶ Moses did so. According to all that Yahweh commanded him, so he did. ¹⁷ It happened in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up. ¹⁸ Moses raised up the tabernacle, and laid its sockets, and set up its boards, and put in its bars, and raised up its pillars. ¹⁹ He spread the covering over the tent, and put the roof of the tabernacle above on it, as Yahweh commanded Moses. ²⁰ He took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the poles on the ark, and put the mercy seat above on the ark. ²¹ He brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony, as Yahweh commanded Moses. ²² He put the table in the Tent of Meeting, on the side of the tabernacle northward, outside of the veil. ²³ He set the bread in order on it before Yahweh, as Yahweh commanded Moses. ²⁴ He put the lampstand

40:6 Sacrifice is necessary before we can enter God's presence. Sacrifice doesn't simply mean giving material things to God; it refers to giving up to God that which is personal and valuable to us. We're not involved with God simply in order to get from Him; in this case, spirituality would be purely selfish, as it is in many religions. Authentic relationship with God depends upon our having the spirit of sacrifice; not in the sense that we can only get to God if we give something, for that too would be too primitive and a denial of grace as the basis of our relationship with God. But His grace and the wonder of fellowship with Him cannot be accepted by us passively nor with indifference; our natural response, if we believe it, is to want to give to Him.

40:19 *As Yahweh commanded Moses* – This phrase runs as a refrain throughout the chapter, as an appropriate ending to the book. See on 36:31.

in the Tent of Meeting, opposite the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. ²⁵ He lit the lamps before Yahweh, as Yahweh commanded Moses. ²⁶ He put the golden altar in the Tent of Meeting before the veil; ²⁷ and he burnt incense of sweet spices on it, as Yahweh commanded Moses. ²⁸ He put up the screen of the door to the tabernacle. ²⁹ He set the altar of burnt offering at the door of the tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the meal offering, as Yahweh commanded Moses. ³⁰ He set the basin between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and put water therein, with which to wash. ³¹ Moses, Aaron, and his sons washed their hands and their feet there. ³² When they went into the Tent of Meeting, and when they came near to the altar, they washed, as Yahweh commanded Moses.

³³ He raised up the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished the work.

God's Glory Fills the Tabernacle

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses wasn't able to enter into the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud stayed on it, and Yahweh's glory filled the tabernacle. ³⁶ When the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward, throughout all their journeys; ³⁷ but if the cloud wasn't taken up, then they didn't travel until the day that it was taken up. ³⁸ For the cloud of Yahweh was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

40:30 Before we can come to offer acceptable sacrifice and do God's work, we must firstly wash in baptism.

40:33 *Finished the work* – Jesus had this in mind when just before His death He said that He had finished the work God had given Him to do (Jn. 17:4); and He died saying “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30). He felt His work had been to build a dwelling place for God – not in a literal tabernacle, but in the hearts of willing men and women whose weakness and sin He had enabled to be overcome through His sacrifice.

40:37 They didn't know their itinerary ahead of time, each day and night they would've wondered whether they'd be called to move on or not. Their lives in this sense had no stability. If the Red Sea crossing represents our baptisms (1 Cor. 10:1,2) then this speaks of our lives afterwards being under God's leadership and guidance, we in that sense cannot map out how we would wish our journey to be.

LEVITICUS

CHAPTER 1 Feb. 27

Regulations concerning the Burnt Offering

Yahweh called to Moses and spoke to him out of the Tent of Meeting, saying, ² Speak to the children of Israel and tell them, ‘When anyone of you offers an offering to Yahweh, you shall offer your offering of the livestock, from the herd and from the flock. ³ If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall offer it at the door of the Tent of Meeting, that he may be accepted before Yahweh. ⁴ He shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. ⁵ He shall slaughter the bull before Yahweh. Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall present the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar that is at the door of the Tent of Meeting. ⁶ He

shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into pieces. ⁷ The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay wood in order on the fire; ⁸ and Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall lay the pieces, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that is on the fire which is on the altar; ⁹ but its inward parts and its legs he shall wash with water. The priest shall burn the whole on the altar, for a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. ¹⁰ If his offering is from the flock, from the sheep, or from the goats, for a burnt offering, he shall offer a male without blemish. ¹¹ He shall kill it on the north side of the altar before Yahweh. Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. ¹² He shall cut it into its pieces, with its head and its fat. The priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the fire which is on the altar, ¹³ but

1:2 *From the herd* – They were not to keep some animals specially for sacrifice; they were to take the sacrificial animals out of the herd. We are to be living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1), not reserving just part of our lives for God. The Lord Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice, and He was taken out of the common herd of humanity, not preserved specially for His work.

1:3 *Without blemish* – No animal actually is without blemish. God recognizes that we will not attain perfection in this life, but we are to do our best towards it. Only Christ was the sacrifice totally without moral blemish (1 Pet. 1:19).

1:4 Putting the hand on the animal’s head was to show that the animal represented the offerer. He showed thereby that he deserved to die, and wished to give his total life to God just as the animal would be totally offered to God. We see here God’s principle of accepting us on the basis of the representative sacrifice of Christ; the equivalent of our putting our hand on the head of the sacrifice is the act of baptism into Christ and abiding “in Christ”, He being our representative and we being His.

1:9 Every part of our lives, including our most inward parts, are to be offered to God. The process of splitting the offering into its parts speaks of our self-examination, defining each part of our lives and offering them to God consciously.

the inward parts and the legs he shall wash with water. The priest shall offer the whole, and burn it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. ¹⁴ If his offering to Yahweh is a burnt offering of birds, then he shall offer his offering of turtledoves, or of young pigeons. ¹⁵ The priest shall bring it to the altar, and wring off its head, and burn it on the altar; and its blood shall be drained out on the side of the altar; ¹⁶ and he shall take away its crop with its filth, and throw it beside the altar on the east side, in the place of the ashes. ¹⁷ He shall tear it by its wings, but shall not divide it apart. The priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that is on the fire. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a pleasant aroma to Yahweh⁷.

CHAPTER 2 Feb. 27

The Grain Offering

‘**W**hen anyone offers an offering of a grain offering to Yahweh, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. ² He shall bring it to Aaron’s sons, the priests; and he shall take his handful of its fine flour, and of its oil, with all its frankincense; and the priest

shall burn its memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, of a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. ³ That which is left of the grain offering shall be Aaron’s and his sons’. It is a most holy thing of the offerings of Yahweh made by fire. ⁴ When you offer an offering of a grain offering baked in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. ⁵ If your offering is a grain offering baked in a pan, it shall be of unleavened fine flour, mixed with oil. ⁶ You shall cut it in pieces, and pour oil on it. It is a grain offering. ⁷ If your offering is a grain offering of the pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. ⁸ You shall bring the grain offering that is made of these things to Yahweh: and it shall be presented to the priest, and he shall bring it to the altar. ⁹ The priest shall take from the grain offering its memorial, and shall burn it on the altar, an offering made by fire, of a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. ¹⁰ That which is left of the grain offering shall be Aaron’s and his sons’. It is a thing most holy of the offerings of Yahweh made by fire. ¹¹ No grain offering, which you shall offer to Yahweh, shall be made with yeast; for you shall burn no yeast, nor any honey, as an offer-

2:6 *In pieces* – See on 1:9.

2:9 *A pleasant aroma* – This is a very common phrase. It is applied to us in 2 Cor. 2:15 – if we are in Christ, we are counted as a pleasant aroma to God. The offering of ourselves to Him is nothing of itself, but because we are in Christ and counted as Him, we are a delight to God. Hence the colossal importance of being “in Christ”.

2:11 Yeast represented sin (1 Cor. 5:8). Honey and yeast would’ve made the grain pleasing to men; but the lesson was that what pleases people isn’t what is necessarily pleasing to God. He wants a person as they are, from the heart.

ing made by fire to Yahweh. ¹² As an offering of firstfruits you shall offer them to Yahweh: but they shall not ascend for a pleasant aroma on the altar. ¹³ Every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; neither shall you allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt. ¹⁴ If you offer a grain offering of first fruits to Yahweh, you shall offer for the grain offering of your first fruits grain in the ear parched with fire, bruised grain of the fresh ear. ¹⁵ You shall put oil on it, and lay frankincense on it: it is a grain offering. ¹⁶ The priest shall burn as its memorial portion part of its crushed grain, and part of its oil, along with all its frankincense: it is an offering made by fire to Yahweh'.

CHAPTER 3 Feb. 28

Regulations about Peace Offerings

If his offering is a sacrifice of peace offerings; if he offers it from the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before Yahweh. ² He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the Tent of Meeting: and Aaron's sons, the priests

shall sprinkle the blood around on the altar. ³ He shall offer of the sacrifice of peace offerings an offering made by fire to Yahweh; the fat that covers the inner parts, and all the fat that is on the inward parts, ⁴ and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the loins, and the cover on the liver, with the kidneys, he shall take away. ⁵ Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar on the burnt offering, which is on the wood that is on the fire: it is an offering made by fire, of a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. ⁶ If his offering for a sacrifice of peace offerings to Yahweh is from the flock; male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. ⁷ If he offers a lamb for his offering, then he shall offer it before Yahweh; ⁸ and he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it before the Tent of Meeting: and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. ⁹ He shall offer from the sacrifice of peace offerings an offering made by fire to Yahweh; its fat, the entire tail fat, he shall take away close to the backbone; and the fat that covers the inwards, and all the fat that is on the inwards, ¹⁰ and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the loins, and the cover on the

2:13 The salt represents gracious speech (Col. 4:6) and peace with one another (Mk. 9:50); without these things, no matter how great our sacrifice, it cannot be accepted by God. Hence Jesus taught that we should not offer our sacrifices to God until we have done what we can to get at peace with our brother (Mt. 5:24).

3:6 *Without blemish* – Although peace offerings were completely voluntary, they were not to think that therefore they could not respect God's holiness and give Him that which was second best. Many of the sacrifices we make to God are likewise not compulsory, but the spirit of giving God the best which permeates the Law of Moses should remain with us.

liver, with the kidneys, he shall take away. ¹¹ The priest shall burn it on the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire to Yahweh. ¹² If his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before Yahweh; ¹³ and he shall lay his hand on its head, and kill it before the Tent of Meeting; and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. ¹⁴ He shall offer from it as his offering, an offering made by fire to Yahweh; the fat that covers the inward parts, and all the fat that is on the inward parts, ¹⁵ and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the loins, and the cover on the liver, with the kidneys, he shall take away. ¹⁶ The priest shall burn them on the altar: it

is the food of the offering made by fire, for a pleasant aroma; all the fat is Yahweh's. ¹⁷ It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings, that you shall eat neither fat nor blood'.

CHAPTER 4 Feb. 28

Sins of Ignorance

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'If anyone sins unintentionally, in any of the things which Yahweh has commanded not to be done, and does any one of them: ³ if the anointed priest sins so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer for his sin, which he has sinned, a young bull without blemish to

3:11 *The food* – The metaphor invites us to see the altar as God's table, at which He as it were ate the sacrifices. At the breaking of bread service, we come to the table of the Lord (1 Cor. 10:21); the offering we bring is ourselves. And yet God has placed on the altar, on the table before us, the sacrifice of His Son, and invites us to eat with Him there. Eating with someone was understood as a sign of religious fellowship. At the breaking of bread, we are therefore celebrating our living fellowship with God Himself.

3:16 The fat was understood as the best part of the animal, although today for health reasons we tend to consider the meat to be of more interest than the fat. They were to give to God that which they perceived to be the most valuable, within the frames of understanding and perception within which they then lived.

4:3 Sins of ignorance still needed to be atoned for. Sin is a felt offence against God, whether or not we were aware of it at the time. If we accidentally step on someone's foot and they don't tell us about it until tomorrow, it doesn't mean that we didn't hurt them at the time. The sins we committed before baptism, in ignorance, were still felt by God and need atonement – which is available freely through being "in Christ". David asked to be forgiven for the sins he committed which he didn't know about (Ps. 19:12 cp. Ps. 90:8). We should pray the same. But this means we are asking for forgiveness for sin which we haven't specifically repented of. We should likewise forgive others for their sins which although *we* so clearly feel them, they themselves don't realize they have committed them. We can, if we wish, insist that we shall only forgive those who repent to us of their sins. But the problem with that approach is that *as* we forgive others, the basis we choose upon which to relate to them, so we will be forgiven (Mt. 6:12). If we trust we are forgiven for sins we aren't conscious of, even though they are very clear to God and felt by Him, then we ought to forgive others for

Yahweh for a sin offering. ⁴ He shall bring the bull to the door of the Tent of Meeting before Yahweh; and he shall lay his hand on the head of the bull, and kill the bull before Yahweh. ⁵ The anointed priest shall take some of the blood of the bull, and bring it to the Tent of Meeting. ⁶ The priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before Yahweh, before the veil of the sanctuary. ⁷ The priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before Yahweh, which is in the Tent of Meeting; and he shall pour out all of rest of the blood of the bull at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the Tent of Meeting. ⁸ He shall take all the fat of the bull of the sin offering off of it: the fat that covers the inward parts, and all the fat that is on the inward parts, ⁹ and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the loins, and the cover on the liver, with the kidneys, he shall take away, ¹⁰ as it is taken off of the bull of the sac-

rifice of peace offerings. The priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering. ¹¹ The bull's skin, all its flesh, with its head, and with its legs, its inward parts, and its dung, ¹² even the whole bull shall he carry forth outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire. Where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned. ¹³ If the whole congregation of Israel sins, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done any of the things which Yahweh has commanded not to be done, and are guilty; ¹⁴ when the sin in which they have sinned is known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for a sin offering, and bring it before the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁵ The elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before Yahweh; and the bull shall be killed before Yahweh. ¹⁶ The anointed priest shall bring of the blood of the bull to the Tent of Meeting; ¹⁷ and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle

their sins even when they don't perceive (at this point in their spiritual journey) that they have sinned.

4:5 Anointed – 'Christ' means 'the anointed one', and so Jewish minds would have associated 'Jesus Christ' with the priest who saves ['Jesus' means 'Yahweh's salvation'].

4:7 At the base of the altar – We think of the blood of Christ trickling down the stake to the ground.

4:8 Inward parts – There is huge emphasis upon this in the regulations about sacrifices. Our inward parts and thoughts of the heart are laid open before God and should be offered to Him, not just the externalities which men see (Heb. 4:12). The sacrifice of Christ was so perfect because His innermost thoughts were offered to God.

4:15 Before Yahweh – Before the priests who represented God. God Himself is in Heaven, but His representatives on earth are functionally Him to other people. We must therefore watch our behaviour and who we are, because we who have been baptized into His Name are His representatives on earth.

it seven times before Yahweh, before the veil. ¹⁸ He shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar which is before Yahweh, that is in the Tent of Meeting; and the rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁹ All its fat he shall take from it, and burn it on the altar. ²⁰ Thus shall he do with the bull; as he did with the bull of the sin offering, so shall he do with this; and the priest shall make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven. ²¹ He shall carry forth the bull outside the camp, and burn it as he burned the first bull. It is the sin offering for the assembly. ²² When a ruler sins, and unwittingly does any one of all the things which Yahweh his God has commanded not to be done, and is guilty; ²³ if his sin, in which he has sinned, is made known to him, he shall bring as his offering a goat, a male without blemish. ²⁴ He shall lay his hand on the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before Yahweh. It is a sin offering. ²⁵ The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering. He shall pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. ²⁶ All its fat he shall burn on the altar, like the fat of

the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and he will be forgiven. ²⁷ If anyone of the common people sins unwittingly, in doing any of the things which Yahweh has commanded not to be done, and is guilty; ²⁸ if his sin, which he has sinned, is made known to him, then he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has sinned. ²⁹ He shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering in the place of burnt offering. ³⁰ The priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering; and the rest of its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar. ³¹ All its fat he shall take away, like the fat is taken away from off of the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a pleasant aroma to Yahweh; and the priest shall make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven. ³² If he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish. ³³ He shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering. ³⁴ The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering; and all the rest

4:29 The person had to personally kill the animal, not delegate it to a priest or someone else. It would've been an unpleasant experience, but designed to teach the seriousness of sin. 'This animal has done nothing wrong; it's *me* who ought to be dying for my sin' would've been the thought of all sensitive, spiritually minded people who did this. And this is our thought as we survey the cross with the son of God dying upon it for our sins.

of its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar. ³⁵ All its fat he shall take away, like the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn them on the altar, on the offerings of Yahweh made by fire; and the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin that he has sinned, and he will be forgiven’.

CHAPTER 5 Mar. 1

The Sacrifices for Sins of Ignorance

If anyone sins, in that he hears the a legal call to testify, he being a witness, whether he has seen or known, if he doesn’t speak, then he shall bear his iniquity. ² Or if anyone touches any unclean thing, whether it is the carcass of an unclean animal, or the carcass of unclean livestock, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and it is hidden from him, and he is unclean, then he shall be guilty. ³ Or if he touches the uncleanness of man, whatever his uncleanness is with which he is unclean, and it is hidden from him; when he knows of it, then he shall be guilty. ⁴ Or if anyone swears rashly with his lips to

do evil, or to do good, whatever it is that a man might utter rashly with an oath, and it is hidden from him; when he knows of it, then he shall be guilty of one of these. ⁵ It shall be, when he is guilty of one of these, he shall confess that in which he has sinned: ⁶ and he shall bring his trespass offering to Yahweh for his sin which he has sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin. ⁷ If he can’t afford a lamb, then he shall bring his trespass offering for that in which he has sinned, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, to Yahweh; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. ⁸ He shall bring them to the priest, who shall first offer the one which is for the sin offering, and wring off its head from its neck, but shall not sever it completely. ⁹ He shall sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar; and the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar. It is a sin offering. ¹⁰ He shall offer the second for a burnt offering, according to the ordinance; and the priest shall make atonement for him con-

5:1 Sins of omission, of turning a blind eye, are just as culpable as sins of commission.

5:2 Haggai comments that it was easier to be made unclean than to be made clean; touching holy things didn’t impart holiness to a person, whereas touching unclean things made people unclean (Hag. 2:11-14). It’s easy to be made unspiritual by association with unspiritual things, the things which are dead, which have no spiritual life in them, which are going nowhere – hence Paul alludes to this by saying “Touch not the unclean thing” in the context of appealing for believers to quit worldly associations (2 Cor. 6:17). However, on the other hand, this is no proof for the wrong idea of ‘guilt by association’. The Lord Jesus touched lepers in order to heal them.

5:10 The sin offering always preceded the burnt offering, which represented dedication to God. Before we can acceptably dedicate ourselves to God in any enterprise or

cerning his sin which he has sinned, and he shall be forgiven. ¹¹ But if he can't afford two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he shall bring his offering for that in which he has sinned, the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it, neither shall he put any frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering. ¹² He shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as the memorial portion, and burn it on the altar, on the offerings of Yahweh made by fire. It is a sin offering. ¹³ The priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin that he has sinned in any of these things, and he will be forgiven; and the rest shall be the priest's, as the grain offering. ¹⁴ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁵ If anyone commits a trespass, and sins unwittingly, in the holy things of Yahweh; then he shall bring his trespass offering to Yahweh, a ram without blemish from the flock, according to your estimation in silver by shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering. ¹⁶ He shall make restitution for that which he has done wrong in the holy thing, and shall add a fifth

part to it, and give it to the priest; and the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and he will be forgiven. ¹⁷ If anyone sins, and does any of the things which Yahweh has commanded not to be done; though he didn't know it, yet he is guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. ¹⁸ He shall bring a ram without blemish from of the flock, according to your estimation, for a trespass offering, to the priest; and the priest shall make atonement for him concerning the thing in which he sinned and didn't know it, and he will be forgiven. ¹⁹ It is a trespass offering. He is certainly guilty before Yahweh'.

CHAPTER 6 Mar. 1

Restoration after Robbery

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² If anyone sins, and commits a trespass against Yahweh, and deals falsely with his neighbour in a matter of deposit, or of bargain, or of robbery, or has oppressed his neighbour, ³ or has found that which was lost, and dealt falsely therein, and swearing to a lie; in any of all these things that a man does, sin-

aspect of our lives, we must first be right with God, cleansed from our sins; for good works alone cannot compensate for the sin we have committed.

5:11 God thirsts for relationship with us, and doesn't want human poverty to mean that we can't get atonement. In Bible times, religion was the hobby of the wealthy; yet God wants relationship with all. Although it was a principle that shedding of blood was required for forgiveness of sins (Heb. 9:22), God was prepared to allow a non-blood sacrifice if this was all a person had to offer. Aware of this, Heb. 9:22 says that "almost all things" under the Law were cleansed by the shedding of blood – but not literally all, because the writer knew that there was this possibility of offering flour offerings instead of the required animal. The fact God is prepared to make concessions to human weakness shouldn't lead us to any spirit of minimalism in how we consider sin or the standards of God's holiness.

ning therein; ⁴ then it shall be, if he has sinned, and is guilty, he shall restore that which he took by robbery, or the thing which he has gotten by oppression, or the deposit which was committed to him, or the lost thing which he found, ⁵ or any thing about which he has sworn falsely; he shall restore it even in full, and shall add a fifth part more to it. To him to whom it belongs he shall give it, in the day of his being found guilty. ⁶ He shall bring his trespass offering to Yahweh, a ram without blemish from the flock, according to your estimation, for a trespass offering, to the priest. ⁷ The priest shall make atonement for him before Yahweh, and he will be forgiven concerning whatever he has done to become guilty’.

The Continual Burnt Offering

⁸ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ⁹ Command Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the law of the burnt offering: the burnt offering shall be on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning; and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it. ¹⁰ The priest shall put on his linen garment, and he shall put on his linen breeches

upon his body; and he shall remove the ashes from where the fire has consumed the burnt offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar. ¹¹ He shall take off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. ¹² The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it, it shall not go out; and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning; and he shall lay the burnt offering in order upon it, and shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. ¹³ Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out’.

The Grain Offering

¹⁴ ‘This is the law of the grain offering: the sons of Aaron shall offer it before Yahweh, before the altar. ¹⁵ He shall take from there his handful of the fine flour of the grain offering, and of its oil, and all the frankincense which is on the grain offering, and shall burn it on the altar for a pleasant aroma, as its memorial, to Yahweh. ¹⁶ That which is left of it Aaron and his sons shall eat. It shall be eaten without yeast in a holy place. They shall eat it in the court

6:4 Robbery – This effectively was what the exaggeration, mind games, manipulation, white lies and deceitful dealing of :2 was reckoned as. These things creep in so easily into any business dealings between people; and God sees them as robbery.

6:5 In the day – Broken relationships were to be restored as quickly as possible, so the restoration was to be made immediately. In all human failure, reconciliation involves some level of restoration, be it verbal or material.

6:13 It shall not go out – There was fair emphasis on this, that always a bullock should be smouldering as a burnt offering to God. Our devotion to God, as a community of believers and as individuals, must be 24/7; it’s not a matter of occasional flashes of devotion, weekly attendance at meetings etc.

6:16 The priests had no inheritance amongst Israel, they survived by eating parts of the offerings. Their eating of them represented God’s ‘eating’ of the sacrifices, the

of the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁷ It shall not be baked with yeast. I have given it as their portion of my offerings made by fire. It is most holy, as the sin offering, and as the trespass offering. ¹⁸ Every male among the children of Aaron shall eat of it, as their portion forever throughout your generations, from the offerings of Yahweh made by fire. Whoever touches them shall be holy'. ¹⁹ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁰ 'This is the offering of Aaron and of his sons, which they shall offer to Yahweh in the day when he is anointed: the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering perpetually, half of it in the morning, and half of it in the evening. ²¹ It shall be made with oil in a griddle. When it is soaked, you shall bring it in. You shall offer the grain offering in baked pieces for a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. ²² The anointed priest that will be in his place from among his sons shall offer it. By a statute forever, it shall be wholly burnt to

Yahweh. ²³ Every grain offering of a priest shall be wholly burned. It shall not be eaten'.

The Sin Offering

²⁴ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁵ Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'This is the law of the sin offering: in the place where the burnt offering is killed, the sin offering shall be killed before Yahweh. It is most holy. ²⁶ The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the Tent of Meeting. ²⁷ Whatever shall touch its flesh shall be holy. When there is any of its blood sprinkled on a garment, you shall wash that on which it was sprinkled in a holy place. ²⁸ But the earthen vessel in which it is boiled shall be broken; and if it is boiled in a bronze vessel, it shall be scoured, and rinsed in water. ²⁹ Every male among the priests shall eat of it: it is most holy. ³⁰ No sin offering, of which any of the blood is brought

altar being described as His table (Mal. 1:7,12), His acceptance of the offerer and fellowship with them – for eating what had been brought to you was a sign of acceptance and religious fellowship with the donor.

6:20 An ephah is about 22 litres.

6:22 *Wholly burnt* – The priests were not to eat parts of their own offering, as they usually did with the offerings of others. We as the new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5) shouldn't take any personal benefit from what we give to God, otherwise the concept of personal sacrifice to God is somewhat lacking in meaning. The priests were so used to dealing with the needs of others for atonement and acceptability with God – but they were not to forget that they too needed this, hence they too had to offer sacrifice. Our dealings with the unsaved world shouldn't lead us to forget our own personal need for reconciliation with God.

6:29 When Jesus presented Himself as the sin offering and invited His people to eat the symbol of it in the breaking of bread meeting, He was inviting us to see ourselves as a new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5,9), no longer assuming some group of special-ists would look after the spiritual concerns of others, but everyone, male and female, taking responsibility. This was a radical, difficult idea to accept for 1st century Jewish

into the Tent of Meeting to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be eaten: it shall be burned with fire’.

CHAPTER 7 Mar. 2

A Summary of the Offerings

6 This is the law of the trespass offering. It is most holy. ² In the place where they kill the burnt offering, he shall kill the trespass offering; and its blood he shall sprinkle around on the altar. ³ He shall offer all of its fat: the fat tail, and the fat that covers the inward parts, ⁴ and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the loins, and the cover on the liver, with the kidneys, shall he take away; ⁵ and the priest shall burn them on the altar for an offering made by fire to Yahweh: it is a trespass offering. ⁶ Every male among the priests may eat of it. It shall be eaten in a holy place. It is most holy. ⁷ As is the sin offering, so is the trespass offering; there is one law for them. The priest who makes atonement with them shall have it. ⁸ The priest who offers any man’s burnt offering, even the priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has offered. ⁹ Every grain offering that is baked

in the oven, and all that is dressed in the pan, and on the griddle, shall be the priest’s who offers it. ¹⁰ Every grain offering, mixed with oil or dry, belongs to all the sons of Aaron, one as well as another. ¹¹ This is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which one shall offer to Yahweh. ¹² If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened loaves mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mixed with oil. ¹³ With loaves of leavened bread he shall offer his offering with the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving. ¹⁴ Of it he shall offer one loaf out of each offering for a gift offering to Yahweh. It shall be the priest’s who sprinkles the blood of the peace offerings. ¹⁵ The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his offering. He shall not leave any of it until the morning. ¹⁶ But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow, or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice; and on the next day what remains of it shall be eaten: ¹⁷ but what remains of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day

Christians, and it is hard for us today too, accustomed as we are to assigning responsibility to others rather than taking it ourselves.

7:1 There’s a difference between the trespass offering and the sin offering, which is hard to define. It seems that the trespass offering was made when a specific sin had been done more consciously, whereas the sin offering was required when sin had been committed less consciously, or when a more general recognition of the fact we are sinners was required.

7:3, 4 There is special emphasis upon the fat, which was perceived as the best part of the animal, and the most covered inward parts. After recognizing our sin, we must be prepared to offer these to God. David understood the spirit of the trespass offering when after his sin with Bathsheba he offered to God his inward parts (Ps. 51:6).

shall be burned with fire. ¹⁸ If any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings is eaten on the third day, it will not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed to him who offers it. It will be an abomination, and the soul who eats any of it will bear his iniquity’.

Some Warnings about Offerings

¹⁹ ‘The flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten. It shall be burned with fire. As for the flesh, everyone who is clean may eat it; ²⁰ but the soul who eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings that belongs to Yahweh, having his uncleanness on him, that soul shall be cut off from his people. ²¹ When anyone touches any unclean thing, the uncleanness of man, or an unclean animal, or any unclean abomination, and eats some of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which belong to Yahweh, that soul shall be cut off from his people’. ²² Yahweh

spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘You shall eat no fat, of bull, or sheep, or goat. ²⁴ The fat of that which dies of itself, and the fat of that which is torn of animals, may be used for any other service, but you shall in no way eat of it. ²⁵ For whoever eats the fat of the animal, of which men offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh, even the soul who eats it shall be cut off from his people. ²⁶ You shall not eat any blood, whether it is of bird or of animal, in any of your dwellings. ²⁷ Whoever it is who eats any blood, that soul shall be cut off from his people’. ²⁸ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁹ Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offerings to Yahweh shall bring his offering to Yahweh out of the sacrifice of his peace offerings. ³⁰ With his own hands he shall bring the offerings of Yahweh made by fire. He shall bring the fat with the breast, that the breast may

7:20 The peace offering was a voluntary sacrifice. But this didn’t mean that the offerer could be careless, or think that having made a special sacrifice to God somehow made his uncleanness of no significance. Taking the initiative in serving God is good, but it shouldn’t make us think that we are somehow above God’s principles and can be unclean in other aspects of our lives.

7:27 The blood represented the life (17:11). The lesson was that life – both our own and that of others – is God’s, and we shouldn’t assume that we are our own masters. It is not for us to do what we wish with life – it is God’s. Paradoxically, the person who thought they could eat blood, who thought that life was theirs, would lose their life. The only way to live eternally is to give our life back to God who gave it to us. In baptism, we die with Christ, giving our lives to God as He did, but this must be an ongoing principle in our daily living, as we live not to ourselves but to Him (2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Pet. 4:2).

7:30 *With his own hands* – We cannot get others to do our worship and devotion to God for us. In this lies the grave error of the orthodox idea of a human priesthood who as it were do everything for us. We are to have a deeply personal relationship with God, with Christ as our only mediator (1 Tim. 2:5).

be waved for a wave offering before Yahweh. ³¹ The priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'. ³² The right thigh you shall give to the priest for a heave offering out of the sacrifices of your peace offerings. ³³ He among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood of the peace offerings, and the fat, shall have the right thigh for a portion. ³⁴ For the waved breast and the heaved thigh I have taken from the children of Israel out of the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as their portion forever from the children of Israel. ³⁵ This is the anointing portion of Aaron, and the anointing portion of his sons, out of the offerings of Yahweh made by fire, in the day when he presented them to minister to Yahweh in the priest's office; ³⁶ which Yahweh commanded to be given them of the children of Israel, in the day that He anointed them. It is their portion forever throughout their generations'. ³⁷ This is the law of the burnt offering, of the grain offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecration, and

of the sacrifice of peace offerings; ³⁸ which Yahweh commanded Moses in Mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the children of Israel to offer their offerings to Yahweh, in the wilderness of Sinai.

CHAPTER 8 Mar. 3

The Consecration of Aaron and His Sons

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² 'Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and the bull of the sin offering, and the two rams, and the basket of unleavened bread; ³ and assemble all the congregation at the door of the Tent of Meeting'. ⁴ Moses did as Yahweh commanded him; and the congregation was assembled at the door of the Tent of Meeting. ⁵ Moses said to the congregation, This is the thing which Yahweh has commanded to be done. ⁶ Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. ⁷ He put the coat on him, tied the sash on him, clothed him with the robe, put the ephod on him, and he tied the skilfully woven band of the ephod on him, and fastened it to him with it.

Waved – The Hebrew word means to lift up, to shake, to move to and fro. This style of offering meant that the offerer lifted up the sacrifice to God. The wave offerings were typically eaten by the priests, but first they had to be lifted up to God in recognition that they were being given ultimately to Him and not to the priests personally. The physical lifting up of the sacrifice through the air towards God could represent the ascension of Jesus as the perfect sacrifice to God.

8:4 *Congregation* – The Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint [LXX], uses the word *ekklesia*, which is used in the New Testament for the church. The body of believers in Christ today are the equivalent of the Old Testament people of God, Israel.

8:6 This washing with water looks ahead to baptism into Christ, by which we become the new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5).

⁸ He placed the breastplate on him; and in the breastplate he put the Urim and the Thummim. ⁹ He set the turban on his head; and on the turban, in front, he set the golden plate, the holy crown; as Yahweh commanded Moses. ¹⁰ Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and sanctified them. ¹¹ He sprinkled it on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its vessels, and the basin and its base, to sanctify them. ¹² He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him. ¹³ Moses brought Aaron's sons, and clothed them with coats, and tied sashes on them, and put headbands on them; as Yahweh commanded Moses. ¹⁴ He brought the bull of the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bull of the sin offering. ¹⁵ He killed it; and Moses took the blood, and

put it around on the horns of the altar with his finger, and purified the altar, and poured out the blood at the base of the altar, and sanctified it, to make atonement for it. ¹⁶ He took all the fat that was on the inward parts, and the cover of the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat; and Moses burned it on the altar. ¹⁷ But the bull, and its skin, and its flesh, and its dung, he burned with fire outside the camp; as Yahweh commanded Moses. ¹⁸ He presented the ram of the burnt offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. ¹⁹ He killed it; and Moses sprinkled the blood around on the altar. ²⁰ He cut the ram into its pieces; and Moses burned the head, and the pieces, and the fat. ²¹ He washed the inward parts and the legs with water; and Moses burned the whole ram on the altar. It was a burnt offering for a pleasant aroma. It was an offering

8:8 *Urim and thummim* – These seem to have been two stones, which at times flashed a sequence of yes / no answers to specific questions which arose amongst God's people.

8:9 *As Yahweh commanded Moses* – The careful obedience of Moses is emphasized; by it he became a type of Christ who was totally obedient to God (Heb. 3:2,5). The early chapters of Exodus present Moses as not always obedient, often arguing back with God and trying to find ways around God's commandments to him. In this we see his spiritual growth. This growing acceptance of God's authority and eagerness to obey rather than find ways around His commandments should be a feature of our spiritual growth too.

8:10 'Christ' means 'the anointed one'. All these anointed things were therefore symbolic of Him. He fulfilled their meaning in reality within His person, character and work.

8:14 Whatever special work we embark upon for God, we should always be aware of our own weakness and need for forgiveness. Therefore the consecration of Aaron and his sons for their great work began with sin offerings.

8:15 The physical furniture of the tabernacle wasn't sinful of itself. It was cleansed in order to demonstrate that whatever humanly beautiful and impressive work we make for God, it is still shadowed by our own sinfulness.

made by fire to Yahweh; as Yahweh commanded Moses. ²² He presented the other ram, the ram of consecration: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. ²³ He killed it; and Moses took some of its blood, and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot. ²⁴ He brought Aaron's sons; and Moses put some of the blood on the tip of their right ear, and on the thumb of their right hand, and on the great toe of their right foot; and Moses sprinkled the blood around on the altar. ²⁵ He took the fat, and the fat tail, and all the fat that was on the inward parts, and the cover of the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and the right thigh; ²⁶ and out of the basket of unleavened bread, that was before Yahweh, he took one unleavened loaf, and one loaf of oiled bread, and one wafer, and placed them on the fat, and on the right thigh. ²⁷ He put all these in Aaron's hands and in his sons' hands, and waved them for a wave offering before Yahweh. ²⁸ Moses took them from their hands, and burned them on the altar on the burnt offering. They were a consecration for a pleasant aroma. It was an offering made by fire to Yahweh. ²⁹ Moses took the breast, and waved it for a wave offering before Yahweh. It was Moses'

portion of the ram of consecration, as Yahweh commanded Moses. ³⁰ Moses took some of the anointing oil, and some of the blood which was on the altar, and sprinkled it on Aaron, on his garments, and on his sons, and on his sons' garments with him, and sanctified Aaron, his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him. ³¹ Moses said to Aaron and to his sons, Boil the flesh at the door of the Tent of Meeting, and there eat it and the bread that is in the basket of consecration, as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons shall eat it'. ³² What remains of the flesh and of the bread you shall burn with fire. ³³ You shall not go out from the door of the Tent of Meeting seven days, until the days of your consecration are fulfilled: for He shall consecrate you seven days. ³⁴ What has been done this day, so Yahweh has commanded to do, to make atonement for you. ³⁵ You shall stay at the door of the Tent of Meeting day and night seven days, and keep Yahweh's command, that you don't die; for so I am commanded. ³⁶ Aaron and his sons did all the things which Yahweh commanded by Moses.

CHAPTER 9 Mar. 4

The People are Sanctified

It happened on the eighth day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons,

8:23 All our service to God is to be done with the awareness of the fact that Christ shed His blood for us – our way of hearing, all we do with our hands and where we go with our feet is to be influenced by our experience of His death for us.

8:34 They were insistently reminded of their own need for atonement as they commenced the work of securing the atonement of others. In all our efforts for others we must bear this in mind.

and the elders of Israel; ² and he said to Aaron, Take a calf from the herd for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before Yahweh. ³ You shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'Take a male goat for a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, both a year old, without blemish, for a burnt offering; ⁴ and a bull and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before Yahweh; and a grain offering mixed with oil: for today Yahweh appears to you'. ⁵ They brought what Moses commanded before the Tent of Meeting: and all the congregation drew near and stood before Yahweh. ⁶ Moses said, This is the thing which Yahweh commanded that you should do: and the glory of Yahweh shall appear to you. ⁷ Moses said to Aaron, Draw near to the altar, and offer your sin offering, and your burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself, and for the people; and offer the offering of the people, and make atonement for them as Yahweh commanded. ⁸ So Aaron drew near to the altar, and killed the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself. ⁹ The sons of Aaron presented the blood to him; and he dipped his finger in the

blood, and put it on the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the base of the altar; ¹⁰ but the fat, and the kidneys, and the cover from the liver of the sin offering, he burned upon the altar; as Yahweh commanded Moses. ¹¹ The flesh and the skin he burned with fire outside the camp. ¹² He killed the burnt offering; and Aaron's sons delivered the blood to him, and he sprinkled it around on the altar. ¹³ They delivered the burnt offering to him, piece by piece, and the head: and he burned them upon the altar. ¹⁴ He washed the inward parts and the legs, and burned them on the burnt offering on the altar. ¹⁵ He presented the people's offering, and took the goat of the sin offering which was for the people, and killed it, and offered it for sin, like the first. ¹⁶ He presented the burnt offering, and offered it according to the regulation. ¹⁷ He presented the grain offering, and filled his hand from there, and burned it upon the altar, besides the burnt offering of the morning. ¹⁸ He also killed the bull and the ram, the sacrifice of peace offerings, which was for the people; and Aaron's sons delivered to him the blood, which he sprinkled around on the altar, ¹⁹ and

9:4 The appearing of Yahweh to His people required that they made themselves right with Him through a sequence of offerings which dealt with their sin and made them acceptable to Him. We in our day are to live in daily expectation of God's appearing to us through the return of Christ; and we too must ensure we are right with Him and can go to meet Him acceptably (Mt. 25:6).

9:15 *The goat of the sin offering* – Jesus spoke of the righteous as sheep and the sinners as goats (Mt. 25:33). A goat rather than a sheep was required because the goat was the representative of the sinful people; it was killed as a recognition by them that their sin deserved death. In baptism we make the same recognition – that I should die, and I identify myself with the dead body of Christ, and come alive again in Him.

the fat of the bull and of the ram, the fat tail, and that which covers the inward parts, and the kidneys, and the cover of the liver; ²⁰ and they put the fat upon the breasts, and he burned the fat on the altar; ²¹ and the breasts and the right thigh Aaron waved for a wave offering before Yahweh, as Moses commanded. ²² Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people, and blessed them; and he came down from offering the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings. ²³ Moses and Aaron went into the Tent of Meeting, and came out, and blessed the people; and the glory of Yahweh appeared to all the people. ²⁴ There came forth fire from before Yahweh, and consumed the burnt offering and the fat upon the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

CHAPTER 10 Mar. 4

Nadab and Abihu Are Killed

Nadab and Abihu the sons of Aaron, each took his censer, and put fire in it, and laid incense on it, and offered strange fire before Yahweh, which He had not commanded them. ² And fire came forth from before Yahweh, and devoured them, and they died before Yahweh. ³ Then Moses said to Aaron, This is what Yahweh spoke of, saying, ‘I will be declared holy in those who come near Me, and before all the people I will be glorified’. Aaron held his peace. ⁴ Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, Draw near, carry your brothers from before the sanctuary out of the camp. ⁵ So they drew near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moses

9:22 *Blessed them* – Blessing is often associated with forgiveness and acceptance with God. The blessings promised to Abraham and his seed likewise (Acts 3:25,26). If we are Abraham’s seed by baptism (Gal. 3:27-29) then we are to be a blessing to the world in that we offer them the way to God’s forgiveness and fellowship with Him. When the offerings are spoken of together, they are always in this order – sin offering, then burnt offering and then peace offering. Firstly we must deal with our sin; then dedicate ourselves to God, as spoken of in the burnt offering. Only then can we have peace with God and fellowship freely with Him, as exemplified in the peace offering.

10:1 The implication of :9 could be that they were drunk when they did this.

10:2 Fire coming down from God has just occurred as a sign of His acceptance of sacrifice (9:24). We shall either be consumed by God’s fire, or we give ourselves to Him as living sacrifices and are accepted and consumed by Him. There’s a logic of devotion here – whether we live to the flesh or to the Spirit, we are to be consumed anyway. So we may as well be consumed by God’s acceptance of us rather than by His wrath.

10:3 God’s destruction of sinners is a constructive declaration of His holiness rather than an angry deity lashing out at people because they offended Him. Any disciplining of others which we may have to do, e.g. of our children or within the family of God, should be done in the same constructive spirit. This incident teaches that we cannot approach God on our own terms, in our own way, but must do so in the way He has defined in His word. The fact He doesn’t respond to human failure so visibly as He did in Moses’ time doesn’t mean that this is any less true for us today.

had said. ⁶ Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and to Ithamar, his sons, Don't let the hair of your heads go loose, neither tear your clothes; that you don't die, and that He not be angry with all the congregation; but let your brothers, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which Yahweh has kindled. ⁷ You shall not go out from the door of the Tent of Meeting, lest you die; for the anointing oil of Yahweh is on you. They did according to the word of Moses. ⁸ Yahweh spoke to Aaron, saying, ⁹ Drink no wine nor strong drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the Tent of Meeting, that you don't die: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations; ¹⁰ and that you are to make a distinction between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; ¹¹ and that you are to teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Yahweh has spoken to them by Moses. ¹² Moses spoke to Aaron, and to Eleazar and to Ithamar, his sons who were left, Take the grain offering that remains of the offerings of Yahweh made by fire, and eat it without yeast beside the altar; for it is most holy; ¹³ and you shall eat it in a holy place, because it is your portion, and your sons' portion, of the offerings of Yahweh made by fire: for so I am commanded. ¹⁴ The waved breast and the contributed

thigh you shall eat in a clean place, you, and your sons, and your daughters with you; for they are given as your portion, and your sons' portion, out of the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the children of Israel. ¹⁵ The heaved thigh and the waved breast they shall bring with the offerings made by fire of the fat, to wave it for a wave offering before Yahweh; and it shall be yours, and your sons' with you, as a portion forever, as Yahweh has commanded. ¹⁶ Moses diligently inquired about the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burned; and he was angry with Eleazar and with Ithamar, the sons of Aaron who were left, saying, ¹⁷ Why haven't you eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary, since it is most holy, and He has given it to you to carry the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before Yahweh? ¹⁸ Behold, its blood was not brought into the inner part of the sanctuary: you certainly should have eaten it in the sanctuary, as I commanded. ¹⁹ Aaron spoke to Moses, Behold, this day they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before Yahweh; and such things as these have happened to me; and if I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been pleasing in the sight of Yahweh? ²⁰ When Moses heard that, it was pleasing in his sight.

10:19 Aaron felt unable to eat with God because of his bad conscience about his sons' behaviour, or maybe because he felt angry with God for killing his sons. Moses expected Aaron to just be obedient to the letter of the law for the sake of it, but Aaron is presented as having done the right thing, living with sensitivity to our conscience and feelings rather than in unthinking obedience to the letter of the law.

CHAPTER 11 Mar. 5***Clean and Unclean Animals***

Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them, ²Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘These are the living things which you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth. ³Whatever parts the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and chews the cud among the animals, that you may eat. ⁴Nevertheless these you shall not eat of those that chew the cud, or of those who part the hoof: the camel, because he chews the cud but doesn’t have a parted hoof, he is unclean to you; ⁵the rock badger, because he chews the cud but doesn’t have a parted hoof, he is unclean to

you; ⁶the hare, because she chews the cud but doesn’t part the hoof, she is unclean to you; ⁷the pig, because he has a split hoof, and is cloven-footed, but doesn’t chew the cud, he is unclean to you. ⁸Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean to you. ⁹These you may eat of all that are in the waters: whatever has fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, that you may eat. ¹⁰All that don’t have fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of all the living creatures that are in the waters, they are to be an abomination to you, ¹¹and you are to detest

11:3 *Chews the cud* – The Hebrew means to bring the food up again, to ruminate. Perhaps this was to represent ruminating upon God’s word; and being cloven-footed perhaps speaks of being sure footed and walking stably in life. To chew the cud (ruminate on God’s word) but not walk the talk (not having a cloven foot) still makes us unclean (:4). However, it may be that there is little significance in the chewing of the cud of itself, because doing so didn’t make the animal unclean of itself – it was just an exercise for Israel to teach them the concept of discernment, self control and obedience to God even when this meant practical inconvenience for them (see on :6).

11:6 *Unclean to you* – Paul observes that there is nothing unclean of itself (Rom. 14:14). These animals were to be unclean “to you” because it was part of God’s method of teaching His people to make a moral choice in life, to recognize there is sin and righteousness, clean and unclean. There were hygienic reasons behind the prohibition of some animals, but the essential intention was to teach the concept of making a difference, of looking at something we could partake of and saying ‘No, that is not for me’. The fact God later withdrew the distinction between clean and unclean animals just confirms that they were not clean nor unclean of themselves; all had been created by God and declared “very good” in Genesis. The distinctions between them were there to simply educate Israel in practicing the concept of separation and discernment between acceptable and unacceptable things in life.

11:8 *You shall not touch* – The basis of the command to us in our age to “touch not the unclean thing” by being separate from sinful things (2 Cor. 6:17).

11:10 The parable of the drag net pictures fishermen sitting down with their catch, throwing away the “bad” fish. These would’ve been the unclean sea creatures, e.g. crabs, which had got caught up in the net. This represented the ‘sitting’ of the final judgment at the last day (Mt. 13:48,49). We are to make that same division between good and bad in the choices we make today.

them. You shall not eat of their flesh, and you shall detest their carcasses. ¹² Whatever has no fins nor scales in the waters, that is to be an abomination to you. ¹³ These you shall detest among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the vulture, and the black vulture, ¹⁴ and the red kite, any kind of black kite, ¹⁵ any kind of raven, ¹⁶ the horned owl, the screech owl, and the gull, any kind of hawk, ¹⁷ the barn owl, the cormorant, the great owl, ¹⁸ the white owl, the desert owl, the osprey, ¹⁹ the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe, and the bat. ²⁰ All flying insects that walk on all fours are an abomination to you. ²¹ Yet you may eat these: of all winged creeping things that go on all fours, which have legs above their feet, with which to hop on the earth. ²² Even of these you may eat: any kind of locust, any kind of bald locust, any kind of cricket, and any kind of grasshopper. ²³ But all winged creeping things which have four feet, are an abomination to you. ²⁴ By these you will become unclean: whoever

touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening. ²⁵ Whoever carries any part of their carcass shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening. ²⁶ Every animal which parts the hoof, and is not cloven-footed, nor chews the cud, is unclean to you. Everyone who touches them shall be unclean. ²⁷ Whatever goes on its paws, among all animals that go on all fours, they are unclean to you. Whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening. ²⁸ He who carries their carcass shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening. They are unclean to you. ²⁹ These are they which are unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the weasel, the rat, any kind of great lizard, ³⁰ the gecko, and the monitor lizard, the wall lizard, the sand lizard and the chameleon. ³¹ These are they which are unclean to you among all that creep. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until the evening. ³² On whatever any of them falls when they are dead, it shall be unclean; whether it

11:13-16 These birds all hunt and eat other unclean animals, and many of them were totems of the idols believed in by the nations. Again the idea was to teach God's people the need to keep away from association with things which resembled sin, which would put ideas in the mind which tended towards sin rather than righteousness. This principle is so relevant today in connection with what we watch or read, for by presenting ourselves continually with sinful associations we are the more likely to ourselves fall into sin.

11:25 The more conscious was the association with uncleanness, the greater was the effort which made to be made to achieve cleansing. Thus if someone knowingly carried a carcass, they had to wash their clothes in addition to being unclean.

11:30 The animals listed were known in the land promised to Abraham. This is another proof that the Law of Moses was not intended for world-wide Gentile use but was the covenant between God and Israel during a specific time and in a specific location on the earth.

is any vessel of wood, or clothing, or skin, or sack, whatever vessel it is with which any work is done, it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the evening; then it will be clean. ³³ Every earthen vessel, into which any of them falls, all that is in it shall be unclean, and you shall break it. ³⁴ All food which may be eaten, that on which water comes, shall be unclean; and all drink that may be drunk in every such vessel shall be unclean. ³⁵ Everything whereupon part of their carcass falls shall be unclean; whether it be an oven, or a range for pots, it shall be broken in pieces: they are unclean, and shall be unclean to you. ³⁶ Nevertheless a spring or a cistern in which water is gathered shall be clean; but that which touches their carcass shall be unclean. ³⁷ If part of their carcass falls on any sowing seed which is to be sown, it is clean. ³⁸ But if water is put on the seed, and part of their carcass falls on it, it is unclean to you. ³⁹ If any animal of which you may eat, dies; he who touches its carcass shall be unclean until the evening. ⁴⁰ He who eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening. He also who carries

its carcass shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening. ⁴¹ Every creeping thing that creeps on the earth is an abomination. It shall not be eaten. ⁴² Whatever goes on its belly, and whatever goes on all fours, or whatever has many feet, even all creeping things that creep on the earth, them you shall not eat; for they are an abomination. ⁴³ You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps, neither shall you make yourselves unclean with them, that you should be defiled thereby. ⁴⁴ For I am Yahweh your God. Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am holy; neither shall you defile yourselves with any kind of creeping thing that moves on the earth. ⁴⁵ For I am Yahweh who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. ⁴⁶ This is the law of the animal, and of the bird, and of every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, ⁴⁷ to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the living thing that may be eaten and the living thing that may not be eaten'.

11:42 They were not to associate themselves with animals which hugged the earth; just as we should not keep close to earthly things (Phil. 3:19) but seek the things which are above (Col. 3:1).

11:44 The Hebrew words for sanctification and holiness include the ideas of both being negatively separated *from* and positively being separated *unto*. The whole legislation about clean and unclean animals was to try to teach Israel this principle. As such there was limited significance in the actual division of animals into clean and unclean – it was merely a teaching device.

11:45 *Who brings you up out of the land of Egypt* – This didn't just happen at the Red Sea, just as it wasn't completed at our baptisms (1 Cor. 10:1,2). Our being brought out of Egypt and toward God is an ongoing process.

CHAPTER 12 Mar. 6***Uncleanness at Childbirth***

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘If a woman conceives, and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her monthly period she shall be unclean. ³ In the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. ⁴ She shall continue in the blood of purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any holy thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed. ⁵ But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her period; and she shall continue in the blood of purification sixty-six days. ⁶ When the days of her purification are completed, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the door of the Tent of Meeting, a year old lamb for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering: ⁷ and he shall offer it before Yahweh, and make atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the fountain of her blood. ‘This is the law for her who bears, whether a male or a female. ⁸ If she cannot afford a lamb,

then she shall take two turtledoves, or two young pigeons: the one for a burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean’.

CHAPTER 13 Mar. 6***The Analysis of Leprosy***

Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ² When a man shall have a rising in his body’s skin, or a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes in the skin of his body the plague of leprosy, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest, or to one of his sons, the priests: ³ and the priest shall examine the plague in the skin of the body; and if the hair in the plague has turned white, and the appearance of the plague is deeper than the body’s skin, it is the plague of leprosy; and the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean. ⁴ If the bright spot is white in the skin of his body, and its appearance isn’t deeper than the skin, and its hair hasn’t turned white, then the priest shall isolate the infected person for seven days. ⁵ The priest shall examine him on the seventh day, and behold, if in his eyes the plague is ar-

12:8 The poverty of Mary the mother of Jesus is indicated by the fact she offered doves and not a lamb (Lk. 2:24). He knew poverty.

13:2 It’s doubtful whether the skin disease referred to in Leviticus is what we now call leprosy, i.e. Hansen’s disease.

13:3 Leprosy is symbolic of sin. But a person can appear to have leprosy when in fact it’s only a surface level appearance of it; but only the priest, representing Jesus, can declare this. We must of course be careful not to excuse our failings as merely surface level sin; but when it comes to judging others, we must accept that someone can appear sinful to us but it’s only a surface appearance; we must not ultimately judge whether a person will be saved or not, quite simply because we cannot do so. Only the priest, the Lord Jesus, can do so.

rested, and the plague hasn't spread in the skin, then the priest shall isolate him for seven more days. ⁶ The priest shall examine him again on the seventh day; and behold, if the plague has faded, and the plague hasn't spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. It is a scab. He shall wash his clothes, and be clean. ⁷ But if the scab spreads on the skin, after he has shown himself to the priest for his cleansing, he shall show himself to the priest again. ⁸ The priest shall examine him; and behold, if the scab has spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is leprosy. ⁹ When the plague of leprosy is in a man, then he shall be brought to the priest; ¹⁰ and the priest shall examine him. Behold, if there is a white rising in the skin, and it has turned the hair white, and there is raw flesh in the rising, ¹¹ it is a chronic leprosy in the skin of his body, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean. He shall isolate him, for he is unclean. ¹² If the leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of the infected per-

son from his head even to his feet, as far as it appears to the priest; ¹³ then the priest shall examine him; and, behold, if the leprosy has covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean of the plague. It has all turned white: he is clean. ¹⁴ But whenever raw flesh appears in him, he shall be unclean. ¹⁵ The priest shall examine the raw flesh, and pronounce him unclean: the raw flesh is unclean. It is leprosy. ¹⁶ Or if the raw flesh turns again, and is changed to white, then he shall come to the priest; ¹⁷ and the priest shall examine him; and, behold, if the plague has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him clean of the plague. He is clean. ¹⁸ When the body has a boil on its skin, and it has healed, ¹⁹ and in the place of the boil there is a white rising, or a bright spot, reddish-white, then it shall be shown to the priest; ²⁰ and the priest shall examine it; and behold, if it appears beneath the skin, and its hair has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is the plague of leprosy. It has broken out in the boil. ²¹ But

13:6 Our life spent in Christ is represented by these periods of seven days; at the end, Christ as the true priest and judge will decide whether the sin which there is in our lives has remained at a surface, appearance level – or whether it has spread. Yeast likewise represents sin, in that it spreads its influence. Sin either spreads in our flesh or doesn't...

13:8 The temptation must have been to try to cover up the appearance of sin / leprosy rather than revealing oneself to the priest; just as we are tempted today.

13:9,10 God's people were to avoid trying to judge the appearance of leprosy / sin in others.

13:13 If a person has indulged in sin and recognizes it, although they carry in their lives the evidence of it, yet the sin has as it were died and they are clean. At baptism into Christ we became "dead to sin" (Rom. 6:2).

13:20 There may be here a distinction being drawn between sin on a surface level and that sin which is deeper, which leads to exclusion from God's family.

if the priest examines it, and behold, there are no white hairs in it, and it isn't deeper than the skin, but is dim, then the priest shall isolate him seven days. ²² If it spreads in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a plague. ²³ But if the bright spot stays in its place, and hasn't spread, it is the scar from the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean. ²⁴ Or when the body has a burn from fire on its skin, and the raw flesh of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white, or white, ²⁵ then the priest shall examine it; and behold, if the hair in the bright spot has turned white, and its appearance is deeper than the skin; it is leprosy. It has broken out in the burning, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is the plague of leprosy. ²⁶ But if the priest examines it, and behold, there is no white hair in the bright spot, and it isn't lower than the skin, but is faded; then the priest shall isolate him seven days. ²⁷ The priest shall examine him on the seventh day. If it has spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is the plague of leprosy. ²⁸ If the bright spot stays in its place, and hasn't spread in the skin, but is faded, it is the swelling from the burn, and the priest shall pronounce him clean; for it is the scar from the burn. ²⁹ When a man or woman has

a plague on the head or on the beard, ³⁰ then the priest shall examine the plague; and behold, if its appearance is deeper than the skin, and the hair in it is yellow and thin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is an itch, it is leprosy of the head or of the beard. ³¹ If the priest examines the plague of itching, and behold, its appearance isn't deeper than the skin, and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate the person infected with itching seven days. ³² On the seventh day the priest shall examine the plague; and behold, if the itch hasn't spread, and there is no yellow hair in it, and the appearance of the itch isn't deeper than the skin, ³³ then he shall be shaved, but he shall not shave the itch; and the priest shall shut up him who has the itch seven more days. ³⁴ On the seventh day, the priest shall examine the itch; and behold, if the itch hasn't spread in the skin, and its appearance isn't deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. He shall wash his clothes, and be clean. ³⁵ But if the itch spreads in the skin after his cleansing, ³⁶ then the priest shall examine him; and behold, if the itch has spread in the skin, the priest shall not look for the yellow hair, he is unclean. ³⁷ But if in his eyes the itch is arrested, and black hair has grown in it; the itch is healed, he is

13:23 People carry the scars of their sins, but these don't mean we should treat them as sinful.

13:37 *In his eyes* – The opinion, analysis and judgment of the priest, representing Christ, is all important. Many people in primitive societies consider they have a legitimate medical opinion, based on the kind of traditions and folk wisdom which abound in relation to skin diseases. Israel were to resist these, and leave the diagnosis and

clean. The priest shall pronounce him clean. ³⁸ When a man or a woman has bright spots in the skin of the body, even white bright spots; ³⁹ then the priest shall examine them; and behold, if the bright spots on the skin of their body are a dull white, it is a harmless rash, it has broken out in the skin, he is clean. ⁴⁰ If a man's hair has fallen from his head, he is bald, he is clean. ⁴¹ If his hair has fallen off from the front part of his head, he is forehead bald, he is clean. ⁴² But if there is in the bald head, or the bald forehead, a reddish-white plague; it is leprosy breaking out in his bald head, or his bald forehead. ⁴³ Then the priest shall examine him; and, behold, if the rising of the plague is reddish-white in his bald head, or in his bald forehead, like the appearance of leprosy in the skin of the flesh, ⁴⁴ he is a leprous man. He is unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean. His plague is on his head. ⁴⁵ The leper in whom the plague is shall wear torn clothes, and the hair of his head shall hang loose. He shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' ⁴⁶ All the days in which the plague is in him he shall be unclean. He is unclean. He shall dwell alone. Outside of the camp shall be his dwelling.

Leprosy in a Garment

⁴⁷ The garment also that the plague of leprosy is in, whether it is a woollen garment, or a linen garment; ⁴⁸ whether it is in warp, or woof; of linen, or of wool; whether in a skin, or in anything made of skin; ⁴⁹ if the plague is greenish or reddish in the garment, or in the skin, or in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything made of skin; it is the plague of leprosy, and shall be shown to the priest. ⁵⁰ The priest shall examine the plague, and isolate the plague seven days. ⁵¹ He shall examine the plague on the seventh day. If the plague has spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in the skin, whatever use the skin is used for, the plague is a destructive leprosy. It is unclean. ⁵² He shall burn the garment, whether the warp or the woof, in wool or in linen, or anything of skin, in which the plague is; for it is a destructive leprosy. It shall be burned in the fire. ⁵³ If the priest examines it, and behold, the plague hasn't spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything of skin; ⁵⁴ then the priest shall command that they wash the thing in which the plague is, and he shall isolate it seven more days. ⁵⁵ Then the priest shall examine it, after the plague is washed; and behold, if the

judgment solely in the hands of the priest. We have a serious tendency to judge others' sin, and we really must leave this to Christ.

13:46 Christ died for us "outside the camp" (Heb. 13:11,13); he was unashamed to associate with lepers and as it were died with them and for them.

13:51 *Whatever use* – No matter how valuable the garment, this didn't somehow mean that the leprosy [cp. sin] was any less significant.

13:55 The tendency would've been to think that if the rot was only on the inside of the garment and not visible to anyone else, then this didn't require attention or cleansing.

plague hasn't changed its colour, and the plague hasn't spread, it is unclean; you shall burn it in the fire. It is a mildewed spot, whether the rot is inside or outside. ⁵⁶ If the priest looks, and behold, the plague has faded after it is washed, then he shall pluck it out of the garment, or out of the skin, or out of the warp, or out of the woof: ⁵⁷ and if it appears again in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything of skin, it is spreading. You shall burn with fire that in which the plague is. ⁵⁸ The garment, either the warp, or the woof, or whatever thing of skin it is, which you shall wash, if the plague has departed from them, then it shall be washed the second time, and it will be clean. ⁵⁹ This is the law of the plague of leprosy in a garment of wool or linen, either in the warp, or the woof, or in anything of skin, to pronounce it clean, or to pronounce it unclean.

CHAPTER 14 Mar. 7

Regulations concerning Cleansing the Leper

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² This shall be the law of the

leper in the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest, ³ and the priest shall go forth out of the camp. The priest shall examine him, and behold, if the plague of leprosy is healed in the leper, ⁴ then the priest shall command them to take for him who is to be cleansed two living clean birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. ⁵ The priest shall command them to kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water. ⁶ As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. ⁷ He shall sprinkle on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird go into the open field. ⁸ He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and bathe himself in water; and he shall be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, but shall dwell outside his tent seven days. ⁹ It shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his

Hence the emphasis – “whether the rot is inside or outside”. Sin is still sin, whether or not it is visible to others or not. Some peoples’ sins are more open to our view than others (1 Tim. 5:24).

13:56 *Pluck it out* – To stop the leprosy / sin spreading. Jesus uses the same phrase in teaching that we should ‘pluck out’ of our lives whatever is likely to lead us to stumble into sin (Mt. 5:29; 18:9). Repeatedly, the seriousness of the leprosy / sin is defined by whether it spreads, either in depth or distribution.

14:7 The two birds may foreshadow the death and resurrection of Jesus. The bird which flew away in joyful, thankful freedom symbolized Christ’s resurrection and the freedom from sin which is enabled for us who were spiritual lepers; thanks to the death of Christ, represented by the death of the first bird.

14:8 The cleansed leper was to become as a baby, and be washed in water. This looked ahead to baptism by full immersion into Christ as the new birth (Jn. 3:3-5).

beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his body in water, then he shall be clean.

¹⁰ On the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb a year old without blemish, and three tenths of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil. ¹¹ The priest who cleanses him shall set these things and the man who is to be cleansed before Yahweh, at the door of the Tent of Meeting. ¹² The priest shall take one of the male lambs, and offer him for a trespass offering, with the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before Yahweh.

¹³ He shall kill the male lamb in the place where they kill the sin offering and the burnt offering, in the place of the sanctuary; for as the sin offering is the priest's, so is the trespass offering. It is most holy. ¹⁴ The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. ¹⁵ The priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand. ¹⁶ The priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times

before Yahweh. ¹⁷ The priest shall put some of the rest of the oil that is in his hand on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering. ¹⁸ The rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed, and the priest shall make atonement for him before Yahweh. ¹⁹ The priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed because of his uncleanness: and afterward he shall kill the burnt offering; ²⁰ and the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. The priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean. ²¹ If he is poor, and can't afford so much, then he shall take one male lamb for a trespass offering to be waved, to make atonement for him, and one tenth of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil for a grain offering, and a log of oil; ²² and two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to afford; and the one shall be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering. ²³ On the eighth day he shall bring them for his cleansing to the priest, to the door of the Tent of Meeting, before Yahweh. ²⁴ The priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering, and the log of oil,

14:14 The leper was to continually live under the impression of the fact he or she had been healed and cleansed, just as we should. The fact the blood of Christ was shed for us personally should affect how we hear (hence the blood was put on the ear), what we do with our hands (the right thumb) and where we go with our feet (the right big toe). The process was repeated with oil (:16), perhaps foreshadowing the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the lives of those in Christ.

and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before Yahweh. ²⁵ He shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering. The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering and put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. ²⁶ The priest shall pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand; ²⁷ and the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before Yahweh. ²⁸ Then the priest shall put some of the oil that is in his hand on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the place of the blood of the trespass offering. ²⁹ The rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before Yahweh. ³⁰ He shall

offer one of the turtledoves, or of the young pigeons, such as he can lay his hand on, ³¹ even such as he is able to afford, the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, with the grain offering. The priest shall make atonement for him who is to be cleansed before Yahweh. ³² This is the law for him in whom is the plague of leprosy, who is not able to afford the sacrifice for his cleansing.

Leprosy in a House

³³ Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ³⁴ When you have come into the land of Canaan which I give to you for a possession, and I put a spreading leprosy in a house in the land of your possession, ³⁵ then he who owns the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, 'There seems to me to be some sort of plague in the house'. ³⁶ The priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest goes in to examine the

14:30 *Such as he can lay his hand on* – Lepers had to live outside the camp of Israel and couldn't work, so they would've typically been very poor. But the concept of sacrifice was important; they weren't to assume 'I'm a leper, of course I have nothing, I don't have to sacrifice anything'. They had to lay their hand on at least some kind of animal – and the Hebrew could possibly carry the sense of '*whatever* he can lay his hand on'. It was important that they gave at least something in recognition of their need for cleansing, and their receipt of it by God's grace. We shouldn't consider our poverty, in whatever area, to mean that we don't have to sacrifice anything to God.

14:34 *Which I give to you for a possession* – Constantly Israel were reminded that God would indeed give them the promised Kingdom, even though at that time as they wandered in the wilderness it must've seemed merely a nice idea. He encourages us likewise.

14:35 It would've been tempting for the owner to just cover up the signs of disease within his house, rather than ask the priest to inspect it. We are to be open before God, freely confessing our sins and possible sins or liabilities to sin, in open dialogue before Him in prayer. When David invites God to search his heart and see if there be any wicked way in him (Ps. 139:23), he was alluding to the language of the house owner inviting the priest to inspect his house for leprosy.

plague, that all that is in the house not be made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to inspect the house. ³⁷ He shall examine the plague; and behold, if the plague is in the walls of the house with hollow streaks, greenish or reddish, and it appears to be deeper than the wall; ³⁸ then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days. ³⁹ The priest shall come again on the seventh day, and look. If the plague has spread in the walls of the house, ⁴⁰ then the priest shall command that they take out the stones in which is the plague, and cast them into an unclean place outside of the city: ⁴¹ and he shall cause the inside of the house to be scraped all over, and they shall pour out the mortar that they scraped off outside of the city into an unclean place. ⁴² They shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones; and he shall

take other mortar, and shall plaster the house. ⁴³ If the plague comes again, and breaks out in the house, after he has taken out the stones, and after he has scraped the house, and after it was plastered; ⁴⁴ then the priest shall come in and look; and behold, if the plague has spread in the house, it is a destructive mildew in the house. It is unclean. ⁴⁵ He shall break down the house, its stones, and its timber, and all the mortar of the house. He shall carry them out of the city into an unclean place. ⁴⁶ Moreover he who goes into the house while it is shut up shall be unclean until the evening. ⁴⁷ He who lies down in the house shall wash his clothes; and he who eats in the house shall wash his clothes. ⁴⁸ If the priest shall come in, and examine it, and behold, the plague hasn't spread in the house, after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because

14:39 This looks forward to Christ as the ultimate priest coming again on the final [seventh] day and inspecting the degree to which sin has spread within us, or remained merely on the level of appearance. 1 Pet. 2:12 alludes here, by calling the day of Christ's return "the day of inspection" (Gk.).

14:41 The removing and scraping of diseased stones is a figure alluded to later in the Bible. The stones of Tyre were to be removed and scraped (Ez. 26:4) – for it was a sinful city. Jesus makes the same allusion when He said that the stones of the temple were to be removed one by one, because the Jews refused to accept the day of Christ's inspection (Lk. 19:44 Gk.). When He entered the temple, looked around it and then walked out, He was acting as a priest inspecting a leprous house (Mk. 11:11). But the Jews refused to accept Him as priest and insisted that their hypocrisy was in fact holiness. The new stones which were to be brought in (:42) refer to the Christian believers, who were to be built up into a new temple (1 Pet. 2:5). It was a radical thing indeed for Jesus to liken the temple, the very symbol of human piety and the very quintessence of the Jewish religion, to a leprous house which needed to be pulled down. Established religion today likely has the same judgment from Him.

14:47 There was greater culpability the more consciously a person did things which he or she knew were unclean. Thus to lie down in the unclean house required a washing of clothes, whereas just going into it merited a lesser requirement for cleansing.

the plague is healed. ⁴⁹ To cleanse the house he shall take two birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. ⁵⁰ He shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water. ⁵¹ He shall take the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. ⁵² He shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, with the living bird, with the cedar wood, with the hyssop, and with the scarlet; ⁵³ but he shall let the living bird go out of the city into the open field. So shall he make atonement for the house; and it shall be clean. ⁵⁴ This is the law for any plague of leprosy, and for an itch, ⁵⁵ and for the destructive leprosy of a garment, and for a house, ⁵⁶ and for a rising, and for a scab, and for a bright spot; ⁵⁷ to teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean. This is the law of leprosy.

CHAPTER 15 Mar. 8

Male Bodily Discharges

Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ² Speak to the

children of Israel, and tell them, ‘When any man has a discharge from his body, because of his discharge he is unclean. ³ This shall be his uncleanness in his discharge: whether his body runs with his discharge, or if his body has stopped excreting his discharge, it is his uncleanness. ⁴ Every bed whereon he who has the discharge lies shall be unclean; and everything he sits on shall be unclean. ⁵ Whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ⁶ He who sits on anything whereon the man who has the discharge sat shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ⁷ He who touches the body of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ⁸ If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ⁹ Whatever saddle he who has the discharge rides on shall be unclean. ¹⁰ Whoever touches anything that was under him shall be unclean until the

14:51 Wood, hyssop and scarlet clothing all featured in the final suffering and crucifixion of Christ. This is the basis for our cleansing from the leprosy of sin.

15:2 These laws were to teach that in essence, it is what comes from within a person which makes them unclean, rather than what enters us from outside (Mk. 7:15-23). The idea that demons, evil spirits or Satan can enter us and make us unclean must be rejected; Jesus emphasizes that sin comes from *within*, therefore it is totally our fault, and we must take responsibility rather than blaming it on cosmic forces outside of us.

15:3 *If his body has stopped excreting his discharge* – Even if we are no longer sinning, we must remember that we still stand guilty for past sins unless we have received cleansing for them. The passage of time and the fading of human memory works only a pseudo-atonement for sin; it is the blood of Christ and our conscious identity with it which alone can eternally cleanse our conscience from sins both past and present.

evening. He who carries those things shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ¹¹ Whoever he who has the discharge touches, without having rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. ¹² The earthen vessel, which he who has the discharge touches, shall be broken; and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water. ¹³ When he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count to himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes; and he shall bathe his flesh in running water, and shall be clean. ¹⁴ On the eighth day he shall take two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, and come before Yahweh to the door of the Tent of Meeting, and give them to the priest; ¹⁵ and the priest shall offer them, the one for a sin offer-

ing, and the other for a burnt offering. The priest shall make atonement for him before Yahweh for his discharge. ¹⁶ If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall bathe all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the evening. ¹⁷ Every garment, and every skin, whereon the semen is, shall be washed with water, and be unclean until the evening. ¹⁸ If a man lies with a woman and there is an emission of semen, they shall both bathe themselves in water, and be unclean until the evening.

Female Bodily Discharges

¹⁹ If a woman has a discharge, and her discharge in her flesh is blood, she shall be in her impurity seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening. ²⁰ Everything that she lies on in her impurity shall be unclean. Everything also that she sits on shall be unclean.

15:10 There was greater culpability the more consciously a person did things which he or she knew were unclean. Thus to purposefully carry something unclean required a washing of clothes, whereas just touching them merited a lesser requirement for cleansing.

15:13 *Running water* – In the dry wilderness, this would have been from the river of spring water which followed them from the smitten rock, which represented Christ who was smitten so that we might have the means of being cleansed (1 Cor. 10:4).

15:16 Like many of the commandments, there was a large element of personal choice in whether to obey this or not; intimate matters such as personal discharges were unknown to others. Under the new covenant, this is even more the case; attitudes of mind which make us unclean before God are known only to ourselves. The Law of Moses was the only legal code which had so many clauses which concerned matters which could never be publically demonstrated. God's intention even under the old covenant was to teach and inculcate personal relationship between God and His people. He did this by giving commandments whose keeping only He and the individual knew about.

15:18, 19 The whole family would have known that 'mum and dad' or just mum was unclean. Personal matters like sex and menstruation thereby became part of normal family awareness, rather than being hived off in quasi-secrecy and invested with an aura of mystery as they are in many modern cultures.

21 Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. 22 Whoever touches anything that she sits on shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. 23 If it is on the bed, or on anything whereon she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until the evening. 24 If any man lies with her, and her monthly flow is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed whereon he lies shall be unclean. 25 If a woman has a discharge of her blood many days not in the time of her period, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her period; all the days of the discharge of her uncleanness shall be as in the days of her period: she is unclean. 26 Every bed whereon she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her period: and everything whereon she sits shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her period. 27 Whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. 28 But if she is cleansed of her discharge, then she

shall count to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. 29 On the eighth day she shall take two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the Tent of Meeting. 30 The priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her before Yahweh for the uncleanness of her discharge. 31 Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, so they will not die in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is in their midst'. 32 This is the law of him who has a discharge, and of him who has an emission of semen, so that he is unclean thereby; 33 and of her who has her period, and of a man or woman who has a discharge, and of him who lies with her who is unclean.

CHAPTER 16 Mar. 9

The Day of Atonement

Yahweh spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before Yahweh and died; ² and Yahweh said to Moses, Tell Aaron your brother not to

15:28 This two stage cleansing process is common in the Mosaic rituals. She was clean, but in another sense not fully cleansed until the end of the seven days. We likewise are now cleansed in Christ, but in a full sense we will only be fully cleansed when He returns and our bodies are made like His, and the flesh no longer is a part of our condition of being.

16:2 This is one of a number of examples where the Law God gave Moses was changed by Him in consideration of human weakness. This shows that God's law isn't set in stone; those who argue that we must keep the Sabbath today must face the fact that God *can* change and abrogate His own laws. The wonderful thing in this case is that God meditated upon the sin of Aaron's sons, and didn't wish to put Aaron in the way of temptation which might be too much for him; because God never allows us to be tempted beyond our capabilities (1 Cor. 10:13). The way God here recognizes

come at all times into the Most Holy Place within the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, in case he die; for I will appear in the cloud on the mercy seat. ³ Herewith shall Aaron come into the sanctuary: with a young bull for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. ⁴ He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches on his body, and shall put on the linen sash, and he shall be clothed with the linen turban. They are the holy garments. He shall bathe his body in water, and put them on. ⁵ He shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two male goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. ⁶ Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house. ⁷ He shall take the two goats, and set them before Yahweh at the door of the Tent of Meeting. ⁸ Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for Yahweh, and the other lot for

the scapegoat. ⁹ Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for Yahweh, and offer him for a sin offering. ¹⁰ But the goat on which the lot fell for the scapegoat shall be presented alive before Yahweh to make atonement for him, and then sent away as the scapegoat into the wilderness. ¹¹ Aaron shall present the bull of the sin offering which is for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. ¹² He shall take a censer full of coals of fire from off the altar before Yahweh, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: ¹³ and he shall put the incense on the fire before Yahweh, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the testimony, so that he will not die. ¹⁴ He shall take some of the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east; and before the mercy seat he shall

the extent of His own holiness and as it were seeks to protect humanity from being harmed by it is similar to how He warned Israel not to come too near to the burning mountain (Ex. 19:21), and how He urged Moses not to come too near to the burning bush (Ex. 3:5). This isn't God distancing Himself from us, but His seeking to establish understanding of His holiness whereby we can ultimately draw near to Him in Christ (Heb. 10:22). When we struggle with God's distance from us we must bear this in mind.

16:10 The two goats represent the death and resurrection of Christ. The scapegoat bounding away in relieved, joyful freedom symbolizes the genuine freedom and joy of forgiven sin which we can experience in Christ. It's clear that human beings are eager for a scapegoat, we seem wired with a psychological need for one, someone upon whom we can place our sins and thereby feel free from them personally. The scapegoat has been provided for us in Christ, and therefore we shouldn't seek to scapegoat others.

16:12 Incense represents prayer offered by Christ (Rev. 8:3,4); the way it was taken beyond the veil into the Most Holy Place reflected how prayer, be it the 'mere' words of a woman waiting at a bus stop, enters into Heaven itself.

sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. ¹⁵ Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with his blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: ¹⁶ and he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, even all their sins; and so he shall do for the Tent of Meeting that is situated amongst them, in the midst of their uncleanness. ¹⁷ No one shall be in the Tent of Meeting when he enters to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, and has made atonement for himself and for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel. ¹⁸ He shall go out to the altar that is before Yahweh and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the bull's blood, and some of the goat's blood, and put it around it, on the horns of the altar. ¹⁹ He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and make it holy from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. ²⁰ When he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting, and the altar, he shall present the live goat.

²¹ Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them on the head of the goat, and shall send him away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness to do this. ²² The goat shall carry all their iniquities on himself to a solitary land, and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness. ²³ Aaron shall come into the Tent of Meeting, and shall take off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and shall leave them there. ²⁴ Then he shall bathe himself in water in a holy place, and put on his garments, and come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people. ²⁵ The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar. ²⁶ He who lets the goat go for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp. ²⁷ The bull for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried forth outside the camp; and they shall burn their skins, their flesh, and their

16:18 The New Testament observes that the blood of this bull and goat could not take away sins – even though the live goat apparently carried the sins away into the wilderness. If sin had really been carried away, there would have been no need for this annual day of atonement ceremony (Heb. 10:3,4). The conclusion is therefore drawn that God only operated this system of atonement on the basis that the blood of the sacrifices pointed forward to the blood of Christ, and on the basis of His faith and knowledge that Christ would make the perfect sacrifice, God accepted the animal blood on the basis that it was symbolic of Christ's blood.

dung with fire. ²⁸ He who burns them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp. ²⁹ It shall be a statute to you forever: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and shall do no kind of work, the native-born, or the stranger who lives as a foreigner among you: ³⁰ for on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before Yahweh. ³¹ It is a Sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict your souls; it is a statute forever. ³² The priest who is anointed and who is consecrated to be priest in his father's place shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen garments, even the holy garments. ³³ Then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary; and he shall make atonement for the Tent of Meeting and for the altar; and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. ³⁴ This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel once in the year because of all their sins. It was done as Yahweh commanded Moses.

CHAPTER 17 Mar. 10

Regulations concerning Animal Blood

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Speak to Aaron, and to his

sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: 'This is the thing which Yahweh has commanded, ³ Whatever man there is of the house of Israel, who kills a bull, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or who kills it outside the camp, ⁴ and hasn't brought it to the door of the Tent of Meeting, to offer it as an offering to Yahweh before the tabernacle of Yahweh: blood shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people. ⁵ This is to the end that the children of Israel may bring to Yahweh their sacrifices which they sacrifice in the open field, to the door of the Tent of Meeting, to the priest, and sacrifice them for sacrifices of peace offerings to Yahweh. ⁶ The priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of Yahweh at the door of the Tent of Meeting, and burn the fat for a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. ⁷ They shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat idols, after which they play the prostitute. This shall be a statute forever to them throughout their generations'. ⁸ You shall say to them, 'Any man there is of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who live as foreigners among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, ⁹ and doesn't bring it to the door of the Tent of Meeting to sacrifice it to Yahweh; that man shall be cut off from his people. ¹⁰ Any man of the house of Israel, or of the stran-

16:29 *Do no kind of work* – Because this was the day of atonement (:30). The point was that *God* was providing atonement by His grace and on account of the blood which represented Christ's blood – and not on the basis of our works.

17:9 Sacrifice couldn't be offered anywhere. It wasn't the case that the fact someone had a desire to do something for God thereby made them acceptable to Him. He had

gers who live as foreigners among them, who eats any kind of blood, I will set my face against that soul who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. ¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life'. ¹² Therefore I have said to the children of Israel, No person among you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger who lives as a foreigner among you eat blood. ¹³ Whatever man there is of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who live as foreigners among them, who takes in hunting any animal or bird that may be eaten; he shall pour out its blood, and cover it with dust. ¹⁴ For as to the life of all flesh, its blood is its life; therefore I said to the children of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any kind of flesh; for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off. ¹⁵ Every

person that eats what dies of itself, or that which is torn by animals, whether he is native-born or a foreigner, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening; then he shall be clean. ¹⁶ But if he doesn't wash them, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity.

CHAPTER 18 Mar. 10

Laws against Incest

Yahweh said to Moses, ² Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, 'I am Yahweh your God. ³ You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived; and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you; neither shall you walk according to their statutes. ⁴ You shall do My ordinances, and you shall keep My statutes, and walk in them: I am Yahweh your God. ⁵ You shall therefore keep My statutes and My ordinances; which if a man does, he shall

to be approached in the way He stipulated; and Jesus said "I am the door" (Jn. 10:9). It's not therefore true that all spiritual roads lead to the same place. We can only come to God in His way.

17:10 Blood represents life; to take life to ourselves rather than recognize it is God's results in us losing our lives (:14). Just as simply as the blood was to be given to God, so we are to give our lives to God. To take the blood to themselves is in fact spoken of as being as bad as murder (:4). This seems extreme language, but it underlines how important to God is this principle – that life is His and we are to give it to Him rather than live or take it to ourselves.

17:13 *Cover it with dust* – Burying the life, as it were. In baptism, we give our lives to God and figuratively die and are buried with Christ (Rom. 6:1-10).

18:5 *If a man does, he shall live in them* – Quoted in Gal. 3:12 to prove that life with God was possible by complete obedience to the Law of Moses. The Law could not give life in practice only in that people broke it (Gal. 3:21). Paul's point in Galatians is that eternal life therefore cannot be given on the basis of doing the Law – because we all break it. But Jesus completely kept the Law, and therefore deserved to have eternal life; but He died for us. Because of His perfect obedience to it, it wasn't therefore

live in them: I am Yahweh. ⁶ None of you shall approach anyone who are his close relatives, to uncover their nakedness: I am Yahweh. ⁷ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, nor the nakedness of your mother: she is your mother. You shall not uncover her nakedness. ⁸ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife: it is your father's nakedness. ⁹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, whether born at home, or born abroad. ¹⁰ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your son's daughter, or of your daughter's daughter, even their nakedness: for theirs is your own nakedness. ¹¹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, conceived by your father, since she is your sister. ¹² You shall not uncover

the nakedness of your father's sister: she is your father's near kinswoman. ¹³ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister: for she is your mother's near kinswoman. ¹⁴ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother, you shall not approach his wife: she is your aunt. ¹⁵ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law: she is your son's wife. You shall not uncover her nakedness. ¹⁶ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife: it is your brother's nakedness. ¹⁷ You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter. You shall not take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness: they are near kinswomen: it is wickedness. ¹⁸ You shall not marry your wife's sister, to be a rival, to uncover her nakedness, while her sister is

possible for Him to remain dead, He had to be raised from the dead (Acts 2:24). The principle that life was possible for those who lived in perfect obedience to the Law would have driven every humble, sensitive, Godly minded person to wonder how he or she could attain to eternal life; they would've so wished to find a person who was completely obedient to the Law whose righteousness could as it were be counted to them. In this sense, the Law was a household servant which led people to perceive their need for Christ (Gal. 3:24).

18:6 *I am Yahweh* – Who God is becomes the motive for obedience; our core desire to be like Him, rather than a legalistic, literalistic desire to keep commandments, is what will help us in practice to be like Him.

18:9 These laws teach that nakedness should only be uncovered before your wife or husband. Uncovering nakedness is an idiom for the sexual act. The allusion is to Adam and Eve having their nakedness uncovered; we have to accept the situation we are in as a result of the curse, rather than having sexual relations with who we like, as if uncovering nakedness is nothing shameful. Our hope is for the curse put on us in Eden to be lifted at Christ's return; we can't lift it in this life, as our own ever insistent mortality reminds us.

18:18 Jacob broke this principle by taking Rachel and Leah, and his sad family life afterwards was recorded as a testimony to how if we break God's principles, we may remain His people as Jacob did, but we will suffer the consequences. David likewise

yet alive. ¹⁹ You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is impure by her uncleanness. ²⁰ You shall not lie carnally with your neighbour's wife, and defile yourself with her. ²¹ You shall not give any of your children to sacrifice to Molech; neither shall you profane the name of your God: I am Yahweh.

Sexual Perversions

²² You shall not lie with a man, as with a woman. That is detestable. ²³ You shall not lie with any animal to defile yourself with it; neither shall any woman give herself to an animal, to lie down with it: it is a perversion. ²⁴ Don't defile yourselves in any of these things; for in all these the nations which I am casting out before you were defiled. ²⁵ The land was defiled; therefore I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out her inhabitants. ²⁶ You therefore shall keep my statutes and my ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations; neither the native-born, nor the stranger who lives as a foreigner among you; ²⁷ (for all these abomina-

tions have the men of the land done that were before you, and the land became defiled); ²⁸ that the land not vomit you out also, when you defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. ²⁹ For whoever shall do any of these abominations, even the souls that do them shall be cut off from among their people. ³⁰ Therefore you shall keep My requirements, that you do not practise any of these abominable customs, which were practised before you, and that you do not defile yourselves with them: I am Yahweh your God'.

CHAPTER 19 Mar. 11

The Ten Commandments

Interpreted

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and tell them, 'You shall be holy; for I Yahweh your God am holy. ³ Each one of you shall respect his mother and his father. You shall keep My Sabbaths. I am Yahweh your God. ⁴ Don't turn to idols, nor make molten gods for yourselves. I am Yahweh your God. ⁵ When you offer a

took the wives of Saul and also Saul's daughter – and likewise his breaking of the Law in this didn't lead to happiness, even though he remained God's man. There seems another connection to David in :20 – for Bathsheba lived in the house next door to David's, and his taking of his neighbour's wife resulted in the destruction of his own family and, ultimately, his kingdom.

18:21 *Profane the name* – We carry God's Name too, in that we are baptized into the Name. Our behaviour must therefore be appropriate to the Name we bear (James 2:7).

18:22 God found homosexuality "detestable"; although the Law of Moses has been abrogated, His basic moral principles remain unchanged. When Christ died on the cross, God didn't suddenly change His mind and decide that homosexuality was now OK.

19:5 Freewill offerings such as the peace offering must really be of our free will. We mustn't feel any sense of obligation to others, doing voluntary things to be seen of

sacrifice of peace offerings to Yahweh, you shall offer it voluntarily. ⁶ It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and on the next day; and if anything remains until the third day, it shall be burned with fire. ⁷ If it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an abomination. It will not be accepted; ⁸ but everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned the holy thing of Yahweh, and that soul shall be cut off from his people. ⁹ When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ You shall not glean your vineyard, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you

shall leave them for the poor and for the foreigner. I am Yahweh your God. ¹¹ You shall not steal, nor lie, nor shall you deceive one another. ¹² You shall not swear by My name falsely, and profane the name of your God. I am Yahweh. ¹³ You shall not oppress your neighbour, nor rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning. ¹⁴ You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind; but you shall fear your God. I am Yahweh’.

Commands Teaching Sensitivity to Others

¹⁵ ‘You shall do no injustice in judgment: you shall not be partial to the

them, but any act of freewill devotion must be genuine, motivated by our personal desire to devote our time or resources to God.

19:7 *An abomination* – If we think our freewill devotions to be God can be done as we wish without regard for His principles, then what we do is obnoxious to Him. The Hebrew word translated “abomination” is often used about idol worship; we will not be worshipping Him, but the idols of our own image and standing in the eyes of people.

19:10 *For the poor* – If all Israel were obedient to the Law of Moses, there wouldn’t have been any poor in Israelite society (Dt. 15:4). But the same Law of Moses repeatedly instructed Israel to be generous and sensitive to the poor; it tacitly recognized, as did Jesus, that there would always be poor within Israel, for the Law would never be fully kept (Mt. 26:11). We see in the structure of the Law the recognition of human failure in a way which no other law has ever equalled. There’s a tendency to assume that the poor are poor because of their own poor decision making and therefore we have no responsibility to help them – although we are all poor decision makers in various ways, especially in spiritual matters. The Law taught a principle we need to learn also – that even if folk have dug a whole and fallen into it, we are still to assist them and be sensitive to their situation.

19:11 The command not to steal is associated with not deceiving others nor lying to them. Dishonesty, even if it’s unrelated to material gain at another’s expense, is a form of theft; we are taking from another wrongfully.

19:14 *Fear your God* – As if God is especially sensitive to our abusing others’ disadvantages in whatever form, and His wrath about this is to be feared.

19:15 We are not to judge in the sense of condemn others, but it’s inevitable in daily life that we have to form opinions. But we must always remember that the person we are judging is in fact our neighbour, our brother, our equal; our judgment shouldn’t

poor, nor show favouritism to the great; but you shall judge your neighbour in righteousness. ¹⁶ You shall not go up and down as a slanderer among your people. You shall not endanger the life of your neighbour. I am Yahweh. ¹⁷ You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbour, and not bear sin because of him. ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people; but you shall love your neighbour as yourself. I am Yahweh. ¹⁹ You shall keep my statutes. You shall not crossbreed different kinds of animals, you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; neither shall there come upon you a garment made of two kinds of material. ²⁰ If a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave girl, pledged to be married to another man, and not ransomed, or given her freedom; they shall be punished. They shall not be put to death, because she was not free. ²¹ He shall bring his trespass offering to Yahweh, to the door of the Tent of Meeting, even a ram for a trespass offering. ²² The priest shall make

atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before Yahweh for his sin which he has committed; and the sin which he has committed shall be forgiven him. ²³ When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as forbidden. Three years shall they be forbidden to you. It shall not be eaten. ²⁴ But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, for giving a praise offering to Yahweh. ²⁵ In the fifth year you shall eat its fruit, that it may yield its increase to you. I am Yahweh your God. ²⁶ You shall not eat any meat with the blood still in it; neither shall you use enchantments, nor practise sorcery. ²⁷ You shall not cut the hair on the sides of your heads, neither shall you clip off the edge of your beard. ²⁸ You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you. I am Yahweh. ²⁹ Don't profane your daughter, to make her a prostitute; lest the land fall to prostitution, and the land become full of wickedness. ³⁰ You shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am Yahweh.

be rooted in any sense of feeling inherently superior over him or her, spiritually or otherwise.

19:17 By not rebuking our brother, by saying nothing and not engaging with the issues when we need to, we are likely to breed anger in our hearts against him or her.

19:18 One reason we fail to love others as ourselves is because we may in fact not love ourselves in the sense of perceiving our own value before God.

19:23 Forbidden fruit naturally recalls the forbidden fruit on the tree in Eden. To grab as much as we can immediately without working for it nor recognizing that the first-fruits of all human endeavour must be given to the Lord – is all very human and common. But to do so is painted as being as bad as taking the forbidden fruit of Eden, with all the long term suffering which came as a result of short-termism.

19:29 *Lest the land fall to prostitution* – Sexual misbehaviour sets an example which spreads so easily.

³¹ Don't turn to those who are mediums, nor to the wizards. Don't seek them out, to be defiled by them. I am Yahweh your God. ³² You shall rise up before the gray head, and honour the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God. I am Yahweh. ³³ If a stranger lives as a foreigner with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. ³⁴ The stranger who lives as a foreigner with you shall be to you as the native-born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you lived as foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God. ³⁵ You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in measures of length, of weight, or of quantity. ³⁶ You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin. I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. ³⁷ You shall observe all my statutes, and all my ordinances, and do them. I am Yahweh'.

CHAPTER 20 Mar. 12

The Sin of Molech Worship

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Moreover, you shall tell the children of Israel, 'Anyone of the

children of Israel, or of the strangers who live as foreigners in Israel, who gives any of his descendants to Molech; he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. ³ I also will set My face against that person, and will cut him off from among his people because he has given of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary, and to profane My holy name. ⁴ If the people of the land all hide their eyes from that person, when he gives of his seed to Molech, and don't put him to death; ⁵ then I will set My face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all who play the prostitute after him, to play the prostitute with Molech, from among their people. ⁶ The person that turns to those who are mediums, and to the wizards, to play the prostitute after them, I will even set My face against that person, and will cut him off from among his people. ⁷ Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am Yahweh your God. ⁸ You shall keep My statutes, and do them. I am Yahweh who sanctifies you. ⁹ For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall

20:3 *To profane My holy name* – Our attitude to our children is our attitude to God's Name. We need to ask ourselves how in our context we might be giving our children to Molech? 'Giving' children to Molech may not only have referred to child sacrifices but also dedicating children to the service of Molech. Our children are to be dedicated to God and nobody and nothing else.

20:4 Acting as if we didn't notice something is a sin of omission just as bad as a sin of commission.

20:5 *All who play the prostitute after him* – The seriousness of sin is partly in the influence it has upon others. To give children to Molech encouraged others to sin by the example set. The power of our example upon others is far greater than we realize. Verse 14 likewise teaches that sexual perversion in one case could easily lead to wickedness being practiced amongst the whole congregation.

surely be put to death: he has cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him?.

Regulations about Sexual Relationships

¹⁰ The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, even he who commits adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. ¹¹ The man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death: their blood shall be upon them. ¹² If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have committed a perversion; their blood shall be upon them. ¹³ If a man lies with a male, as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. ¹⁴ If a man takes a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burned with fire, both he and they; that there may be no wickedness among you. ¹⁵ If a man lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death; and you shall kill the animal. ¹⁶ If a woman approaches any animal, and lies down with it, you shall kill the woman, and the animal: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. ¹⁷ If a man

takes his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness; it is a shameful thing; and they shall be cut off in the sight of the children of their people: he has uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity. ¹⁸ If a man lies with a woman having her monthly period, and uncovers her nakedness; he has made naked her fountain, and she has uncovered the fountain of her blood: and both of them shall be cut off from among their people. ¹⁹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, nor of your father's sister; for he has made naked his close relative: they shall bear their iniquity. ²⁰ If a man lies with his uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness: they shall bear their sin: they shall die childless. ²¹ If a man takes his brother's wife, it is an impurity: he has uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless. ²² You shall therefore keep all My statutes, and all My ordinances, and do them; that the land, where I am bringing you to dwell, may not vomit you out. ²³ You shall not walk in the customs of the nation, which I am casting out before you: for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. ²⁴ But I have said to you, You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess it, a

20:10 *Another man's wife, even... his neighbour's wife* – This definition suggests that every man in the community was to be treated as one's neighbour. Hence in the New Testament, loving our neighbour is interpreted as meaning loving all others within the community of God's people (Gal. 5:13,14). We shouldn't think that because someone is unknown to us or distant from us in whatever sense, that we can act differently to them than we would to the one living next door to us.

land flowing with milk and honey. I am Yahweh your God, Who has separated you from the peoples. ²⁵ You shall therefore make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you shall not make yourselves abominable by animal, or by bird, or by anything with which the ground teems, which I have separated from you as unclean for you. ²⁶ You shall be holy to me; for I, Yahweh, am holy, and have set you apart from the peoples, that you should be Mine. ²⁷ A man or a woman that is a medium, or is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them’.

CHAPTER 21 Mar. 13

Regulations about the Private Lives of Priests

Yahweh said to Moses, Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: ‘A priest shall not

defile himself for the dead among his people; ² except for his relatives that are near to him: for his mother, for his father, for his son, for his daughter, for his brother, ³ and for his virgin sister who is near to him, who has had no husband; for her he may defile himself. ⁴ He shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself. ⁵ They shall not shave their heads, neither shall they shave off the corners of their beards, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. ⁶ They shall be holy to their God, and not profane the name of their God; for they offer the offerings of Yahweh made by fire, the food of their God; therefore they shall be holy. ⁷ They shall not marry a woman who is a prostitute, or profane; neither shall they marry a woman divorced from her husband; for he is holy to his God. ⁸ You shall sanctify him therefore; for he offers the bread of your God: he shall be holy to you; for I

20:25 You shall therefore make a distinction – The fact God had separated His people from this world (:24) was the reason for the commandments about them making a distinction between clean and unclean. There is nothing unclean of itself, the commands were given as a mechanism for teaching and reminding Israel in their daily lives of their separation from uncleanness. Those animals designated by God as “unclean” were “unclean *for you*” – not that they were in themselves.

21:6 *Food of their God* – God invited Israel to eat with Him at the altar, which became His table. The equivalent for us is eating with God at the Lord’s table, the breaking of bread (1 Cor. 10:21). Eating together was understood in Semitic culture as a sign of religious acceptance and fellowship.

21:7 *A woman who is a prostitute* – Another tacit recognition within the Law that it would not be fully kept; for prostitution was outlawed. Thus in the very structure of the Law we see God’s sensitive recognition of the fact it would not be fully kept. His sensitivity to and provision for our failures in advance, both individually and collectively, shouldn’t lead us to think that therefore we needn’t take His principles seriously; His foreknowledge of our weakness shouldn’t be perceived by us as a safety net for our sinfulness.

Yahweh, who sanctify you, am holy. ⁹ The daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the prostitute, she profanes her father: she shall be burned with fire. ¹⁰ He who is the high priest among his brothers, upon whose head the anointing oil is poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not let the hair of his head hang loose, nor tear his clothes; ¹¹ neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother; ¹² neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him. I am Yahweh. ¹³ He shall take a wife in her virginity. ¹⁴ A widow, or one divorced, or a woman who has been defiled, or a prostitute, these he shall not marry; but a virgin of his own people shall he take as a wife. ¹⁵ He shall not profane his seed among his people; for I am Yahweh who sanctifies him’.

Priests to Be without Blemish

¹⁶ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

¹⁷ Say to Aaron, ‘None of your seed throughout their generations who has a blemish may approach to offer the food of his God. ¹⁸ For whatever man he is that has a blemish, he shall not draw near: a blind man, or a lame, or he who has a flat nose, or any deformity, ¹⁹ or a man who has an injured foot, or an injured hand, ²⁰ or hunchbacked, or a dwarf, or one who has a defect in his eye, or an itching disease, or scabs, or who has damaged testicles; ²¹ no man of the seed of Aaron the priest who has a blemish shall come near to offer the offerings of Yahweh made by fire. Since he has a blemish, he shall not come near to offer the food of his God. ²² He shall eat the food of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. ²³ He shall not come near to the veil, nor come near to the altar, because he has a blemish; that he may not profane My sanctuaries, for I am Yahweh who sanctifies them’. ²⁴ So Moses spoke to Aaron, and to his sons, and to all the children of Israel.

21:10 *Not let the hair of his head hang loose* – This is not to say that long hair is wrong in itself for a male. The pagan priests of Egypt, from where Israel had just been brought out, were noted for their long hair, which stood out from the rest of the male population in Egypt who generally had shaved heads at that time. The principle is that we shouldn’t perceive our religion as merely just one of many other religions; there is something utterly unique about our way to God through Christ, who is our only mediator, the only way, “the truth”. Whilst on one hand God doesn’t judge the outward appearance but the heart, we should also be careful not to have externalities which make us appear to be ‘pagan’ and not the unique people of God.

21:22 Whatever blemish the man had, he could still personally fellowship with God, but he was not to publically offer the offerings of others. The priests at that moment were to be consciously representative of the sacrifices, which are the only other things which have the language of ‘blemish’ and ‘unblemished’ applied to them (e.g. 22:20).

CHAPTER 22 Mar. 14**Regulations about Eating Holy Things**

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Tell Aaron and his sons to separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, which they make holy to Me, and that they don't profane My holy name. I am Yahweh. ³ Tell them, 'If anyone of all your descendants throughout your generations approaches the holy things, which the children of Israel make holy to Yahweh, having his uncleanness on him, that soul shall be cut off from before Me. I am Yahweh. ⁴ Whoever of the seed of Aaron is a leper or has an issue shall not eat of the holy things, until he is clean. Whoever touches anything that is unclean by the dead, or a man whose seed goes from him; ⁵ or whoever touches any creeping thing, whereby he may be made unclean; or a man from whom he may take uncleanness, whatever unclean-

ness he has; ⁶ the person that touches any such shall be unclean until the evening, and shall not eat of the holy things, until he bathe his body in water. ⁷ When the sun is down, he shall be clean; and afterward he shall eat of the holy things, because it is his food. ⁸ That which dies of itself, or is torn by animals, he shall not eat, defiling himself by it. I am Yahweh. ⁹ They shall therefore follow My requirements, lest they bear sin for it, and die therein, if they profane it. I am Yahweh who sanctifies them. ¹⁰ No foreigner shall eat of the holy thing: a foreigner living with the priests, or a hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing. ¹¹ But if a priest buys a slave, purchased by his money, he shall eat of it; and such as are born in his house, they shall eat of his bread. ¹² If a priest's daughter is married to an outsider, she shall not eat of the heave offering of the holy things. ¹³ But if a priest's daughter is a widow, or divorced,

22:6 As we as the new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5) read of these requirements not to eat the holy things whilst unclean, we may wonder how we as sinners can ever eat the bread and drink the wine as required to remember Christ's death. But the fact is, we have been washed and sanctified for service by baptism into the Name of Christ (1 Cor. 6:11 alludes here). This is a status we are continually in – for this is the wonder of the concept of our being “in Christ”.

22:10 *A foreigner living with the priests* – The Law has a lot to say about welcoming foreigners and being hospitable to them. We as the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16) should likewise be open rather than closed to the people of the world around us, even though we are in another sense separated *from* them and *unto* the things of our God.

22:11 Gentiles who had been bought for a price by a priest to be his servants were treated as Israelites. This looked forward to Christ, the final Priest, buying us with His own blood that we might be His servants, and thereby we are fully part of His family and the people of God (1 Cor. 7:23).

22:13 *No stranger shall eat* – But if the stranger had been bought by the Priest, he or she was no longer a stranger (:11). Paul has this passage in mind when he rejoices that those baptized into Christ are no longer strangers and foreigners but members of

and has no child, and has returned to her father's house, as in her youth, she may eat of her father's bread: but no stranger shall eat any of it. ¹⁴ If a man eats something holy unwittingly, then he shall add the fifth part of its value to it, and shall give the holy thing to the priest. ¹⁵ The priests shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel, which they offer to Yahweh, ¹⁶ and so cause them to bear the iniquity that brings guilt, when they eat their holy things; for I am Yahweh who sanctifies them'.

The Importance of Unblemished Sacrifices

¹⁷ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁸ Speak to Aaron, and to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them, 'Whoever is of the house of Israel, or of the foreigners in Israel, who offers his offering, whether it be any of their vows, or any of their freewill offerings, which they offer to Yahweh for a burnt offering; ¹⁹ that you may be accepted, you shall offer a male without blemish, of the bulls, of the sheep, or of the goats. ²⁰ But whatever has a blemish, that you shall not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you. ²¹ Whoever offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to Yahweh to accomplish a vow, or for a freewill offering, of the herd or of the flock, it shall be

perfect to be accepted: no blemish shall be therein. ²² Blind, injured, maimed, having a wart, festering, or having a running sore, you shall not offer these to Yahweh, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to Yahweh. ²³ A bull or a lamb that has any deformity or is lacking in his parts, that you may offer for a freewill offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted. ²⁴ That which has its testicles bruised, crushed, broken, or cut, you shall not offer to Yahweh; neither shall you do thus in your land. ²⁵ Neither shall you offer any of these as the food of your God from the hand of a foreigner; because their corruption is in them. There is a blemish in them. They shall not be accepted for you'. ²⁶ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁷ When a bull, or a sheep, or a goat, is born, then it shall remain seven days with its mother; and from the eighth day and thenceforth it shall be accepted for the offering of an offering made by fire to Yahweh. ²⁸ Whether it is a cow or ewe, you shall not kill it and its young both in one day. ²⁹ When you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Yahweh, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted. ³⁰ It shall be eaten on the same day; you shall leave none of it until the morning. I am Yahweh. ³¹ Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and do them. I am Yahweh. ³² You shall

God's family and fellow citizens with "the saints", a term which he may well have understood in this context as referring to the community of Israel (Eph. 2:19).

22:24 *Neither shall you do thus in your land* – Animals weren't to be castrated. We see in this not only a reflection of the huge value God places upon life in general, but also His sensitivity to animals. Verses 27 and 28 may reflect the same.

not profane My holy name, but I will be made holy among the children of Israel. I am Yahweh Who makes you holy, ³³ Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. I am Yahweh.

CHAPTER 23 Mar. 15

The Feasts of Yahweh

The Passover

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them, ‘The set feasts of Yahweh, which you shall proclaim to be holy assemblies, even these are My set feasts. ³ Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy assembly; you shall do no kind of work. It is a Sabbath to Yahweh in all your dwellings. ⁴ These are the set feasts of Yahweh, even holy assemblies, which you shall proclaim in their appointed season. ⁵ In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening, is Yahweh’s Passover. ⁶ On the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread to Yahweh. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. ⁷ In the first day you shall have a holy assembly. You shall do no regular work, ⁸ but you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh seven days. In the seventh day is a holy assembly: you shall do no regular work’.

The Feast of First Fruits

⁹ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them, ‘When you have come into the land which I give to you, and shall reap the harvest, then you shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest: ¹¹ and he shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh, to be accepted for you. On the next day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. ¹² On the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb without blemish a year old for a burnt offering to Yahweh. ¹³ The grain offering with it shall be two tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire to Yahweh for a pleasant aroma; and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, the fourth part of a hin. ¹⁴ You shall eat neither bread, nor roasted grain, nor fresh grain, until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God. This is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The Feast of Pentecost

¹⁵ ‘You shall count from the next day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be completed: ¹⁶ even to the next day after the seventh Sabbath you shall

22:32 *I will be made holy... I am Yahweh who makes you holy* – They as us were to live out in practice the status which God had given them. He had made them holy and acceptable in His sight, and they were therefore to live in a holy manner.

23:4 *You shall proclaim* – Paul alludes here when he says that the breaking of bread meeting – the only ‘feast’ we have under the New Covenant – is a proclaiming of Christ’s death (1 Cor. 11:26).

number fifty days; and you shall offer a new grain offering to Yahweh. ¹⁷ You shall bring out of your habitations two loaves of bread for a wave offering made of two tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour. They shall be baked with yeast, for first fruits to Yahweh. ¹⁸ You shall present with the bread seven lambs without blemish a year old, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be a burnt offering to Yahweh, with their grain offering, and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of a sweet aroma to Yahweh. ¹⁹ You shall offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings. ²⁰ The priest shall wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering before Yahweh, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to Yahweh for the priest. ²¹ You shall make proclamation on the same day: there shall be a holy assembly to you; you shall do no regular work. This is a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. ²² When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not

wholly reap into the corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest: you shall leave them for the poor, and for the foreigner. I am Yahweh your God'.

The Day of Atonement

²³ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, shall be a solemn rest to you, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy assembly. ²⁵ You shall do no regular work; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh'. ²⁶ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁷ However on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement: it shall be a holy assembly to you, and you shall afflict yourselves; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh. ²⁸ You shall do no kind of work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before Yahweh your God. ²⁹ For whoever it is who shall not bow himself down in that same day shall be cut off from his people. ³⁰ Whoever

23:17 *Baked with yeast* – Yeast represents human sin (1 Cor. 5:8), and was often banned from being offered. But here it was required – to remind the people that they were sinners, and yet God still accepts the offerings of sinners.

23:20 The two lambs offered for a burnt offering at the end of harvest contrast with the single lamb offered at the start of it (:12). This was to underline that the receipt of blessing from God must be responded to in dedication to Him – which is what the burnt offering represented.

23:22 The Israelites were reminded of this principle at this point in the legislation lest they become so caught up with realizing their own material blessings that they forgot that others were not so blessed. Whenever we reflect upon our material blessings we are to immediately remind ourselves that others somewhere are not so blessed, and we have a duty towards them.

23:30 *That person I will destroy from among his people* – Whilst work was forbidden during the other feasts, this threat is added only here concerning the Day of Atonement.

it is who does any kind of work in that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. ³¹ You shall do no kind of work: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. ³² It shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall bow down yourselves. In the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall keep your Sabbath.

The Feast of Tents

³³ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴ Speak to the children of Israel, and say, ‘On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tents for seven days to Yahweh. ³⁵ On the first day shall be a holy assembly: you shall do no regular work. ³⁶ Seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh. On the eighth day shall be a holy assembly to you; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh. It is a solemn assembly; you shall do no regular work. ³⁷ These are the appointed feasts of Yahweh, which you shall proclaim to be holy assemblies, to offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh, a burnt offering, and a grain offering, a sac-

rifice, and drink offerings, each on its own day; ³⁸ besides the Sabbaths of Yahweh, and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings, which you give to Yahweh. ³⁹ So on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruits of the land, you shall keep the feast of Yahweh seven days: on the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. ⁴⁰ You shall take on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God seven days. ⁴¹ You shall keep it a feast to Yahweh seven days in the year: it is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall keep it in the seventh month. ⁴² You shall dwell in booths seven days. All who are native-born in Israel shall dwell in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God’. ⁴⁴ Moses declared to the children of Israel the appointed feasts of Yahweh.

ment. This was how important it was for them to realize that atonement for our sins is in the end by God’s grace through the sacrifice of the animals who represented Christ; and not according to our works.

23:38 The repeated use of the word “besides” emphasized that times of special commitment to God shouldn’t lead us to forget the regular sacrifices and devotions which we are to make. An example of this would be that if one spends some days away at a church gathering, we are not to forget our own personal quiet time with God, prayer and Bible reading.

23:43 It’s not recorded in the account of the Exodus that God made Israel dwell in booths. Often later Scripture gives us extra information about what happened at a historical event. This is why we need to use the entire Bible in order to get the correct picture about what happened in the historical sections.

CHAPTER 24 Mar. 16*The Showbread*

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Command the children of Israel, that they bring to you pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually. ³ Outside of the veil of the Testimony, in the Tent of Meeting, shall Aaron keep it in order from evening to morning before Yahweh continually: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. ⁴ He shall keep in order the lamps on the pure gold lampstand before Yahweh continually. ⁵ You shall take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes of it: two tenth parts of an ephah shall be in one cake. ⁶ You shall set them in two rows, six on a row, on the pure gold table before Yahweh. ⁷ You shall put pure frankincense on each row, that it may make the bread be for a memorial, even an offering made by fire to Yahweh. ⁸ Every Sabbath day he shall set it in order before Yahweh

continually. It is on the behalf of the children of Israel an everlasting covenant. ⁹ It shall be for Aaron and his sons; and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him of the offerings of Yahweh made by fire by a perpetual statute.

A Case of Blasphemy

¹⁰ The son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and the son of the Israelite woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp. ¹¹ The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name, and cursed; and they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. ¹² They put him in custody, until the will of Yahweh about this should be declared to them. ¹³ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁴ Bring out of the camp him who cursed; and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the

24:2 The whole congregation of Israel were to bring a small amount of oil and flour for the bread each week. The constantly burning oil and presence of the small loaves was a symbol of how Israel were continually before Him. Yet the amount of oil and flour required each week was miniscule in comparison to the size of all Israel – there were probably three million of them at the time this law was given (Ex. 12:37). But God is the God of small things. In the very small things we offer Him, we are remembered before Him. Israel were taught that this tiny offering of oil and flour each week was so highly significant; offering even very small things shouldn't be seen by us as unnecessary or insignificant before God. The way Jesus noticed the widow offering two tiny coins and commented upon it is proof of this (Lk. 21:2).

24:6 The bread on the table connects with the breaking of bread at the table of the Lord under the New Covenant. The bread was replaced – as it were eaten by God – each week (:8). Whilst there is no specific command as to how frequently we should break bread, it would seem from Acts 20:7 that some of the early Christians did it weekly, and this is no bad example for us to follow.

24:11 If we marry out of the family of faith, our children may well not have the reverence towards the true God which they should have.

congregation stone him. ¹⁵ You shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. ¹⁶ He who blasphemes the name of Yahweh, he shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him: the foreigner as well as the native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death. ¹⁷ He who strikes any man mortally shall surely be put to death. ¹⁸ He who strikes an animal mortally shall make it good, life for life. ¹⁹ If anyone injures his neighbour; as he has done, so shall it be done to him: ²⁰ fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has injured someone, so shall it be done to him. ²¹ He who kills an animal shall make it good; and he who kills a man shall be put to death. ²² You shall have one kind of law, for the foreigner as well as the native-born; for I am Yahweh your God’. ²³ Moses spoke to the children of Israel; and they brought out him who had cursed out of the camp, and stoned him with stones. The children of Israel did as Yahweh commanded Moses.

CHAPTER 25 Mar. 17

The Sabbath Year and the Year of Jubilee

Yahweh said to Moses in Mount Sinai, ² Speak to the children

of Israel, and tell them, ‘When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a Sabbath to Yahweh. ³ Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruits; ⁴ but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to Yahweh. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. ⁵ What grows of itself in your harvest you shall not reap, and the grapes of your undressed vine you shall not gather. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land. ⁶ The Sabbath of the land shall be for food for you; for yourself, for your servant, for your maid, for your hired servant, and for your stranger, who lives as a foreigner amongst you. ⁷ For your livestock also, and for the animals that are in your land, shall all its increase be for food. ⁸ You shall count off seven Sabbaths of years, seven times seven years; and there shall be to you the days of seven Sabbaths of years, even forty-nine years. ⁹ Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. ¹⁰ You shall make the fiftieth year holy, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a ju-

24:22 *For the foreigner as well as the native-born* – If we have unbelievers into our homes or any situation where we are in charge of the social situation, we are to ensure that God’s principles are upheld. Again translating this into modern terms – if parents have unbelieving children in their home to play with their own children, God’s principles are still to be upheld by the visitors.

25:10 *You shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants* – This is alluded to in Lk. 4:19 where we read that Jesus proclaimed “the **acceptable year** of

bilee to you; and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family. ¹¹ That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee to you. In it you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself, nor gather from the undressed vines. ¹² For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat of its increase out of the field. ¹³ In this Year of Jubilee each of you shall return to his property. ¹⁴ If you sell anything to your neighbour, or buy from your neighbour, you shall not wrong one another. ¹⁵ According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbour. Relative to the number of years of the crops he shall sell to you. ¹⁶ According to the length of the years you shall increase its price, and according to the shortness of the years you shall diminish

its price; for he is selling the number of the crops to you. ¹⁷ You shall not wrong one another; but you shall fear your God; for I am Yahweh your God. ¹⁸ Therefore you shall do My statutes, and keep My ordinances and do them; and you shall dwell in the land in safety. ¹⁹ The land shall yield its fruit, and you shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety. ²⁰ If you were to say, What shall we eat the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase; ²¹ know that I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for the three years. ²² You shall sow the eighth year, and eat of the fruits, the old store; until the ninth year, until its fruits come in, you shall eat the old store. ²³ The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is Mine; for

the Lord". We are to make the same proclamation in preaching the good news to all people – "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached [proclaimed, s.w. Lk. 4:19] in his name among all nations" (Lk. 24:47). The year of Jubilee began with the Day of Atonement, which is understood in the New Testament as foreshadowing the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for our sins. We are now to live in a permanent state of Jubilee, announcing it to all people. The Hebrew word translated "jubilee" carries the idea of forgiveness, release, freedom. This is our message to all the people of the world.

25:15 The ultimate time of Jubilee will be at the return of Christ. We are to perceive the value of all things we buy relative to this. Effectively, the Jubilee was a time of release from debt. "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Mt. 6:12) is probably another allusion to the Jubilee. We release / forgive men their debt to us, as God does to us. If we choose not to participate in this Jubilee by not releasing others, then we cannot expect to receive it ourselves.

25:20 The Lord Jesus implied that we are in a permanent Jubilee year situation when He said that we should "take no thought what you shall eat... Sow not nor gather into barns" and not think "What shall we eat?" (Mt. 6:26,31 = Lev. 25:20). If we put God's principles first, somehow materially everything works out. We shall not starve.

25:23 The principles of the Jubilee taught that all persons and land belong to God; we are only temporarily using them, and nothing ultimately belongs to us personally; all is God's. This helps us cope better with 'loss' of possessions, and should keep us from

you are strangers and live as foreigners with Me. ²⁴ In all the land of your possession you shall grant a redemption for the land. ²⁵ If your brother becomes poor, and sells some of his possessions, then his kinsman who is next to him shall come, and redeem that which his brother has sold. ²⁶ If a man has no one to redeem it, and he becomes prosperous and finds sufficient means to redeem it; ²⁷ then let him reckon the years since its sale, and restore the surplus to the man to whom he sold it; and he shall return to his property. ²⁸ But if he isn't able to get it back for himself, then what he has sold shall remain in the hand of him who has bought it until the Year of Jubilee: and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession. ²⁹ If a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it has been sold. For a full year he shall have the right of redemption. ³⁰ If it isn't redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be

made sure in perpetuity to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee. ³¹ But the houses of the villages which have no wall around them shall be reckoned with the fields of the country: they may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the Jubilee. ³² Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. ³³ The Levites may redeem the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, and it shall be released in the Jubilee; for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel. ³⁴ But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold; for it is their perpetual possession'.

How to Deal with the Poor

³⁵ If your brother has become poor, and his hand can't support him among you; then you shall uphold him. He shall live with you like an alien and a temporary resident. ³⁶ Take no interest from him or profit, but fear

the manic materialism which has been bred by capitalism, whereby all seek personal ownership of land and resources.

25:28 Eph. 1:13 speaks of our place in God's Kingdom as our possession which has been purchased by the blood of Christ, and which we will receive as an inheritance at His return. This is all Jubilee language. The eternal time of Jubilee will be when the Kingdom is established upon earth, and we will each receive both literally and more abstractly an eternal inheritance in that Kingdom on earth, each with a varying number of towns to rule over (Lk. 19:17). Whether we are rich or poor in this life, whether or not we purchase our 'own' homes (:29), we are assured that our very own personal possession is assured, and we will return to it eternally in the Kingdom of God at Christ's return. The Israelite who became "poor", either by his own failures, others' manipulations or his own poor decision making, would have continually looked forward to the year of Jubilee – when finally he and his family would be free, no longer in servitude, and could return to their very own land and inheritance as their eternal possession (:34). We look forward to Christ's return with the same spirit.

your God; that your brother may live among you. ³⁷ You shall not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for profit. ³⁸ I am Yahweh your God, Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God. ³⁹ If your brother has grown poor among you, and sells himself to you; you shall not make him to serve as a slave. ⁴⁰ As a hired servant and as a temporary resident he shall live with you; he shall serve with you until the Year of Jubilee: ⁴¹ then he shall go out from you, he and his children with him, and shall return to his own family, and to the possession of his fathers. ⁴² For they are My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. They shall not be sold as slaves. ⁴³ You shall not rule over him with harshness, but shall fear your God. ⁴⁴ As for your male and your female slaves whom you may have; of the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves. ⁴⁵ Moreover of the children of the aliens who live among you, of them you may buy, and of their families who are with you, which they have conceived in your land; and they will be your property. ⁴⁶ You may make them an inheritance for your children after you, to hold for a possession; of them may you take your slaves forever; but over your brothers the children of Israel you shall not rule,

one over another, with harshness. ⁴⁷ If an alien or temporary resident with you becomes rich, and your brother beside him has grown poor, and sells himself to the stranger or foreigner living among you, or to a member of the stranger's family; ⁴⁸ after he is sold he may be redeemed. One of his brothers may redeem him; ⁴⁹ or his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any who is a close relative to him of his family may redeem him; or if he has grown rich, he may redeem himself. ⁵⁰ He shall reckon with him who bought him from the year that he sold himself to him relative to the Year of Jubilee: and the price of his sale shall be according to the number of years; according to the time of a hired servant shall he be with him. ⁵¹ If there are yet many years, according to them he shall give back the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for. ⁵² If there remain but a few years to the year of jubilee, then he shall reckon with him; according to his years of service he shall give back the price of his redemption. ⁵³ As a servant hired year by year shall he live with him: he shall not rule with harshness over him in your sight. ⁵⁴ If he isn't redeemed by these means, then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee, he, and his children with him. ⁵⁵ For to Me the children of Israel are servants; they are My servants whom I brought

25:53 *With harshness* – Any social superiority we may have over others is temporary, and must be seen in the context of the year of Jubilee which has been announced in Christ.

The whole concept was designed to teach humility and gentleness in relationships.

25:55 Those who had servants were to remember that they themselves were servants.

Maybe Paul had this in mind when he reminded us that all our brothers and sisters are

out of the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God⁷.

CHAPTER 26 Mar. 18

Blessings for Obedience

You shall make for yourselves no idols, neither shall you raise up an engraved image or a pillar, neither shall you place any figured stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am Yahweh your God. ² You shall keep My Sabbaths, and have reverence for My sanctuary. I am Yahweh. ³ If you walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them; ⁴ then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. ⁵ Your threshing shall reach to the vintage, and the vintage shall reach to the sowing time; and you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. ⁶ I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and no one will make you afraid; and I will remove evil animals out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. ⁷ You shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. ⁸ Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand; and

your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. ⁹ I will have respect for you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and will establish My covenant with you. ¹⁰ You shall eat old store long kept, and you shall move out the old because of the new. ¹¹ I will set My tent among you: and My soul won't abhor you. ¹² I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you will be My people. ¹³ I am Yahweh your God, Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; and I have broken the bars of your yoke, and made you go upright⁷.

Curses for Disobedience

¹⁴ 'But if you will not listen to Me, and will not do all these commandments; ¹⁵ and if you shall reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances, so that you will not do all My commandments, but break My covenant; ¹⁶ I also will do this to you: I will appoint terror over you, even consumption and fever, that shall consume the eyes, and make the soul to pine away; and you will sow your seed in vain, for your enemies will eat it. ¹⁷ I will set My face against you, and you will be struck down before your enemies. Those

servants of Christ and not of us, and we therefore have no right to judge another man's servant (Rom. 14:4). As Israel were to be a nation of servants, so should the Christian community be today.

26:9 That God can "respect" mere humans indicates not only His humility but also His extreme sensitivity to us and His delight in our feeble attempts to please Him; rather like a parent may be thrilled by the responses of a baby, totally insignificant as they are in themselves.

26:17 *Flee when no one pursues you* – A spirit of fear, nervousness and negativity can be given by God as a result of wilful disobedience to His ways. He can give a spirit (mental attitude) of fear (2 Tim. 1:7).

who hate you will rule over you; and you will flee when no one pursues you. ¹⁸ If you in spite of these things will not listen to Me, then I will chastise you seven times more for your sins. ¹⁹ I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your sky like iron, and your soil like brass; ²⁰ and your strength will be spent in vain; for your land won't yield its increase, neither will the trees of the land yield their fruit. ²¹ If you walk contrary to Me, and won't listen to Me, then I will bring seven times more plagues on you according to your sins. ²² I will send wild animals among you, which will rob you of your children, destroy your livestock, and make you few in number; and your roads will become desolate. ²³ If by these things you won't be returned to Me, but will walk contrary to Me; ²⁴ then I will also walk contrary to you; and I will strike you, even I, seven times for your sins. ²⁵ I will bring a sword upon you, that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; and you will be gathered together within your cities: and I will send the plague among you; and you will be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

²⁶ When I break your staff of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver your bread again by weight, and you shall eat, and not be satisfied. ²⁷ If you in spite of this won't listen to Me, but walk contrary to Me; ²⁸ then I will walk contrary to you in wrath; and I also will chastise you seven times for your sins. ²⁹ You will eat the flesh of your sons, and you will eat the flesh of your daughters. ³⁰ I will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and cast your dead bodies upon the bodies of your idols; and My soul will hate you. ³¹ I will lay your cities waste, and will bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not take delight in the sweet fragrance of your offerings. ³² I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies that dwell therein will be astonished at it. ³³ I will scatter you among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you; and your land will be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste. ³⁴ Then the land will enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land. Even then the land will rest and enjoy its Sab-

26:23 *If by these things* – It seems that the curses mentioned in this chapter aren't just a general list, but there is an intended chronological sequence. God had planned from the start that if Israel were disobedient, then He would bring various judgments, in order to help them be obedient; and if they failed, He would bring more, again with the intention that they responded to them. The curses for disobedience weren't therefore merely an offended deity lashing out at a people who had irritated Him; God has purpose and positive spiritual intention even in the judgments He brings into peoples' lives. He is constantly seeking our return to Him, just as the shepherd searched for the lost sheep until He found it (Lk. 15:4).

26:24 *Even I* – To have God against you is a terrible thing (Heb. 10:31).

26:26 *Not be satisfied* – So many of the judgments are mental attitudes (especially :16,36). God gives people attitudes of mind, positive and negative.

baths. ³⁵ As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, even the rest which it didn't have in your Sabbaths, when you lived on it. ³⁶ As for those of you who are left, I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a driven leaf will put them to flight; and they shall flee, as one flees from the sword; and they will fall when no one pursues. ³⁷ They will stumble over one another, as it were before the sword, when no one pursues: and you will have no power to stand before your enemies. ³⁸ You will perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies will eat you up. ³⁹ Those of you who are left will pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them. ⁴⁰ If they confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass which they trespassed against Me, and also recognize that because they walked contrary to Me, ⁴¹ I also walked contrary to them, and brought them into the land of their enemies: if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled, and they then accept the punishment of their iniquity; ⁴² then I will remember My covenant

with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham; and I will remember the land. ⁴³ The land also will be left by them, and will enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them: and they will accept the punishment of their iniquity; because, even because they rejected My ordinances, and their soul hated My statutes. ⁴⁴ Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them; for I am Yahweh their God; ⁴⁵ but I will for their sake remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am Yahweh'. ⁴⁶ These are the statutes, ordinances and laws, which Yahweh made between Him and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai by Moses.

CHAPTER 27 Mar. 19

Regulations concerning Vows

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, 'When a man makes a vow, the persons shall be for

26:43 If we hate or despise God's word, He will hate us (:30). Our attitude to God's word is related to His attitude to us. The very least we can do is to read His word daily and love it, through all our weakness.

27:1 This chapter is as it were an appendix to the Law because it concerns vows which were freewill decisions to give something to God and weren't part of the legal demands which God made upon His people in the previous chapters. It's good for us to at times make a special commitment to God from a joyful heart. The values attached to people in the next verses seem to speak of the price that should be paid if a person wished to cancel the dedication of themselves or even of others which they had made. It seems Jephthah may have been ignorant of these provisions and therefore suffered immensely from not paying attention to all God's law (Jud. 11:31-40).

Yahweh by your valuation. ³ Your valuation shall be of a male from twenty years old even to sixty years old, even your valuation shall be fifty shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. ⁴ If it is a female, then your valuation shall be thirty shekels. ⁵ If the person is from five years old even to twenty years old, then your valuation shall be for a male twenty shekels, and for a female ten shekels. ⁶ If the person is from a month old even to five years old, then your valuation shall be for a male five shekels of silver, and for a female your valuation shall be three shekels of silver. ⁷ If the person is from sixty years old and upward; if it is a male, then your valuation shall be fifteen shekels, and for a female ten shekels. ⁸ But if he is poorer than your valuation, then he shall be set before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to the ability of him who vowed shall the priest value him. ⁹ If it is an animal, of which men offer an offering to Yahweh, all that any man gives of such to Yahweh becomes holy. ¹⁰ He shall not

alter it, nor change it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good; and if he shall at all change animal for animal, then both it and that for which it is changed shall be holy. ¹¹ If it is any unclean animal, of which they do not offer as an offering to Yahweh, then he shall set the animal before the priest; ¹² and the priest shall value it, whether it is good or bad. As you the priest values it, so shall it be. ¹³ But if he will indeed redeem it, then he shall add the fifth part of it to its valuation. ¹⁴ When a man dedicates his house to be holy to Yahweh, then the priest shall evaluate it, whether it is good or bad: as the priest shall evaluate it, so shall it stand. ¹⁵ If he who dedicates it will redeem his house, then he shall add the fifth part of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall be his. ¹⁶ If a man dedicates to Yahweh part of the field of his possession, then your valuation shall be according to the seed for it: the sowing of a homer of barley shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver. ¹⁷ If he dedicates his field from the Year of Jubilee, according to your

27:8 This provision seems to foresee the possibility that a totally poor person would dedicate themselves to God's service (e.g. doing some work related to the maintenance of the sanctuary) and yet need to change that commitment (perhaps to care for a sick and dying relative), and yet have nothing to pay for his own redemption. This freewill dedication of oneself to God's service is alluded to when Paul praises some of the Macedonian believers for devoting their own selves to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:5), and the family of Stephanas for having 'ceremonially consecrated' themselves to serving their fellow believers (1 Cor. 16:15 Gk.). What could we devote ourselves to do, remembering that wealth is no barrier to making this kind of devotion?

27:10 Changing what we have given to God according to new circumstances isn't encouraged; we should give and assume that what we gave is now not ours any longer. Giving should be frank and final, with no thought of regret afterwards or considering what might have been if we had not given it – e.g. letting our mind wander around the possibilities of what we could have used money for if we'd not given it to God.

valuation it shall stand. ¹⁸ But if he dedicates his field after the Jubilee, then the priest shall reckon to him the money according to the years that remain to the Year of Jubilee; and a reduction shall be made from your valuation. ¹⁹ If he who dedicated the field will indeed redeem it, then he shall add the fifth part of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall remain his. ²⁰ If he will not redeem the field, or if he has sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed anymore; ²¹ but the field, when it goes out in the Jubilee, shall be holy to Yahweh, as a field devoted; it shall be owned by the priests. ²² If he dedicates to Yahweh a field which he has bought, which is not of the field of his possession, ²³ then the priest shall reckon to him the worth of your valuation up to the Year of Jubilee; and he shall give your valuation on that day, as a holy thing to Yahweh. ²⁴ In the Year of Jubilee the field shall return to him from whom it was bought, even to him to whom the possession of the land belongs. ²⁵ All your valuations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs to the shekel. ²⁶ Only the firstborn among animals, which is made a firstborn to Yahweh,

no man may dedicate it: whether an ox or sheep, it is Yahweh's. ²⁷ If it is an unclean animal, then he shall buy it back according to your valuation, and shall add to it the fifth part of it; or if it isn't redeemed, then it shall be sold according to your valuation. ²⁸ Notwithstanding, no devoted thing that a man shall devote to Yahweh of all that he has, whether of man or animal, or of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy to Yahweh. ²⁹ No one devoted, who shall be devoted from among men, shall be ransomed: he shall surely be put to death. ³⁰ All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is Yahweh's. It is holy to Yahweh. ³¹ If a man redeems anything of his tithe, he shall add a fifth part to it. ³² All the tithe of the herds or the flocks, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth shall be holy to Yahweh. ³³ He shall not analyze whether it is good or bad, neither shall he change it; and if he changes it at all, then both it and that for which it is changed shall be holy. It shall not be redeemed'. ³⁴ These are the commandments which Yahweh commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai.

27:23 The value of all things is relative to the Year of Jubilee, which speaks of the return of Christ (see on 25:10,15,20).

27:26 We should avoid the temptation to give what we owe to God anyway as if it is a gift of special freewill devotion.

27:33 *Not analyze whether it is good or bad* – We should not be carefully calculating in our giving to God, trying to do so at minimal cost to ourselves.

NUMBERS

CHAPTER 1 Mar. 20

A Census Taken

Yahweh spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ² Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the names, every male, one by one; ³ from twenty years old and upward, all who are able to go out to war in Israel. You and Aaron shall number them by their divisions. ⁴ With you there shall be a man of every tribe; each one the head of his fathers' house. ⁵ These are the names of the men who shall stand with you: Of Reuben, Elizur the son of She-deur; ⁶ of Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; ⁷ of Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab; ⁸ of Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar; ⁹ of Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon; ¹⁰ of the children of Joseph, of Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud, of Man-

asseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; ¹¹ of Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni; ¹² of Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; ¹³ of Asher, Pagiel the son of Ochran; ¹⁴ of Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel; ¹⁵ of Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan. ¹⁶ These are those who were called of the congregation, the princes of the tribes of their fathers; they were the heads of the thousands of Israel. ¹⁷ Moses and Aaron took these men who are mentioned by name. ¹⁸ They assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month; and they declared their ancestry by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, one by one. ¹⁹ As Yahweh commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

The Number of the Tribes of Israel

²⁰ The children of Reuben, Israel's firstborn, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the

1:2 *One by one* – Here we see the value and meaning attached to the human person by God.

1:18 The implication is that every single Israelite was part of a family. In such a large community there inevitably would have been some who had no family. In commenting upon the Exodus, Ps. 68:6 observes that God set the lonely in families. This may have happened at this point. Those who had no family were arranged into one, so that God's people moved through the wilderness in family units. In this we see how God is a family God; the family is His desired way of human organization, and we should seek to preserve it.

1:20 *The number of the names* – Implies there was a written list. Moses had been educated in Egypt and therefore would've been able to write (Acts 7:22). We should use what worldly wisdom we have in the service of God's people.

names, one by one, every male from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go out to war; ²¹ those who were numbered of them of the tribe of Reuben, were forty-six thousand five hundred. ²² Of the children of Simeon, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' families, those who were numbered of it, according to the number of the names, one by one, every male from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go out to war; ²³ those who were numbered of them, of the tribe of Simeon, were fifty-nine thousand three hundred. ²⁴ Of the children of Gad, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go out to war; ²⁵ those who were numbered of them, of the tribe of Gad, were forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty. ²⁶ Of the children of Judah, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go out to war; ²⁷ those who were numbered of them, of the tribe of Judah, were sixty-four thousand six hundred. ²⁸ Of the children of Issachar, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go out to war; ²⁹ those who were numbered of them, of the tribe of Issachar, were fifty-four thousand four hundred. ³⁰ Of the children of

Zebulun, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go out to war; ³¹ those who were numbered of them, of the tribe of Zebulun, were fifty-seven thousand four hundred. ³² Of the children of Joseph, of the children of Ephraim, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go out to war; ³³ those who were numbered of them, of the tribe of Ephraim, were forty thousand five hundred. ³⁴ Of the children of Manasseh, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go out to war; ³⁵ those who were numbered of them, of the tribe of Manasseh, were thirty-two thousand two hundred. ³⁶ Of the children of Benjamin, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go out to war; ³⁷ those who were numbered of them, of the tribe of Benjamin, were thirty-five thousand four hundred. ³⁸ Of the children of Dan, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go forth to war; ³⁹ those who were numbered of them, of the tribe of

Dan, were sixty-two thousand seven hundred.⁴⁰ Of the children of Asher, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go forth to war;⁴¹ those who were numbered of them, of the tribe of Asher, were forty-one thousand five hundred.⁴² Of the children of Naphtali, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' families, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go forth to war;⁴³ those who were numbered of them, of the tribe of Naphtali, were fifty-three thousand four hundred.⁴⁴ These are those who were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Israel, being twelve men: they were each one for his fathers' house.⁴⁵ So all those who were numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' families, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go out to war in Israel;⁴⁶ even all those who were numbered were six hundred

and three thousand five hundred and fifty.

The Levites

⁴⁷ But the Levites after the tribe of their fathers were not numbered among them.⁴⁸ For Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,⁴⁹ Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, neither shall you take a census of them among the children of Israel;⁵⁰ but appoint the Levites over the Tabernacle of the Testimony, and over all its furnishings, and over all that belongs to it. They shall carry the tabernacle, and all its furnishings; and they shall serve it, and shall encamp around it.⁵¹ When the tabernacle is to move, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall set it up. The stranger who comes near shall be put to death.⁵² The children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, according to their divisions.⁵³ But the Levites shall encamp around the Tabernacle of the Testimony, that there may be

1:46 Over a period of 430 years (Gen. 15:13; Ex. 12:40), the Israelites grew from 70 people (Gen. 46:27; Dt. 10:22) to 603,550 men. This was a primary fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, that his descendants would greatly multiply (Gen. 22:17; Heb. 11:12). We who are in the same covenant relationship with God will experience some element of blessing and fulfilment of the covenant promises in this life too. The large numbers may also have been due to the Egyptians joining the people of Israel.

1:50 We are a new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5). The spirit of the Levites should be ours. As they encamped around the tabernacle, having it as the centre of their lives, so the things of God's ecclesia, His church, should be central to our lives and have far more importance to us than our careers and associations in this world.

1:53 *That there may be no wrath on the congregation* – The wellbeing of others is dependent upon our efforts. If we don't do our part for them, we cannot assume that God will raise up someone else. There really can be Divine wrath on others because of our lack of attention to them.

no wrath on the congregation of the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be responsible for the Tabernacle of the Testimony. ⁵⁴ Thus the children of Israel did. According to all that Yahweh commanded Moses, so they did.

CHAPTER 2 Mar. 21

The Order of the Twelve Tribes in the Camp and on the March

Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ² The children of Israel shall encamp every man

by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' families: at a distance from the Tent of Meeting shall they encamp around it. ³ Those who encamp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah, according to their divisions, and the prince of the children of Judah shall be Nahshon the son of Amminadab. ⁴ His division, and those who were numbered of them, were seventy-four thousand six hundred. ⁵ Those who encamp next to him shall be the tribe of Issa-

2:1 Encamping around standards and by their tribes was different to how they had filed out of Egypt as one long stream of humanity (Ex. 13:18). After our exodus from the world through our Red Sea baptism, we find our place within the larger family of God. Their sense of which tribe they belonged to had probably been eroded in the 430 years they spent in Egypt; now even the isolated and lonely were given family groups to belong to (Ps. 68:6; see on 1:18).

2:2 The standards of the tribes were a pole with a symbol upon it. Israel marched through the wilderness towards the promised land, as we walk through the wilderness of life towards the Kingdom, carrying and walking behind poles – foreshadowing the cross or stake of Christ, which we are asked to daily pick up and walk behind. Is. 11:10-12 speaks of the cross of Christ as a standard lifted up, to which the believing Gentiles come and camp around – as if they take their place in the Israel of God.

2:3 Three tribes camped on each of the four sides, around the tabernacle. This place of meeting with God was to be central to the community. It is the things of Christ and our relationship with God which should be at the core of the Christian community; we're not held together by geography, personal friendship or shared denominational history. We are to be Christ centred. The language of the numbering of Israel according to how many fighting men there were in each tribe, and the ideas of encamping and breaking up, all suggest that Israel were God's army on earth. According to Jewish tradition, Judah carried a lion emblem on their standard, Reuben a man, Joseph an ox, and Dan an eagle. In this case, the cherubim vision of Ezekiel 1 would allude to Israel, as if to say that above them there hovered an Angelic army organized the same way, and the armies of God's people on earth were a reflection of them. The tent of meeting in the midst of the troops of Israel would've been understood in military terms as the tent or pavilion of a general in the centre of an army. But there was nobody within that pavilion – just the presence of God over the sprinkled blood. We aren't just sitting around waiting for Christ's return; we are God's army in this world, with a very present although invisible Heavenly commander in our midst. But His invisibility led Israel many times to ask 'Is the Lord among us?', and we face the same doubt in our weak moments. But this is the essence of faith.

char, and the prince of the children of Issachar shall be Nethanel the son of Zuar. ⁶ His division, and those who were numbered of it, were fifty-four thousand four hundred. ⁷ The tribe of Zebulun, and the prince of the children of Zebulun shall be Eliab the son of Helon. ⁸ His division, and those who were numbered of it, were fifty-seven thousand four hundred. ⁹ All who were numbered of the camp of Judah were one hundred eighty-six thousand four hundred, according to their divisions. They shall set out first. ¹⁰ On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben according to their divisions. The prince of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of Shedeur. ¹¹ His division, and those who were numbered of it, were forty-six thousand five hundred. ¹² Those who encamp next to him shall be the tribe of Simeon. The prince of the children of Simeon shall be Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. ¹³ His division, and those who were numbered of them, were fifty-nine thousand three hundred. ¹⁴ The tribe of Gad, and the prince of the children of Gad shall be Eliasaph the son of Reuel. ¹⁵ His division, and those who were numbered of them, were forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty. ¹⁶ All who were numbered of the camp of Reuben were one hundred fifty-one thousand four hundred fifty, according to their armies. They shall set out second. ¹⁷ Then the Tent of Meeting shall set out, with the camp of the

Levites in the midst of the camps. As they encamp, so shall they march out, every man in his place, by their standards. ¹⁸ On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their divisions, and the prince of the children of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud. ¹⁹ His division, and those who were numbered of them, were forty thousand five hundred. ²⁰ Next to him shall be the tribe of Manasseh, and the prince of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. ²¹ His division, and those who were numbered of them, were thirty-two thousand two hundred. ²² The tribe of Benjamin, and the prince of the children of Benjamin shall be Abidan the son of Gideoni. ²³ His army, and those who were numbered of them, were thirty-five thousand four hundred. ²⁴ All who were numbered of the camp of Ephraim were one hundred eight thousand one hundred, according to their divisions. They shall set out third. ²⁵ On the north side shall be the standard of the camp of Dan according to their divisions, and the prince of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. ²⁶ His division, and those who were numbered of them, were sixty-two thousand seven hundred. ²⁷ Those who encamp next to him shall be the tribe of Asher, and the prince of the children of Asher shall be Pagiel the son of Ochran. ²⁸ His division, and those who were numbered of them,

2:17 *As they encamp, so shall they march out* – Our attitude and position at rest or leisure is to be our attitude when on the move for Christ.

were forty-one thousand and five hundred.²⁹ The tribe of Naphtali, and the prince of the children of Naphtali shall be Ahira the son of Enan.³⁰ His division, and those who were numbered of them, were fifty-three thousand four hundred.³¹ All who were numbered of the camp of Dan were one hundred fifty-seven thousand six hundred. They shall set out last by their standards.³² These are those who were numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' families. All who were numbered of the camps according to their armies were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.³³ But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel; as Yahweh commanded Moses.³⁴ Thus the children of Israel did. According to all that Yahweh commanded Moses, so they encamped by their standards, and so they marched out, everyone by their families, according to their fathers' families.

CHAPTER 3 Mar. 22

The Levites Appointed

Now this is the history of the generations of Aaron and Moses in

the day that Yahweh spoke with Moses in Mount Sinai.² These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.³ These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests who were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office.⁴ Nadab and Abihu died before Yahweh, when they offered strange fire before Yahweh in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children. Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the presence of Aaron their father.⁵ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ⁶Bring the tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister to him.⁷ They shall keep his requirements, and the requirements of the whole congregation before the Tent of Meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle.⁸ They shall keep all the furnishings of the Tent of Meeting, and the obligations of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.⁹ You shall give the Levites to Aaron and to his sons. They are wholly given to him on the behalf of the children of Israel.¹⁰ You shall appoint Aaron and

2:32 The size of Israel's encampment would've been huge – maybe twenty square kilometres, like a moveable city, with streets and lanes. The continual commands to move on, to follow the leading of the Angel in the pillar of fire and cloud, would've likely been received without enthusiasm because the breaking of camp would've been a long and tedious process. Yet as with us, God works things so that His people are always on the move. God looked down upon their orderly encampment and thought His people were beautiful (24:5,6). Perhaps Paul alludes to their order when he says that the body of Christ should likewise be characterized by orderliness when they are beheld by others (Col. 2:5).

3:4 *They had no children* – That is, no children who ministered as priests. Ultimately, from the perspective of the Kingdom, if our children don't serve God it will be as if we have no children. Hence the need in this life to train them up to be God's servants.

3:9 This meant that Moses' sons were Levites and not priests, and were given to serve

his sons, and they shall keep their ministry. The stranger who comes near shall be put to death. ¹¹ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹² Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn who open the womb among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine: ¹³ for all the firstborn are mine. On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I made holy to me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and animal. They shall be mine. I am Yahweh.

The Number and Duties of the Levites

¹⁴ Yahweh spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, ¹⁵ Count the children of Levi by their fathers' families, by their families. You shall count every male from a month old and upward. ¹⁶ Moses numbered them according to the word of Yahweh, as he was commanded. ¹⁷ These

were the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari. ¹⁸ These are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shimei. ¹⁹ The sons of Kohath by their families: Amram, and Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. ²⁰ The sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their fathers' families. ²¹ Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimeites: these are the families of the Gershonites. ²² Those who were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, even those who were numbered of them were seven thousand five hundred. ²³ The families of the Gershonites shall encamp behind the tabernacle westward. ²⁴ The prince of the fathers' house of the Gershonites shall be Eliasaph the son of Lael. ²⁵ The duty of the sons of Gershon in the Tent of Meeting shall be the taber-

Aaron's sons. Yet Moses time and again is revealed as the undoubted leader of the people, and more spiritually mature and committed than Aaron. Verse 38 could imply that Moses even camped separately to his children. There were no special privileges for the children of the leader, and Moses' humility would have been exercised by seeing his sons serve Aaron's sons. If all we want to see is God's work go forward, we will likewise not become resentful of such things as they work out in church life today.

3:10 *Keep their ministry* – The phrase from the Septuagint version is quoted by Paul about our service of the ecclesia / church today (Rom. 12:7). Whatever day job or career we have in this world, our real work is our ministry to God's people.

3:13 Those who had been spared from death by the blood of the lamb on Passover night weren't just free to do as they wished with their saved lives, but were to be devoted to God. We are those who have likewise been spared from eternal death by Christ's blood, and we are therefore not to see ourselves as having merely escaped eternal death but must go further to perceive ourselves as thereby dedicated to God's service. Hence the Christian community is called "the church of the firstborn" (Heb. 12:23) – we are all as it were the firstborn who were saved by grace on Passover night, because we are in Christ, the firstborn (Col. 1:18).

nacle, and the tent, its covering, and the screen for the door of the Tent of Meeting, ²⁶ and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the door of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and around the altar, and its cords for all of its service. ²⁷ Of Kohath was the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izharites, and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites: these are the families of the Kohathites. ²⁸ According to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, there were eight thousand six hundred, keeping the requirements of the sanctuary. ²⁹ The families of the sons of Kohath shall encamp on the south side of the tabernacle. ³⁰ The prince of the fathers' house of the families of the Kohathites shall be Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. ³¹ Their duty shall be the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the vessels of the sanctuary with which they minister, and the screen, and all its service. ³² Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be prince of the princes of the Levites, with the oversight of those who keep the requirements of the sanctuary. ³³ Of Merari was the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mus-hites. These are the families of Merari. ³⁴ Those who were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old

and upward, were six thousand two hundred. ³⁵ The prince of the fathers' house of the families of Merari was Zuriel the son of Abihail. They shall encamp on the north side of the tabernacle. ³⁶ The appointed duty of the sons of Merari shall be the tabernacle's boards, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, all its instruments, all its service, ³⁷ the pillars of the court around it, their sockets, their pins, and their cords. ³⁸ Those who encamp before the tabernacle eastward, in front of the Tent of Meeting toward the sunrise, shall be Moses and Aaron and his sons, keeping the requirements of the sanctuary for the duty of the children of Israel. The stranger who comes near shall be put to death. ³⁹ All who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of Yahweh, by their families, all the males from a month old and upward, were twenty-two thousand. ⁴⁰ Yahweh said to Moses, Number all the firstborn males of the children of Israel from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names. ⁴¹ You shall take the Levites for Me (I am Yahweh) instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel; and the livestock of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the livestock of the children of Israel. ⁴² Moses numbered, as Yahweh com-

3:28 Some original manuscripts read 8,300. This could solve the apparent discrepancies in the numbers later on. The difference between the Hebrew letters for 8,300 and 8,600 is miniscule. Although the word of God itself is inspired and infallible, this isn't to say that there aren't minor errors of copyists as the manuscripts were passed on over the generations.

3:38 See on :9.

manded him, all the firstborn among the children of Israel. ⁴³ All the firstborn males according to the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those who were numbered of them, were twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three. ⁴⁴ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ⁴⁵ Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of their livestock; and the Levites shall be Mine. I am Yahweh. ⁴⁶ For the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three of the firstborn of the children of Israel, who exceed the number of the Levites, ⁴⁷ you shall take five shekels for each one; after the shekel of the sanctuary you shall take them (the shekel is twenty gerahs): ⁴⁸ and you shall give the money, with which their remainder is redeemed, to Aaron and to his sons. ⁴⁹ Moses took the redemption money from those who exceeded

the number of those who were redeemed by the Levites; ⁵⁰ from the firstborn of the children of Israel he took the money, one thousand three hundred and sixty-five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: ⁵¹ and Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of Yahweh, as Yahweh commanded Moses.

CHAPTER 4 Mar. 23

The Work of the Kohathites

Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ² Take a census of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, by their families, by their fathers' families, ³ from thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all who enter into the service, to do the work in the Tent of Meeting. ⁴ This is the service of the sons of Kohath in the Tent of Meeting, in the most holy things. ⁵ When the camp moves forward, Aaron shall

3:43 Levi was by far the smallest tribe – the numbers of the males over 20 in the other tribes (as recorded in Num. 1) is far larger than the number of males of the tribe of Levi. God uses as His special workers those who are weakest in human terms. It could be argued that Levi grew less in number than the other tribes because of some spiritual weakness – for at this time, Divine blessing was reckoned in terms of number of offspring. So perhaps spiritually as well as numerically they were the weakest, yet were chosen by God for His special work. God seems to love to work in this way.

4:1 Kohath wasn't the firstborn nor the senior born amongst the three sons listed here, but the Kohathites are numbered first and had the greatest responsibility. Again we see how God prefers to work not with the humanly best, strongest or most senior.

4:3 *Enter into the service* – The original words have a military connotation. Whatever our occupation in this world, we are to see ourselves as soldiers fighting for the only truly good and worthy cause on earth. There should therefore be in our lives an element of discipline, regimentation and focus on specific objectives. The New Testament is full of military metaphors (e.g. 2 Tim. 2:4).

4:5 The taking down of the tabernacle is turned by Paul and Peter into a metaphor for our death (2 Cor. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:14). The implication is that all the valuable things within the tabernacle through which God was manifest can on one level be interpreted

go in, and his sons, and they shall take down the veil of the screen, and cover the ark of the Testimony with it, ⁶ and shall put a covering of sealskin on it, and shall spread over it a cloth all of blue, and shall put in its poles. ⁷ On the table of show bread they shall spread a blue cloth, and put on it the dishes, the spoons, the bowls, and the cups with which to pour out; and the continual bread shall be on it. ⁸ They shall spread on them a scarlet cloth, and cover the same with a covering of sealskin, and shall put in its poles. ⁹ They shall take a blue cloth, and cover the lampstand of the light, and its lamps, and its snuffers, and its snuff dishes, and all its oil vessels, with which they minister to it. ¹⁰ They shall put it and all its vessels within a covering of sealskin, and shall put it on the frame. ¹¹ On the golden altar they shall spread a blue cloth, and cover it with a covering of sealskin, and shall put in its poles. ¹² They shall take all the vessels of ministry, with which they minister in the sanctuary, and put them in a blue

cloth, and cover them with a covering of sealskin, and shall put them on the frame. ¹³ They shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth on it. ¹⁴ They shall put on it all its vessels, with which they minister for it, the fire pans, the flesh hooks, the shovels, and the basins; all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread on it a covering of sealskin, and put in its poles. ¹⁵ When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary, and all the furniture of the sanctuary, as the camp moves forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to carry it: but they shall not touch the sanctuary, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁶ The duty of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be the oil for the light, the sweet incense, the continual grain offering, and the anointing oil, the requirements of all the tabernacle, and of all that is in it, the sanctuary, and its furnishings. ¹⁷ Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ¹⁸ Don't cut off the

as our lives. In this metaphor alone we see the immense value and meaning of human life if it is lived in God's service.

4:8 *Sealskin* – Taken by the Israelites from the shores of the Red Sea? Whatever we pick up along the wilderness journey of life we are to give to God's service.

4:15 In 2 Sam. 6:8, God slew Uzzah because he touched the ark when David brought it back to Jerusalem on a cart. Yet the Law clearly stated that the ark was to be carried only by the Levites, and was to be carried on poles rather than on a cart. Throughout Ps. 119, David declares how he loves God's law and studies and recites it by day and night. That surely included this passage in Numbers 4. But we have a tendency to read God's word, to know it well, speaking of it to others – and yet somehow assume that it doesn't apply to us personally, and we can take shortcuts as convenient to us. If righteous David did this, how much more should we be aware of our temptation to fail in the same way.

4:18 *Don't cut off the clan* – By Moses' inattention, a whole group of people could have died. Our sensitivity, or lack of it, to others' likely failings can lead to their los-

clan of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites; ¹⁹ but thus do to them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach to the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them each one to his service and to his burden; ²⁰ but they shall not go in to see the sanctuary even for a moment, lest they die.

The Work of the Gershonites

²¹ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²² Take a census of the sons of Gershon also, by their fathers' families, by their families; ²³ you shall count them from thirty years old and upward until fifty years old; all who enter in to wait on the service, to do the work in the Tent of Meeting. ²⁴ This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, in serving and in bearing burdens: ²⁵ they shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle, and the Tent of Meeting, its covering, and

the covering of sealskin that is above it, and the screen for the door of the Tent of Meeting, ²⁶ and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the door of the gate of the court, which is by the tabernacle and around the altar, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and whatever shall be done with them. In this will be their service. ²⁷ At the commandment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burden, and in all their service; and you shall appoint their duty to them in all their responsibilities. ²⁸ This is the service of the families of the sons of the Gershonites in the Tent of Meeting: and their duty shall be under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

The Work of the Merarites

²⁹ As for the sons of Merari, you shall number them by their families, by their fathers' families; ³⁰ you shall

ing their part amongst the family of the redeemed. We can't reason that human failure is simply their fault; we also bear some responsibility if we don't do what we can to mitigate against it.

4:19 Not touching holy things connects with the command not to touch the forbidden fruit of Eden (Gen. 3:3). Time and again, Adam's sin is presented (by way of such allusions) as the sin of everyman; elements of it are to be found in all human sin, and therefore we can never blame Adam as the source of our present discomfort under the curse; for we would have done the same. In this sense, all humanity sinned as it were in Adam (Rom. 5:12 Gk.). It's no bad exercise to analyze our own sins in the light of Adam's failure and see wherein are the essential similarities.

4:20 This law was applied even to Gentiles who looked into the ark (1 Sam. 6:19). God still feels sin as a committed offence against Him personally, even when it's performed by those not responsible to His law. It must be hard being God, seeing and feeling so much offence against Him every moment. In this we see not only His sensitivity to sin, but His grace in allowing the whole of human society to exist in its disobedient, sinful state, minute by minute. And thereby we can appreciate more fully the way that He delays judging this world and ending sin, all because He is so earnest that we and others might come to repentance and salvation (2 Pet. 3:9).

count them from thirty years old and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who enters on the service, to do the work of the Tent of Meeting. ³¹ This is the duty of their burden, according to all their service in the Tent of Meeting: the tabernacle's boards, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, ³² and the pillars of the court around it, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name you shall appoint the instruments of the duty of their burden. ³³ This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service, in the Tent of Meeting, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

The Numbers of Aaron's Sons

³⁴ Moses and Aaron and the princes of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites by their families, and by their fathers' families, ³⁵ from thirty years old and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who entered into the service, for work in the Tent of Meeting. ³⁶ Those who were numbered of them by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty. ³⁷ These are those who were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all who served in the Tent of Meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of Yahweh by Moses.

³⁸ Those who were numbered of the sons of Gershon, by their families, and by their fathers' families, ³⁹ from thirty years old and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who entered into the service, for work in the Tent of Meeting, ⁴⁰ even those who were numbered of them, by their families, by their fathers' families, were two thousand six hundred and thirty. ⁴¹ These are those who were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon, all who served in the Tent of Meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of Yahweh. ⁴² Those who were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, by their families, by their fathers' families, ⁴³ from thirty years old and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who entered into the service, to do work in the Tent of Meeting, ⁴⁴ even those who were numbered of them by their families, were three thousand two hundred. ⁴⁵ These are those who were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of Yahweh by Moses. ⁴⁶ All those who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the princes of Israel numbered, by their families, and by their fathers' families, ⁴⁷ from thirty years old and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who entered in to do

4:44 The Merarites had 3200 workers out of a total of 6200. Although they were the smallest of the three families, they had the most number of workers (Gershon had 2630 out of 7500; Kohath 2750 out of 8600). This may have been for various reasons, but it's also a fact that the smaller the group, the higher percentage are willing to work. God doesn't need great numbers to do His work.

the work of service, and the work of bearing burdens in the Tent of Meeting, ⁴⁸ even those who were numbered of them, were eight thousand five hundred and eighty. ⁴⁹ According to the commandment of Yahweh they were numbered by Moses, everyone according to his service, and according to his burden. Thus were they numbered by him, as Yahweh commanded Moses.

CHAPTER 5 Mar. 24

Rebuilding Relationships after Sin

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, and everyone who has an issue, and whoever is unclean by the dead. ³ Both male and female you shall put outside of the camp that they not defile their camp, in the midst of which I dwell. ⁴ The children of Israel did so, and put them out outside of the camp; as Yahweh spoke to Moses, so did the children of Israel. ⁵ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ⁶ Speak to

the children of Israel: ‘When a man or woman commits any sin that people commit, so as to trespass against Yahweh, and that soul is guilty; ⁷ then he shall confess his sin which he has done, and he shall make restitution for his guilt in full, and add to it the fifth part of it, and give it to him in respect of whom he has been guilty. ⁸ But if the man has no kinsman to whom restitution may be made for the guilt, the restitution for guilt which is made to Yahweh shall be the priest’s; besides the ram of the atonement, by which atonement shall be made for him. ⁹ Every heave offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they present to the priest, shall be his. ¹⁰ Every man’s holy things shall be his: whatever any man gives the priest, it shall be his’.

The Trial of Jealousy

¹¹ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹² Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them: ‘If any man’s wife goes

4:49 Each man having his own burden to bear is an idea picked up in the New Testament (Gal. 6:5). We are each asked to carry the cross of Christ, and yet that cross is articulated in unique ways for each of us.

5:4 *The children of Israel did so* – Israel’s obedience was mainly when it came to disciplining others, giving materially and making things. But the Pentateuch emphasizes their disobedience when it came to personal morality, internal spirituality and worshipping God alone rather than any idols. We must analyze our own acts of obedience and see if they follow a similar pattern. To be externally religious isn’t difficult, indeed we can rather enjoy being like that.

5:6-8 *When a man or woman commits any sin... he shall confess... the man* – Proof that the Bible often uses the masculine singular to mean ‘any person’, of either gender.

5:7 Both confession and restitution were required. These two elements are still required if we are to truly resolve broken relationships.

5:12 There were various possibilities for how a man should respond in this situation. He could have his wife stoned; divorce her; put her through this ‘trial of jealousy’; or simply forgive her. We too have a range of options open to us when wrong is done to

astray, and is unfaithful to him,¹³ and a man lies with her carnally, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and is kept close, and she is defiled, and there is no witness against her, and she isn't taken in the act;¹⁴ and the spirit of jealousy comes on him, and he is jealous of his wife, and she is defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy comes on him, and he is jealous of his wife, and she isn't defiled;¹⁵ then the man shall bring his wife to the priest, and shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal. He shall pour no oil on it, nor put frankincense on it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to memory.¹⁶ The priest shall bring her near, and set her before Yahweh;¹⁷ and the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water.¹⁸ The priest shall set the woman before Yahweh, and let the hair of the woman's head go loose, and put the grain offering of memorial in her hands, which is the grain

offering of jealousy. The priest shall have in his hand the water of bitterness that brings a curse.¹⁹ The priest shall cause her to swear, and shall tell the woman, If no man has lain with you, and if you haven't gone aside to uncleanness, being under your husband, be free from this water of bitterness that brings a curse.²⁰ But if you have gone astray, being under your husband, and if you are defiled, and some man has lain with you besides your husband;²¹ then the priest shall cause the woman to swear with the oath of cursing, and the priest shall tell the woman, Yahweh make you a curse and an oath among your people, when Yahweh allows your thigh to fall away, and your body to swell;²² and this water that brings a curse will go into your bowels, and make your body swell, and your thigh fall away. The woman shall say, Amen, Amen.²³ 'The priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out into the water of bitterness.²⁴ He shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that causes the curse;

us or when we suspect it has been. The very existence of these options encourages us to think through our responses, and surely inspires us to choose the way of grace over the way of personal revenge or justification.

5:14 This provision for the trial of jealousy appears to have been a concession to human weakness, in this case, male weakness. For the New Testament outlaws envy (the Hebrew word translated "jealousy" here has this sense): Rom. 1:29; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:3. It could be that James 4:5 alludes to the spirit of male jealousy which this legislation sought to make a concession to (:14). The simple lesson for us can be that God does indeed make concessions to our human weakness; but we are to use them sparingly, and realize that their very existence is actually intended to inspire us *not* to make use of them but to serve God on the highest level we can.

5:24 The Corinthians were told that they would "provoke the Lord to jealousy" by breaking bread and yet also worshipping idols (1 Cor. 10:22). This is surely an allusion to the "trial of jealousy". A curse was recited and then the believer drank a cup; if

and the water that causes the curse shall enter into her and become bitter. ²⁵ The priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the grain offering before Yahweh, and bring it to the altar. ²⁶ The priest shall take a handful of the grain offering, as its memorial, and burn it on the altar, and afterward shall make the woman drink the water. ²⁷ When he has made her drink the water, then it shall happen. If she is defiled, and has committed a trespass against her husband, that the water that causes the curse will enter into her and become bitter, and her body will swell, and her thigh will fall away; and the woman will be a curse among her people. ²⁸ If the woman isn't defiled, but is clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed. ²⁹ This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, being under her husband, goes astray, and is defiled; ³⁰ or when the spirit of jealousy comes on a man, and he is jealous of his wife; then he shall set the woman before Yahweh, and

the priest shall execute on her all this law. ³¹ The man shall be free from iniquity, and that woman shall bear her iniquity'.

CHAPTER 6 Mar. 25

The Nazirite Vow

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them: 'When either man or woman shall make a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to Yahweh, ³ he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of fermented drink, neither shall he drink any juice of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or dried. ⁴ All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is made of the grapevine, from the seeds even to the skins. ⁵ All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall come on his head, until the days are fulfilled, in which he separates himself to Yahweh. He shall be holy. He shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long. ⁶ All the days that he sep-

they were unfaithful, they drunk to their condemnation. Paul's allusion suggests that each day we break bread and drink the cup, we as the bride of Christ are going through the trial of jealousy. Brutal honesty and self-examination, and not merely of our lives in the last few days, is therefore crucial before drinking the cup.

6:3 Any Israelite could vow him or herself to special service to God; we too shouldn't see our service to God in terms of doing the minimum. Realizing the wonder of His grace and the certainty of our eternal life in His Kingdom, we should be moved to special devotions. In this vow, the ordinary Israelite willingly submitted to some of the regulations specific to the priests on duty. The growing of long hair could be seen as an imitation of the High Priest's mitre. They were not to see the priesthood as something reserved just for specialists, those born into it; nor were they to see the High Priest as so distant from themselves that he could never be imitated, in spirit at least. We likewise can take to ourselves some aspects of the personal work of the Lord Jesus; for all that is true of Him becomes true of us who are baptized into Him. As He was the light of the world, so are we to be.

arates himself to Yahweh he shall not go near a dead body. ⁷ He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head. ⁸ All the days of his separation he is holy to Yahweh. ⁹ If any man dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles the head of his separation, then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing. On the seventh day he shall shave it. ¹⁰ On the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the Tent of Meeting. ¹¹ The priest shall offer one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned by reason of the dead, and shall make his head holy that same day. ¹² He shall consecrate to Yahweh the days of his separation, and shall bring a male lamb a year old for a trespass offering; but the

former days shall be void, because his separation was defiled. ¹³ This is the law of the Nazirite: when the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought to the door of the Tent of Meeting, ¹⁴ and he shall offer his offering to Yahweh, one male lamb a year old without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb a year old without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings, ¹⁵ and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their grain offering, and their drink offerings. ¹⁶ The priest shall present them before Yahweh, and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering. ¹⁷ He shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings to Yahweh, with the basket of unleavened bread. The priest shall offer also its grain offering, and its drink offering. ¹⁸ The Nazirite shall shave the head of his

6:6 The Nazirite was not only to not touch a corpse, but not to go near one; likewise they were not only to not drink wine, but to not drink grape juice nor eat seeds or skins of grapes, from which wine is made. This is the classic ‘hedge around the law’ – forbidding something not because it is unlawful of itself but because the associations may lead to breaking an actual law. We in Christ are freed from all legalism and casuistry; and yet in our daily struggle against temptation, it’s no bad idea to remove far from us those things, associations, images etc. which may stimulate temptation and the power of sin.

6:11 It hardly sounds sinful for a person who has made a special dedication to God to be made unclean by a person unexpectedly falling dead next to him or her. But in this legislation God is seeking to teach us how sensitive He is to uncleanness. This principle can carry over into our lives today; if we love to view, read and talk about unclean things, even if we don’t do them, then we are not respecting the distance which God seeks to set between the clean and unclean, right and wrong, good and evil.

6:14 The need for a sin offering at the end of his period of dedication was maybe to remind him that his extra special devotion didn’t take away his sin and need for grace; for relationship with God depends upon this rather than upon our works and special efforts. Again, we can take that principle to ourselves in our age.

separation at the door of the Tent of Meeting, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace offerings. ¹⁹ The priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them on the hands of the Nazirite, after he has shaved the head of his separation; ²⁰ and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before Yahweh. This is holy for the priest, together with the breast that is waved and the thigh that is offered. After that the Nazirite may drink wine. ²¹ This is the law of the Nazirite who vows, and of his offering to Yahweh for his separation, besides that which he is able to put his hand on. According to his vow which he vows, so he must do after the law of his separation'. ²² Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'This is how you shall bless the children of Israel'. You shall tell them, ²⁴ 'Yahweh bless you, and keep you. ²⁵ Yahweh make His face to shine on you, and be gracious to you. ²⁶ Yahweh lift up His face toward you, and give you peace'. ²⁷ So they shall put My name on the children of Israel; and I will bless them.

CHAPTER 7 Mar. 26

A Major Freewill Offering from the Tribes

It happened on the day that Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, and had anointed it and made it holy, with all its furniture, and the altar with all its vessels, and had anointed and sanctified them; ² that the princes of Israel, the heads of their fathers' families, offered. These were the princes of the tribes. These are they who were over those who were numbered; ³ and they brought their offering before Yahweh, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen - a wagon for every two of the princes, and for each one an ox - and they presented them before the tabernacle. ⁴ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ⁵ Accept these from them that they may be used in doing the service of the Tent of Meeting; and you shall give them to the Levites, to every man according to his service. ⁶ Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites. ⁷ He gave two wagons and four oxen to the sons of Gershon, according to their service; ⁸ and he gave four wagons and eight oxen to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. ⁹ But to the sons of Kohath

7:2 Continuing the voluntary spirit of the Nazirite vow explained in chapter 6, we read that the heads of the tribes now offered a voluntary offering. They weren't commanded to bring these things; they chose to bring them. The constant repetition of chapter 7 can seem boring, but the point is that God remembered their freewill offerings, in every detail; and recorded and preserved them for millennia. He likewise remembers all our sacrifices for His sake (Ps. 20:3).

7:9 Significantly, David carried the ark on a wagon rather than have it carried on shoulders as commanded. One wonders whether his slip in this matter was because

he gave none, because the service of the sanctuary belonged to them: they carried it on their shoulders. ¹⁰ The princes gave offerings for the dedication of the altar in the day that it was anointed, even the princes gave their offerings before the altar. ¹¹ Yahweh said to Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedication of the altar.

A Detailed Record of the Offerings

¹² He who offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah, ¹³ and his offering was: one silver plate, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ¹⁴ one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; ¹⁵ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ¹⁶ one male goat for a sin offering; ¹⁷ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab. ¹⁸ On the second day Nethanel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, gave his offering. ¹⁹ He offered for his offering: one silver plate, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty

shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ²⁰ one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; ²¹ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ²² one male goat for a sin offering; ²³ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Nethanel the son of Zuar. ²⁴ On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, ²⁵ gave his offering: one silver plate, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ²⁶ one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; ²⁷ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ²⁸ one male goat for a sin offering; ²⁹ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Eliab the son of Helon. ³⁰ On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, ³¹ gave his offering: one silver plate, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of

the Kohathites had resented seeing how their brothers got to transport their parts of the tabernacle in wagons, whereas they had to carry their parts on their shoulders; and therefore they began to use wagons, because their brother did. We can also too easily do what our brothers do, and for us it can become sin, because we each have an individual calling. What may be permissible for them may not be for us. The fact they do it doesn't mean we can, because our context and calling is different from theirs.

seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ³² one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; ³³ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ³⁴ one male goat for a sin offering; ³⁵ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur. ³⁶ On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, ³⁷ gave his offering: one silver plate, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ³⁸ one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; ³⁹ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁴⁰ one male goat for a sin offering; ⁴¹ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. ⁴² On the sixth day, Eliasaph the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, ⁴³ gave his offering: one silver plate, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ⁴⁴ one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁴⁵ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;

⁴⁶ one male goat for a sin offering; ⁴⁷ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel. ⁴⁸ On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, ⁴⁹ gave his offering: one silver plate, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ⁵⁰ one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁵¹ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁵² one male goat for a sin offering; ⁵³ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud. ⁵⁴ On the eighth day Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh, ⁵⁵ gave his offering: one silver plate, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ⁵⁶ one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁵⁷ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁵⁸ one male goat for a sin offering; ⁵⁹ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. ⁶⁰ On

the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin, ⁶¹ gave his offering: one silver plate, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ⁶² one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁶³ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁶⁴ one male goat for a sin offering; ⁶⁵ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni. ⁶⁶ On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, ⁶⁷ gave his offering: one silver plate, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ⁶⁸ one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁶⁹ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁷⁰ one male goat for a sin offering; ⁷¹ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. ⁷² On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ochrán, prince of the children of Asher, ⁷³ gave his offering: one silver plate, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after

the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ⁷⁴ one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁷⁵ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁷⁶ one male goat for a sin offering; ⁷⁷ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Pagiel the son of Ochrán. ⁷⁸ On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, ⁷⁹ gave his offering: one silver plate, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; ⁸⁰ one golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense; ⁸¹ one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁸² one male goat for a sin offering; ⁸³ and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Ahira the son of Enan. ⁸⁴ This was the dedication of the altar, on the day when it was anointed, by the princes of Israel: twelve silver plates, twelve silver bowls, twelve golden spoons - ⁸⁵ each silver plate weighing one hundred and thirty shekels, and each bowl seventy; all the silver of the vessels two thousand four hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; ⁸⁶ the twelve golden spoons, full of incense, weighing ten shekels apiece, after the shekel of the sanctu-

ary; all the gold of the spoons weighed one hundred and twenty shekels.⁸⁷ All the cattle for the burnt offering: twelve bulls, the rams twelve, the male lambs a year old twelve, and their grain offering; and the male goats for a sin offering twelve;⁸⁸ and all the cattle for the sacrifice of peace offerings: twenty-four bulls, the rams sixty, the male goats sixty, the year old male lambs sixty. This was the dedication of the altar, after it was anointed.⁸⁹ When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with Yahweh, he heard His voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim: and He spoke to him.

CHAPTER 8 Mar. 27

The Sanctifying of the Levites

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,² Speak to Aaron, and tell him, ‘When you light the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand’.³ Aaron did so. He lit its

lamps to light the area in front of the lampstand, as Yahweh commanded Moses.⁴ This was the workmanship of the lampstand, beaten work of gold. From its base to its flowers, it was beaten work: according to the pattern which Yahweh had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.⁵ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,⁶ Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them.⁷ You shall do this to them, to cleanse them: sprinkle the water of cleansing on them, let them shave their whole bodies with a razor, and let them wash their clothes, and cleanse themselves.⁸ Then let them take a young bull, and its grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil; and another young bull you shall take for a sin offering.⁹ You shall present the Levites before the Tent of Meeting. You shall assemble the whole congregation of the children of Israel.¹⁰ You shall present the Levites before Yahweh. The children of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites,¹¹ and Aaron

7:89 The blood of atonement, pointing forward to the blood of Christ, was permanently on the mercy seat, i.e. the cover of the ark of the covenant, with the Angel-like cherubim peering down onto it. There in that most Holy of places, God spoke. The fact that the voice of God was associated with the blood which represented the blood of His Son is alluded to in Heb. 12:24-26, which likens the blood of Christ to a voice more powerful than the sound which accompanied the shaking of Sinai. God’s word becomes powerful to us over the blood of Christ in that beholding Him there, we cannot walk away passively. We are spurred to action. Yet as we behold His blood in our mind’s eye, in our reconstruction of how it all maybe happened on Golgotha, we face an insistent question: What can I do, what must I do, in response to this? That question is answered in God’s word, and it is in this sense that His word becomes of especial power to us over the blood of Christ. In this sense He is that word made flesh, supremely in His time of dying.

8:7 Washing and becoming like new born children, with no body hair, looks forward to baptism. We’re not baptized just for the sake of it; we do this so that we may be made holy or separated unto the service of God. We are God’s, just as they were (:14).

shall offer the Levites before Yahweh for a wave offering, on the behalf of the children of Israel, that it may be theirs to do the service of Yahweh. ¹² The Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, and you shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering to Yahweh, to make atonement for the Levites. ¹³ You shall set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them as a wave offering to Yahweh. ¹⁴ Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine. ¹⁵ After that, the Levites shall go in to do the service of the Tent of Meeting; and you shall cleanse them, and offer them as a wave offering. ¹⁶ For they are wholly given to Me from among the children of Israel; instead of all who open the womb, even the firstborn of all the children of Israel, I have taken them to Me. ¹⁷ For all the firstborn among the children of Israel are Mine, both man and animal. On the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of

Egypt, I sanctified them for Myself. ¹⁸ I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel. ¹⁹ I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the Tent of Meeting, and to make atonement for the children of Israel that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come near to the sanctuary. ²⁰ Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel did so to the Levites. According to all that Yahweh commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so the children of Israel did to them. ²¹ The Levites purified themselves from sin, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them for a wave offering before Yahweh; and Aaron made atonement for them to cleanse them. ²² After that, the Levites went in to do their service in the Tent of Meeting before Aaron, and before his sons, as Yahweh had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so

8:12 The sin offering always preceded the burnt offering. Dedication to God, represented by the burnt offering, is on the basis of our recognizing first of all our sinfulness and need for His grace. This is why the sin offering always precedes the burnt offering in the Mosaic rituals. We too have been cleansed by the blood of Christ in order to serve Him and His Father (Heb. 9:14; 1 Thess. 1:9).

8:14 *Separate* – The Levites were separated unto God’s service; it wasn’t so much that they were separate *from* others in a negative sense; rather they were positively separated *unto* God’s service. We shouldn’t see holiness as negative – that we can no longer do certain things; but instead focus on what positively we have been separated *unto*.

8:19 *That there be no plague among the children of Israel* – The spiritual and physical wellbeing of others can depend upon third parties, in this case the faithfulness of the Levites. Others can suffer because of our lack of diligence; it’s not that if we don’t do our part for them, then God will raise up others to do what we ought to have done. He *may* do this, as He was prepared to at the time of Esther, but He wishes us to see the eternal consequence of our actions upon others.

they did to them. ²³ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ This is that which belongs to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall go in to serve in the service in the work of the Tent of Meeting; ²⁵ and from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting on the work, and shall serve no more, ²⁶ but shall minister with their brothers in the Tent of Meeting, to perform the duty, and shall do no service. You shall do thus to the Levites concerning their duties.

CHAPTER 9 Mar. 27

The Passover Regulations

Yahweh spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ² Moreover let the children of Israel keep the Passover in its appointed season. ³ On the fourteenth day of this month, at evening, you shall keep it in its appointed time. According to all its statutes, and according to all its ordinances, you shall

keep it. ⁴ Moses spoke to the children of Israel, that they should keep the Passover. ⁵ They kept the Passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at evening, in the wilderness of Sinai. According to all that Yahweh commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did. ⁶ There were certain men, who were unclean because of the dead body of a man, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day, and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day. ⁷ Those men said to him, We are unclean because of the dead body of a man. Why are we kept back, that we may not offer the offering of Yahweh in its appointed time among the children of Israel? ⁸ Moses answered them, Wait, that I may hear what Yahweh will command concerning you. ⁹ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ Say to the children of Israel, ‘If any man of you or of your generations is unclean by reason of a dead body, or is on a journey far away, he shall still keep the Passover to Yahweh. ¹¹ In the second month, on the

8:24 *That which belongs to* – A reference to the fact the Levites had no possessions of land within Israel. What belonged to them was the honour of serving God; whether or not we own property in this present age, our eternal possession is the honour of being God’s servants. To be a servant, in a world where perceived ‘freedom’ is so cherished, is to be our greatest possession.

9:6 These men are similar to us. We wish to keep the Passover, which for us is the breaking of bread service (1 Cor. 5:8), but we feel the burden of our uncleanness. But this is no barrier to God; He found a way for them to keep it, so eager was He for fellowship with His people. In our times, God has likewise found a way – and that way is through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus which cleanses us and enables us to legitimately have fellowship with God. This desire of God to ‘find a way’ for His weak people to approach Him is found throughout the Law of Moses, e.g. in the possibility for a very poor person to offer a flour sacrifice rather than a blood one requiring an animal. This is a comfort to us, and should also be a pattern for us in how we deal with the weakness of others.

fourteenth day at evening they shall keep it: they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ¹² They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break a bone of it. According to all the law of the Passover they shall keep it. ¹³ But the man who is clean, and is not on a journey, and fails to keep the Passover, that soul shall be cut off from his people. Because he didn't offer the offering of Yahweh in its appointed time, that man shall bear his sin. ¹⁴ If a foreigner lives among you, and desires to keep the Passover to Yahweh according to the statute of the Passover, and according to its ordinance, so shall he do. You shall have one statute, both for the foreigner, and for him who is born in the land'.

Israel Led by Cloud and Fire

¹⁵ On the day that the tabernacle was raised up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, even the Tent of the Testimony, and at evening it was over the tabernacle as if it were the appearance of fire, until morning. ¹⁶ Thus it was continually. The cloud covered it, and the appearance of fire by night. ¹⁷ Whenever the cloud was taken up

from over the Tent, then after that the children of Israel took their journey; and in the place where the cloud remained, there the children of Israel encamped. ¹⁸ At the commandment of Yahweh the children of Israel travelled, and at the commandment of Yahweh they encamped. As long as the cloud remained on the tabernacle they remained encamped. ¹⁹ When the cloud stayed on the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept Yahweh's command, and didn't travel. ²⁰ Sometimes the cloud was a few days on the tabernacle; then according to the commandment of Yahweh they remained encamped, and according to the commandment of Yahweh they travelled. ²¹ Sometimes the cloud was from evening until morning; and when the cloud was taken up in the morning, they travelled: by day and by night, when the cloud was taken up, they travelled. ²² Whether it was two days, or a month, or a year that the cloud stayed on the tabernacle, remaining on it, the children of Israel remained encamped, and didn't travel; but when it was taken up, they travelled. ²³ At the commandment of Yahweh they

9:14 The Passover was open to Gentiles who wished to identify themselves with Israel, and to see in the Red Sea deliverance something of their own deliverance from this world. We should not be exclusive but rather inclusive when it comes to the breaking of bread service which was typified by the Passover.

9:22, 23 There was no prior warning how long they were to remain in any one place; sometimes they stayed a year in one place, at other times they had to travel even by night. This was all at the commandment or word of the Lord. If the Red Sea deliverance represents our baptism (1 Cor. 10:1,2), the wilderness journey is like our journey through life towards the promised land of God's Kingdom. We are led by an Angel, and the path we take is determined by God. Sometimes we are suddenly and unexpectedly asked to move forward; sometimes quickly, travelling by night, as it were; other

encamped, and at the commandment of Yahweh they took up their journey. They kept Yahweh's command, at the commandment of Yahweh by Moses.

CHAPTER 10 Mar. 28

The Use of the Trumpets

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Make two trumpets of silver. You shall make them of beaten work. You shall use them for the calling of the congregation, and for the journeying of the camps. ³ When they blow them, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the door of the Tent of Meeting. ⁴ If they blow just one, then the princes, the heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves to you. ⁵ When you blow an alarm, the camps that

lie on the east side shall go forward. ⁶ When you blow an alarm the second time, the camps that lie on the south side shall go forward. They shall blow an alarm for their journeys. ⁷ But when the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but you shall not sound an alarm. ⁸ The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets. This shall be to you for a principle forever throughout your generations. ⁹ When you go to war in your land against the adversary who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets. Then you will be remembered before Yahweh your God, and you will be saved from your enemies. ¹⁰ Also in the day of your gladness, and in your set feasts, and in the be-

periods of our lives can appear static and leading nowhere. But in all these situations we are still being led – if we remain obedient to the word of God. A community of three million people would've been very hard to organize; setting up and breaking camp demanded a huge amount of time and effort. When they only remained a short time, even a day, in one place, the tendency would've been to complain 'Must we really break camp and move on so quickly?'. We too are tempted to resent the unstable nature of our lives; for those whose lives are led by the Spirit, as the Angel was in a sense the Spirit of God (Ps. 104:4), life will never be static and boring; even if we geographically remain in one place all our lives, we are being actively led forward by God's direction.

10:9 *When you go to war in your land against the adversary who oppresses you* – If Israel were obedient, they were promised that they would live *in their land* in peace with no oppressors; they would only be oppressed if they were disobedient. So here we have another reflection of God's sensitivity to the weakness of His people; the very structure of His law foresaw their likely weakness, and offered a way out. In this case, it was through the blowing of the trumpets. The perceptive Israelite would have seen that the same blowing of trumpets was what had been done to command Israel to move forward during their wilderness journey (:5). Even in the settled existence in Canaan, they were to still see themselves as on a wilderness journey – just as we should in our settled lives. And when we fail, we are to rally ourselves and move onwards, rather like a 'Play on!' command in some sports, when a player has tumbled and fallen. We have to move on, as quickly as possible.

10:10 *Also in the day of your gladness* – The trumpet call was an appeal to God. It wasn't only to be made in times of crisis (:9), but in good times too. We shouldn't

ginnings of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be to you for a memorial before your God. I am Yahweh your God.

The First Journey of Israel

¹¹ It happened in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, that the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle of the testimony. ¹² The children of Israel went forward according to their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud stayed in the wilderness of Paran. ¹³ They first went forward according to the commandment of Yahweh by Moses. ¹⁴ First, the standard of the camp of the children of Judah went forward according to their armies. Nahshon the son of Amminadab was over his army. ¹⁵ Nethanel the son of Zuar was over the army of the tribe of the children of Issachar. ¹⁶ Eliab the son of Helon was over the army of the tribe of the children of Zebulun. ¹⁷ The tabernacle was taken down, and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari, who bore the tabernacle, went forward. ¹⁸ The standard of the camp of Reuben went forward according to their armies. Elizur the son of Shedeur was over his army.

¹⁹ Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai was over the army of the tribe of the children of Simeon. ²⁰ Eliasaph the son of Deuel was over the army of the tribe of the children of Gad. ²¹ The Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary. The others set up the tabernacle before they arrived. ²² The standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set forward according to their armies. Elishama the son of Ammihud was over his army. ²³ Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur was over the army of the tribe of the children of Manasseh. ²⁴ Abidan the son of Gideoni was over the army of the tribe of the children of Benjamin. ²⁵ The standard of the camp of the children of Dan, which was the rear guard of all the camps, set forward according to their armies. Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai was over his army. ²⁶ Pagiel the son of Ochran was over the army of the tribe of the children of Asher. ²⁷ Ahira the son of Enan was over the army of the tribe of the children of Naphtali. ²⁸ Thus were the travels of the children of Israel according to their armies, and they went forward. ²⁹ Moses said to Hobab, the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying to the place of which Yahweh said, 'I will give it to you'. Come with us, and we will treat you

treat God as someone we rush to only in times of crisis, but should share with Him our good times as well as the bad times.

10:11 *The tabernacle of the testimony* – The tent of meeting is sometimes called the tent of the “testimony”, a reference to God’s word on the tables of stone which were within the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place. Out of all the tabernacle furniture, the symbol of God’s word was seen as central. God’s word – the Bible, in our times – is to be utterly central to our lives and collective sense of community.

well; for Yahweh has spoken good concerning Israel. ³⁰ He said to him, I will not go; but I will depart to my own land, and to my relatives. ³¹ He said, Don't leave us, please, because you know how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and you can be to us instead of eyes. ³² It shall be, if you go with us, yes, it shall be, that whatever good Yahweh does to us, we will do the same to you. ³³ They set forward from the Mount of Yahweh three days' journey. The ark of the covenant of Yahweh went before them three days' journey, to seek out a camping place for them. ³⁴ The cloud of Yahweh was over them by day, when they set forward from the camp. ³⁵ It happened, when the ark went forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Yahweh, and let your enemies be scattered! Let those who hate you flee before you! ³⁶ When it rested,

he said, Return, Yahweh, to the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel.

CHAPTER 11 Mar. 29

The People Complain and Moses Becomes Desperate

The people started complaining in the ears of Yahweh. When Yahweh heard it, His anger was kindled; and Yahweh's fire burnt among them, and consumed some of those in the outskirts of the camp. ² The people cried to Moses, and Moses prayed to Yahweh, and the fire abated. ³ The name of that place was called Taberah, because Yahweh's fire burnt among them. ⁴ The mixed multitude that was among them lusted exceedingly; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who will give us flesh to eat? ⁵ We remember the fish, which we ate in Egypt for nothing; the cucumbers, and the melons,

10:30 There's something very sad about this; Hobab could've identified himself with Israel and shared a place in the promised land with them, if he had travelled with them through the wilderness. But he preferred his own family rather than God's family, and so he turned back. We too invite people to share our future hope, but they turn back, even if they journey with us for a while as Hobab did with Israel.

10:31 *You can be to us instead of eyes* – This may have been a moment of weakness in Moses, for the Angel went before Israel to find them camping places (:33), and the Angels are God's eyes (2 Chron. 16:9; Rev. 4:6-8). Like Moses, we tend to seek for human guidance in our wilderness journey, rather than trusting in God's Angelic Spirit guidance of us.

11:1 *In the ears of Yahweh* – They doubtless grumbled amongst themselves. But what we say secretly, as we think, to ourselves and to each other is spoke right into the ears of God Himself.

Those in the outskirts of the camp – The implication could be that it was those who camped furthest away from the tabernacle who complained. An encampment of three million people (:21) would've been large, and for them to walk to the tabernacle would've been quite a journey. If we are wholeheartedly devoted to God, we won't want to be on the edge of God's people, just peripherally associated with the things of God.

11:5 They forgot their misery in the slave camps of Egypt, and imagined life had

and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic; ⁶ but now we have lost our appetite. There is nothing at all except this manna to look at. ⁷ The manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like the appearance of bdellium. ⁸ The people went around, gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in mortars, and boiled it in pots, and made cakes of it. Its taste was like the taste of fresh oil. ⁹ When the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it. ¹⁰ Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, every man at the door of his tent; and the anger of Yahweh was kindled greatly; and Moses was

displeased. ¹¹ Moses said to Yahweh, Why have You dealt with Your servant so badly? Why haven't I found grace in Your sight- for You lay the burden of all this people on me? ¹² Have I conceived all this people? Have I brought them forth, that You should tell me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing infant', to the land which You swore to their fathers? ¹³ From where can I get meat to give to all this people? For they weep to me, saying, 'Give us meat, that we may eat'. ¹⁴ I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. ¹⁵ If You treat me this way, please kill me right

been much better there than it was. In our weakness, there are times on our wilderness journey towards the Kingdom when we look back to this world and think it was all far better than it was.

11:6 In the same way as Israel became ungrateful for the manna and became bored with it, so we can become bored with God's word in Christ which it represents (Jn. 6:63 and context). It all can become the same old scene – unless we remember the daily miracle God is performing in giving us His word and guiding us as Israel were daily guided by the fire and cloud, with His presence clearly amongst them. These things were soon taken for granted by them. We at times long for a more visible declaration of God's presence in our lives; but Israel had this daily, and yet it didn't result in their faith remaining. For faith isn't related to what we can see with our eyes (Heb. 11:1,2).

11:11 Moses earlier had had the same doubt, as to whether he had really found grace in God's sight; and God had magnificently assured Moses that indeed he had (Ex. 33:13-17). Yet Moses still struggled to accept this; the complex difficulties of his life coupled with what appears to have been some form of depression led him to again doubt it. We too struggle with accepting our salvation by pure grace; one moment we may grasp it, but life's difficulties trigger again the old doubt. Only perhaps at the day of judgment, as he see ourselves as it were from outside of ourselves, standing in the promised land of God's Kingdom, shall we finally realize that all is ultimately OK, His grace to me is for real.

11:13 The disciples had the same question – from where to find food to feed a great multitude in the desert (Mk. 8:4). If their minds had been more spiritually attune, they would have perceived that they were in essence in the same situation as Moses – and God would likewise provide. The more we are familiar with Scripture, the more we will realize that our life situations and the crises we face have in fact been faced and overcome, in essence, in previous Biblical situations.

11:15 Here we surely have Moses in depression; but God doesn't seem to rebuke him

now, if I have indeed found grace in Your sight; and don't let me see my wretchedness. ¹⁶ Yahweh said to Moses, Gather to me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. ¹⁷ I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit which is on you, and will put it on them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you not bear it yourself alone.

The Giving of Quails

¹⁸ Say to the people, 'Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow, and you will eat flesh; for you have wept in the ears of Yahweh, saying, Who will give us flesh to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt. Therefore Yahweh will give you flesh, and you will eat. ¹⁹ You will not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days, ²⁰ but a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it is loathsome to you; because that you have rejected Yahweh Who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, Why did we come out of Egypt?' ²¹ Moses said, The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand men on foot; and you have said, 'I will

give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month'. ²² Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to be sufficient for them? Shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to be sufficient for them? ²³ Yahweh said to Moses, Has Yahweh's hand grown short? Now you will see whether My word will happen to you or not. ²⁴ Moses went out, and told the people the words of Yahweh; and he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them around the Tent. ²⁵ Yahweh came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was on him, and put it on the seventy elders: and it happened that when the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did so no more. ²⁶ But two men remained in the camp. The name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the Spirit rested on them; and they were of those who were written, but had not gone out to the Tent; and they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ A young man ran, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp! ²⁸ Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his chosen men, answered, My lord Moses, forbid them! ²⁹ Moses said to him, Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all Yahweh's people were prophets,

(although He does rebuke him for other failures at other times). He recognizes our humanity with incredible sensitivity; and depression isn't sin.

11:29 This incident has similarities with the disciples asking Jesus to forbid the disciples of John the Baptist from using the Spirit (Mk. 9:40). Because other believers aren't with us or in our group, we aren't to forbid them. This isn't to say that unity amongst God's people isn't important; but where there is fracture amongst them, this doesn't mean that God only works with one of the groups.

that Yahweh would put His Spirit on them! ³⁰ Moses went into the camp, he and the elders of Israel. ³¹ A wind from Yahweh went out and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, about a day's journey on this side, and a day's journey on the other side, around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the earth. ³² The people rose up all that day, and all the night, and all the next day, and gathered the quails. He who gathered least gathered ten homers, and they spread them all abroad for themselves around the camp. ³³ While the flesh was yet between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of Yahweh was kindled against the people, and Yahweh struck the people with a very great plague. ³⁴ The name of that place was called Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who lusted. ³⁵ From Kibroth Hattaavah the people travelled to Hazeroth, and they stayed at Hazeroth.

CHAPTER 12 Mar. 30

A Challenge to Moses' Authority

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married; for he had married a Cushite woman. ² They said, Has Yahweh indeed spoken only with Moses? Hasn't He spoken also with us? And Yahweh heard it. ³ Now the man Moses was very humble, above all the men who were on the surface of the earth. ⁴ Yahweh spoke suddenly to Moses, to Aaron, and to Miriam, You three come out to the Tent of Meeting! The three of them came out. ⁵ Yahweh came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the door of the Tent, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forward. ⁶ He said, Hear now My words. If there is a prophet among you, I Yahweh will make Myself known to him in a vision. I will speak with him in a dream. ⁷ My servant Moses is not so. He is so faithful in all My house ⁸ that with him I will

11:33 Ps. 78:31 adds the detail that those who were killed were the “fattest” – those who weren't really hungry, but simply wanted a better life in the wilderness with the delicacies of Egypt, rather than the basic provision of daily food which God had faithfully promised His people. This attitude can easily happen amongst us – discontent because we seek both eternity in the future, and the life of Egypt right now too. Jesus clearly teaches that we must carry the cross in this life before we can enter the eternal joys of His future Kingdom.

12:2 *Yahweh heard it* – It is a theme of the record of the wilderness journeys that God heard the thoughts and secret complaints of His people. His total knowledge and sensitive awareness of every word and thought of our wilderness journey should have an abiding impression on how we think and talk.

12:3 *Moses was very humble* – The Hebrew could imply ‘made very humble’. Moses appears to have been very angry at times, but this may be understandable in terms of his depression, and this great commendation, that he was the humblest person, must be allowed its full weight in our interpretation of his character. True greatness is in humility, as the New Testament often teaches. Moses was the leader because he was the most humble.

speak mouth to mouth, even plainly, and not in riddles; and he shall see Yahweh's form. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses? ⁹ The anger of Yahweh was kindled against them; and He departed. ¹⁰ The cloud departed from over the Tent; and behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. Aaron looked at Miriam, and behold, she was leprous. ¹¹ Aaron said to Moses, Oh, my lord, please don't count this sin against us, in which we have done foolishly, and in which we have sinned. ¹² Let her not, I pray, be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb. ¹³ Moses cried to Yahweh, saying, Heal her, God, I beg You! ¹⁴ Yahweh said to Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, shouldn't she be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut up outside of the camp seven days, and after that she shall be brought in again. ¹⁵ Miriam was shut up outside of the camp seven days, and the people didn't travel until Miriam was brought in again. ¹⁶ Afterward the people travelled from Hazeroth, and encamped in the wilderness of Paran.

CHAPTER 13 Mar. 30

Spies Sent Out and Return with a Negative Message

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Send men, that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel. Of every tribe of their fathers, you shall send a man, every one a prince among them.

³ Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran according to the commandment of Yahweh: all of them men who were heads of the children of Israel. ⁴ These were their names. Of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur. ⁵ Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori. ⁶ Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. ⁷ Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph. ⁸ Of the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun. ⁹ Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu. ¹⁰ Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi. ¹¹ Of the tribe of Joseph, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi. ¹² Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli. ¹³ Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael. ¹⁴ Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi. ¹⁵ Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. ¹⁶ These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun 'Joshua'. ¹⁷ Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, Go up this way by the South, and go up into the hill country; ¹⁸ and see the land, what it is, and the people who dwell therein, whether they are strong or weak, whether they are few or many; ¹⁹ and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it is good or bad; and what cities they are that they dwell in, whether in camps, or in fenced cities; ²⁰ and what the land is, whether it is fat or lean, whether there is wood therein, or not. Be courageous, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of

the first-ripe grapes. ²¹ So they went up, and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, to the entrance of Hamath. ²² They went up by the South, and came to Hebron; and Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of Anak, were there. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) ²³ They came to the valley of Eshcol, and cut down from there a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a staff between two. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs. ²⁴ That place was called the valley of Eshcol because of the cluster which the children of Israel cut down from there. ²⁵ They returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days. ²⁶ They went and came to Moses and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, to the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh, and brought back word to them, and to all the congregation, and showed

them the fruit of the land. ²⁷ They told him, and said, We came to the land where you sent us and surely it flows with milk and honey and this is its fruit. ²⁸ However the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. Moreover, we saw the children of Anak there. ²⁹ Amalek dwells in the land of the South; and the Hittite, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, dwell in the hill country; and the Canaanite dwells by the sea, and along by the side of the Jordan. ³⁰ Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. ³¹ But the men who went up with him said, We aren't able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. ³² They brought up an evil report of the land which they had spied out to the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to spy it out,

13:28 *The people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified* – Rahab informed the later spies that the cities were fortified from fear of Israel, and the Canaanites were weak and fearful before Israel at this time (Josh. 2:10,11). Those obstacles to our inheritance of the Kingdom which seem to us huge and too strong for us may actually be very weak and far easier to overcome than we imagine.

13:30 *Let us go up at once* – The Bible often records the immediacy of response in faithful people. Procrastination and endlessly weighing up the difficulties often leads to failure to act as we should.

13:32 *A land that eats up its inhabitants* – This was effectively calling God's descriptions of the promised land untrue. If we don't believe we can inherit the Kingdom prepared for us (Mt. 25:34), then we are effectively calling God a liar. Ps. 106:24 says that they didn't believe God's word of promise that they would possess the land (Gen. 15:18; 17:8; Ex. 23:30). These promises were clear and unambiguous; but the immediate and the visible seemed more true to them than the promises of God's word. Perhaps they had forgotten those promises, not recited them to themselves, not bothered to attend Moses' sessions of instruction, of which the Pentateuch is likely a transcript. Unless God's words of promise are regularly in our consciousness, we will likewise fail to believe it when we come up against the human obstacles in our paths.

is a land that eats up its inhabitants; and all the people who we saw in it are men of great stature. ³³ There we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who come of the Nephilim, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

CHAPTER 14 Mar. 31

The People Want to Return to Egypt

All the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. ² All the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would that we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why does Yahweh bring us to this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be a prey: wouldn't it be better for us to return into Egypt? ⁴ They said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. ⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. ⁶ Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who

were of those who spied out the land, tore their clothes: ⁷ and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, The land which we passed through to spy it out is an extremely good land. ⁸ Since Yahweh delights in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us - a land which flows with milk and honey. ⁹ Only don't rebel against Yahweh, neither fear the people of the land; for they are bread for us. Their defence is removed from over them, and Yahweh is with us. Don't fear them. ¹⁰ But all the congregation threatened to stone them with stones. The glory of Yahweh appeared in the Tent of Meeting to all the children of Israel. ¹¹ Yahweh said to Moses, How long will this people despise Me? and how long will they not believe in Me, for all the signs which I have worked among them? ¹² I will strike them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.

God and Moses in Dialogue

¹³ Moses said to Yahweh, Then the Egyptians will hear it; for You

14:3 There should be no question amongst us, not in our deepest heart, about returning to the world / Egypt, the life we knew before our baptism (cp. the Red Sea crossing, 1 Cor. 10:1,2). If we do allow this question, then it will lead to actually doing this in practice (:4).

14:4 *A captain* – Human beings so want human leadership. God through Moses was their captain, but they wanted a leader who would lead them where *they* wanted. The large number of human religions and religious leaders is proof enough of this desire for human leadership.

14:11 *How long will they not believe in Me* – It's not that the people were atheists. They speak about the existence of Yahweh quite freely (:3). But to not believe that He will give us the Kingdom, the promised land, is to effectively be in denial of Him. We too can be effective atheists when we doubt our salvation by grace.

brought up this people in Your might from among them; ¹⁴ and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, Yahweh, are in the middle of this people; for You, Yahweh, are seen face to face, and Your cloud stands over them and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. ¹⁵ Now if You killed this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of You will speak, saying, ¹⁶ ‘Because Yahweh was not able to bring this people into the land which He swore to them, therefore He has slain them in the wilderness’. ¹⁷ Now please let the power of the Lord be great, according as You have spoken, saying, ¹⁸ ‘Yahweh is slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness, forgiving iniquity and disobedience; and that will

by no means justify the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and on the fourth generation’. ¹⁹ Please pardon the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your grace, and according as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. ²⁰ Yahweh said, I have pardoned according to your word: ²¹ but in very deed, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh; ²² because all those men who have seen My glory and My signs which I worked in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have tempted Me these ten times, and have not listened to My voice; ²³ surely they shall not see the land which I swore to their fathers, neither shall any of those who despised Me see it. ²⁴ But My servant Caleb, because he had

14:13 To have done this would’ve resulted in God changing His stated purpose with Israel. He is prepared to alter His intentions, according to human behaviour. And He shows Himself here open to dialogue, to persuasion, from His faithful children like Moses who reason according to a desire to see *God’s* glory rather than their own glory. It may be that it becomes clear that God intends to do something – perhaps to end a life, to relocate us geographically, to close one road and open another. Our prayers shouldn’t be simply asking Him to do or not do something. Rather should we reason with Him, giving our reasons as to why we wish Him to act in the way we are asking. This is for our benefit and reveals our motives to ourselves; and also deepens our faith that we are really asking according to God’s will as revealed in His word.

14:14 *They have heard that You, Yahweh, are... seen face to face* – It was only Moses who saw Yahweh face to face. But his personal relationship with God had been shared not only with Israel, but somehow the Gentile world of Canaan had got to hear about it. If we have a close relationship with God, we will not need to boast of this to others, it will become apparent, and the knowledge of it will somehow spread widely.

14:20 *I have pardoned according to your word* – Others can be forgiven because of our intercession (see too Mk. 2:5,6). This has huge implications; for in this case we should be praying constantly for others, if the prayers of a third party can have such power in another’s life.

14:24 *Followed Me faithfully* – ‘Caleb’ means ‘dog’ in Hebrew, and God alludes to this in describing Caleb as His faithful follower. The intimacy between a man and his dog can be seen between God and His man.

another spirit with him, and has followed Me faithfully, him will I bring into the land into which he went; and his seed shall possess it. ²⁵ Now the Amalekite and the Canaanite dwell in the valley. Tomorrow, turn and go into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.

The Punishment of the People

²⁶ Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ²⁷ How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, that murmur against Me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against Me. ²⁸ Tell them, ‘As I live, says Yahweh, surely as you have spoken in My ears, so will I do to you. ²⁹ Your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness; and all who were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against Me, ³⁰ surely you shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore that I would make you dwell therein, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. ³¹ But your little ones, that you said should be for a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which you have rejected. ³² But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. ³³ Your children shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years,

and shall bear your prostitution, until your dead bodies be consumed in the wilderness. ³⁴ According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year, you will bear your iniquities, even forty years; and you will know the altering of My purpose’. ³⁵ I Yahweh have spoken, surely this will I do to all this evil congregation, who are gathered together against Me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die. ³⁶ The men, whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation to murmur against Him, by bringing up an evil report against the land, ³⁷ even those men who brought up an evil report about the land, died by the plague before Yahweh. ³⁸ But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive out of those men who went to spy out the land. ³⁹ Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. ⁴⁰ They rose up early in the morning, and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, Behold, we are here, and will go up to the place which Yahweh has promised; for we have sinned. ⁴¹ Moses said, Why now do you disobey the commandment of Yahweh, since disobedience shall not prosper? ⁴² Don’t go up, for Yahweh isn’t among you; that

14:33 *Your prostitution* – To disbelieve we will enter the promised land of God’s Kingdom is effectively prostitution against God. The Bible often describes unfaithfulness in terms which are startling to us, but this is to show how serious is unbelief.

14:34 *The altering of My purpose* – That God can change His mind is an indication of the extreme sensitivity He has to human behaviour. The only thing in which He is unchanging is His patience with sinners (Mal. 3:6).

you not be struck down before your enemies. ⁴³ There the Amalekite and the Canaanite are before you, and you shall fall by the sword, because you are turned back from following Yahweh; therefore Yahweh will not be with you. ⁴⁴ But they presumed to go up to the top of the mountain; nevertheless the ark of the covenant of Yahweh and Moses didn't depart out of the camp. ⁴⁵ Then the Amalekite came down, and the Canaanite who lived in that mountain, and struck them and beat them down, even to Hormah.

CHAPTER 15 Apr. 1

The Importance of the Grain Offering

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them, 'When you have come into the land of your habitations, which I give to you, ³ and will make an offering by fire to Yahweh, a burnt offering, or a sacrifice, to accomplish a vow, or as a freewill offering, or in your set feasts, to make a pleasant aroma to Yahweh, of the herd, or of the flock; ⁴ then he who offers his offering shall offer to Yahweh a grain offering of a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour mixed with the fourth part of a hin of oil; ⁵ and wine

for the drink offering, the fourth part of a hin, you shall prepare with the burnt offering, or for the sacrifice, for each lamb. ⁶ Or for a ram, you shall prepare for a grain offering two tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour mixed with the third part of a hin of oil; ⁷ and for the drink offering you shall offer the third part of a hin of wine, for a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. ⁸ When you prepare a bull for a burnt offering, or for a sacrifice, to accomplish a vow, or for peace offerings to Yahweh, ⁹ then shall he offer with the bull a grain offering of three tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil; ¹⁰ and you shall offer for the drink offering half a hin of wine, for an offering made by fire, for a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. ¹¹ Thus shall it be done for each bull, or for each ram, or for each of the male lambs, or of the young goats. ¹² According to the number that you shall prepare, so you shall do to each one according to their number. ¹³ All who are native-born shall do these things in this way, in offering an offering made by fire, for a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. ¹⁴ If a stranger lives as a foreigner with you, or whoever may be among you throughout your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire,

14:44 Those rejected by God at His judgment still desperately want to enter His Kingdom (Mt. 25:11). In that day of final judgment, all present will desperately want only one thing – to enter the Kingdom. Nothing else will matter. We should have that spirit with us now.

15:4 This section seems to be reminding Israel of the need not to forget to offer a grain offering at the same time as a major sacrifice; as if to underline that God is magnified in the little things of life, and these shouldn't be left outside the sphere of His influence just because we consider we have made a major sacrifice to Him.

for a pleasant aroma to Yahweh; as you do, so he shall do. ¹⁵ For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who lives as a foreigner, a statute forever throughout your generations: as you are, so shall the foreigner be before Yahweh. ¹⁶ One law and one ordinance shall be for you, and for the stranger who lives as a foreigner with you’.

Sins of Ignorance

¹⁷ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁸ Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them, ‘When you come into the land to which I bring you, ¹⁹ then it shall be that when you eat of the bread of the land, you shall offer up a wave offering to Yahweh. ²⁰ Of the first of your dough you shall offer up a cake for a wave offering: as the wave offering of the threshing floor, so you shall heave it. ²¹ Of the first of your dough you shall give to Yahweh a wave offering throughout your generations. ²² When you shall err, and not observe all these commandments which Yahweh has spoken to Moses, ²³ even all that Yahweh has commanded you by Moses, from the day that Yahweh gave command-

ment, and onward throughout your generations; ²⁴ then it shall be, if it be done unknowingly, without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bull for a burnt offering, for a pleasant aroma to Yahweh, with the grain offering of it, and the drink offering of it, according to the ordinance, and one male goat for a sin offering. ²⁵ The priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and they shall be forgiven; for it was an error, and they have brought their offering, an offering made by fire to Yahweh, and their sin offering before Yahweh, for their error. ²⁶ And all the congregation of the children of Israel shall be forgiven, and the stranger who lives as a foreigner among them; for in respect of all the people it was done unknowingly. ²⁷ If one person sins unknowingly, then he shall offer a female goat of a year old for a sin offering. ²⁸ The priest shall make atonement for the soul who errs when he sins unknowingly, to make atonement for him before Yahweh; and he shall be forgiven. ²⁹ You shall have one law for him who does any-

15:17 *When you come into the land to which I bring you* – The Law of Moses, like the whole of God’s word, is studded with such incidental reminders that truly we shall enter the promised land.

15:24 Sins of ignorance still required atonement. The passage of time doesn’t work a quasi-atonement for our sins; confession of sin and earnest searching of our lives, both past and present, is one of the disciplines which characterize the spiritually healthy believer. It’s likely we will come to the day of judgment with sins of ignorance still counted to us, and yet we believe God will forgive them – hence we ask to be forgiven for such sins which aren’t perceived by us (Ps. 19:12). This means we will be forgiven without repentance. If we look forward to such forgiveness, we should show it to our brethren today, forgiving without demanding their repentance, hoping that they will later on in their journey perceive things more maturely.

thing unknowingly, for him who is native-born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger who lives as a foreigner among them’.

The Sin of Presumption

³⁰ But the soul who does anything in presumption, whether he is native-born or a foreigner, the same blasphemes Yahweh; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. ³¹ Because he has despised the word of Yahweh, and has broken His commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be on him’. ³² While the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. ³³ Those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. ³⁴ They put him in custody, because it had not been declared what should be done to him. ³⁵ Yahweh said to Moses, The man shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp. ³⁶ All the congregation brought him outside of the camp, and stoned him to death

with stones, as Yahweh commanded Moses.

Blue Fringes

³⁷ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁸ Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them that they should make themselves fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put on the fringe of each border a cord of blue: ³⁹ and it shall be to you for a fringe, that you may look on it, and remember all the commandments of Yahweh, and do them; and that you do not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you use to play the prostitute; ⁴⁰ that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy to your God. ⁴¹ I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. I am Yahweh your God.

CHAPTER 16 Apr. 2

The Rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram

Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons

15:31 *Despised the word* – These words are used about David’s sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:9,10). But God’s grace is such that even in this case, when David deserved to die for knowingly doing wrong, still a way was found for David to live. We are all in essence in the same situation, for our sins are often knowingly done.

15:35 *Outside the camp* – Heb. 13:12 stresses that the Lord Jesus died in the same place, outside the camp of God’s people. Although Jesus never sinned, in His time of dying He so closely identified with condemned sinners that even in our moments of sin He can still identify with us (Gal. 3:13).

15:38 People touched the hem of Jesus’ garment, the fringes mentioned here, in search of healing (Mt. 9:20; 14:36). By doing so, they were recognizing that their healing was possible because of His righteous obedience to the Father’s commandments. His power to heal has a basis – not merely that He is powerful of Himself, but because of His moral obedience.

of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; ² and they rose up before Moses with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation, men called to lead the assembly, men of renown. ³ They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said to them, You take too much on yourself, since all the congregation are holy, each one of them, and Yahweh is among them. Why then lift yourselves up above the assembly of Yahweh? ⁴ When Moses heard it, he fell on his face, ⁵ and he spoke to Korah and to all his company, saying, In the morning Yahweh will show who are His, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him. Even him whom He shall choose He will cause to come near to Him. ⁶ Do this: take censers, Korah, and all his company, ⁷ and put fire in them, and put incense on them before Yahweh tomorrow; and it shall be that the man whom Yahweh chooses, he shall be holy. You have gone too far, you sons of Levi! ⁸ Moses said to Korah, Hear now, you sons of Levi! ⁹ Is it a small thing to you, that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near

to Himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of Yahweh, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them; ¹⁰ and that He has brought you near, and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you? Do you seek the priesthood also? ¹¹ Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against Yahweh; and Aaron, who is he that you murmur against him? ¹² Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; and they said, We won't come up. ¹³ Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, but you must also make yourself a prince over us? ¹⁴ Moreover you haven't brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We won't come up. ¹⁵ Moses was very angry, and said to Yahweh, Don't respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, neither have I hurt one of them. ¹⁶ Moses said to Korah, You and all your company go before Yahweh, you, and they, and Aaron, tomorrow; ¹⁷ and let each man take his censer, and put incense on them, and each man bring before Yahweh

16:9 They didn't consider servanthood within the family of God to be a very great honour; they wanted leadership and personal honour from those they would be over. This is the great paradox, the acme of humility, that serving is actually an honour. But there are so few who really grasp this. Leadership, like respect, is something which can never be demanded nor sought after if we are truly God's people. Notice that to serve others in God's family is to come "near to [God] Himself".

16:16 *Moses was very angry* – Yet he was the humblest man on planet earth at the time (12:3). Anger isn't advisable for us, as it can easily lead us into sin; but of itself, anger isn't necessarily incompatible with humility.

his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; you also and Aaron, each his censer. ¹⁸ They each took his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood at the door of the Tent of Meeting with Moses and Aaron. ¹⁹ Korah assembled all the congregation against them to the door of the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Yahweh appeared to all the congregation. ²⁰ Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ²¹ Separate yourselves from among this congregation that I may consume them in a moment! ²² They fell on their faces, and said, God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will You be angry with all the congregation? ²³ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ Speak to the congregation, saying, ‘Get away from around the tent of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram!’ ²⁵ Moses rose up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. ²⁶ He spoke to the congregation, saying, Depart, I beg you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins! ²⁷ So they went away from

the tent of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side; and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood at the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little ones. ²⁸ Moses said, Hereby you shall know that Yahweh has sent me to do all these works; for they are not from my own mind. ²⁹ If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then Yahweh hasn’t sent me. ³⁰ But if Yahweh make a new thing, and the ground open its mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain to them, and they go down alive into Sheol; then you shall understand that these men have despised Yahweh. ³¹ It happened, as he made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground split apart that was under them; ³² and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who appertained to Korah, and all their goods. ³³ So they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into Sheol; and the earth closed on them, and they perished from among the assembly.

16:22 *Shall one man sin* – It’s clear from the record in this chapter that the architect of the rebellion was Korah, the “one man” whom Moses referred to (see too :40,49; Jude 11). But he influenced others to sin, and they were still guilty for their sin. Although God doesn’t count people as guilty merely by association, He expects us not to identify ourselves with sinful behaviour – hence verses 23-25 are God’s response to Moses’ concern that God might be indiscriminately applying the unfair principle of ‘guilt by association’.

16:32 *All the men who appertained to Korah* – Korah’s sons didn’t die (26:11); they separated themselves from their father and his supporters in time. There are times when our loyalty to the Lord will result in us having to experience some kind of separation from family members who choose not to go the Lord’s way; Jesus foretold this would happen frequently (Mt. 10:34-37).

³⁴ All Israel that were around them fled at their cry; for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up! ³⁵ Fire came forth from Yahweh, and devoured the two hundred and fifty men who offered the incense. ³⁶ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁷ Speak to Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter the fire yonder, for they are holy, ³⁸ even the censers of these sinners against their own lives. Let them be made beaten plates for a covering of the altar; for they offered them before Yahweh, therefore they are holy; and they shall be a sign to the children of Israel. ³⁹ Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burnt had offered, and they beat them out for a covering of the altar, ⁴⁰ to be a memorial to the children of Israel, to the end that no stranger, who isn't of the seed of Aaron, comes near to burn incense before Yahweh; that he not be as Korah, and as his company - as Yahweh spoke to him by Moses. ⁴¹ But on the next day all the congregation of the

children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, You have killed Yahweh's people! ⁴² It happened, when the congregation was assembled against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the Tent of Meeting; and behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of Yahweh appeared. ⁴³ Moses and Aaron came to the front of the Tent of Meeting. ⁴⁴ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ⁴⁵ Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment! They fell on their faces. ⁴⁶ Moses said to Aaron, Take your censer, and put fire from off the altar in it, and lay incense on it, and carry it quickly to the congregation, and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from Yahweh! The plague has begun. ⁴⁷ Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and behold, the plague has begun among the people: and he put on the incense, and made atonement for the people. ⁴⁸ He stood between the dead and the living, and the plague

16:34 These people who “were around them” were saved by grace, considering the warning of :24-26, that whoever stood near those men would also perish. All the time in the Old Testament we are seeing examples of people breaking God’s law and yet being saved by grace.

16:38 The example of sinners from previous generations ought to be a warning to us. Asaph in Psalm 73 explains how he struggled with the fact that sinners appear to have a blessed life and the righteous suffer; but when he entered the sanctuary, “then understood I their end” (Ps. 73:17), probably a reference to him beholding the plates on the altar made from the censers of these sinners.

16:46 Again we see Moses acting on his own initiative to persuade God to change His intended plan. Moses and Aaron could only have brought about this change of mind in God by intense, fervent prayer and desire – and it was for people who had just tacitly supported a revolution against them. No matter how much we are slandered and manipulated against by our brethren, they are still God’s people and we should respect them and intercede for them as that.

was stayed. ⁴⁹ Now those who died by the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, besides those who died about the matter of Korah. ⁵⁰ Aaron returned to Moses to the door of the Tent of Meeting, and the plague was stayed.

CHAPTER 17 Apr. 3

God Confirms His Choice of Aaron

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Speak to the children of Israel, and take of them rods, one for each father's house, of all their princes according to their fathers' families, twelve rods. Write every man's name on his rod. ³ You shall write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi; for there shall be one rod for each head of their fathers' families. ⁴ You shall lay them up in the Tent of Meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you. ⁵ It shall happen, that the rod of the man whom I shall choose shall bud; and I will make to cease from Me the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against you. ⁶ Moses spoke to the children of Israel; and all their princes gave him rods, for each prince one, according to their fathers' families, even twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was among their rods. ⁷ Moses laid

up the rods before Yahweh in the tent of the testimony. ⁸ It happened on the next day that Moses went into the tent of the testimony, and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and put forth buds, and produced blossoms, and bore ripe almonds. ⁹ Moses brought out all the rods from before Yahweh to all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod. ¹⁰ Yahweh said to Moses, Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the children of rebellion; that you may make an end of their murmurings against me, that they not die. ¹¹ Moses did so. As Yahweh commanded him, so he did. ¹² The children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, Behold, we perish! We are undone! We are all undone! ¹³ Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of Yahweh, dies! Will we all perish?

CHAPTER 18 Apr. 3

The Allowance for the Priests to Eat the Sacrifices

Yahweh said to Aaron, You and your sons and your fathers' house with you shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; and you and your sons with you shall bear the

17:5 Their murmuring against Moses was a murmuring against God; our attitude to our brethren is our attitude to God.

17:8 The language of budding, blossoming and bearing fruit is used in Is. 27:6 about all Israel. The initial hearers of Isaiah's words would have thought back to how Aaron's rod budded, blossomed and bore fruit as a sign that God had chosen that family and not all Israel. However, Is. 27:6 makes it clear that God's ideal intention was that all Israel would be a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6). This came to fulfilment in essence with the end of the Levitical priesthood and the establishment of all those in Christ as a new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5).

iniquity of your priesthood. ² Your brothers also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, bring near with you, that they may be joined to you, and minister to you; but you and your sons with you shall be before the tent of the testimony. ³ They shall keep your commands, and the duty of all the Tent; only they shall not come near to the vessels of the sanctuary and to the altar, that they not die, neither they, nor you. ⁴ They shall be joined to you, and keep the responsibility of the Tent of Meeting, for all the service of the Tent, and a stranger shall not come near to you. ⁵ You shall perform the duty of the sanctuary, and the duty of the altar, that there be no more wrath on the children of Israel. ⁶ I, behold, I have taken your brothers the Levites from among the children of Israel. To you they are given as a gift, given to Yahweh, to do the service of the Tent of Meeting. ⁷ You and your sons with you shall keep your priesthood for everything of the altar, and for that within the veil; and you shall serve. I give you the priesthood as a gift, and the stranger who comes near shall be put to death. ⁸ Yahweh spoke to Aaron, I, behold, I have given you

the responsibility for My wave offerings, even all the holy things of the children of Israel. To you have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to your sons, as a portion forever. ⁹ This shall be yours of the most holy things from the fire: every offering of theirs, even every grain offering of theirs, and every sin offering of theirs, and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render to Me, shall be most holy for you and for your sons. ¹⁰ You shall eat of it like the most holy things. Every male shall eat of it. It shall be holy to you. ¹¹ This is yours, too: the wave offering of their gift, even all the wave offerings of the children of Israel. I have given them to you, and to your sons and to your daughters with you, as a portion forever. Everyone who is clean in your house shall eat of it. ¹² All the best of the oil and all the best of the vintage and of the grain, the first fruits of them which they give to Yahweh, to you have I given them. ¹³ The first-ripe fruits of all that is in their land which they bring to Yahweh shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house shall eat of it. ¹⁴ Everything devoted in Israel shall be yours. ¹⁵ Every-

18:6 The Levites were given to God, through having been given to the priests. What we give to God's people we give to God (see too on 17:5). Constantly we are being taught to see God as manifest in His people, and to treat them appropriately.

18:7 Serving God is presented as an honour, a gift from God (see on 16:9). Although the Levites had no physical land inheritance amongst the people of Israel, this was compensated for by being given the gift of serving God. Of course, this would only have been perceived as a gift by the more spiritually minded. We are to see service to God even in repetitive things as a gift we have been given to do.

18:11 The theme of giving gifts continues; what was given as a gift to God, He gave as a gift to the priests. See on :6.

thing that opens the womb, of all flesh which they offer to Yahweh, both of man and animal shall be yours; nevertheless you shall surely redeem the firstborn of man, and you shall redeem the firstborn of unclean animals. ¹⁶ You shall redeem those who are to be redeemed of them from a month old, according to your estimation, for five shekels of money, after the shekel of the sanctuary (the same is twenty gerahs). ¹⁷ But you shall not redeem the firstborn of a cow, or the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat. They are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar, and shall burn their fat for an offering made by fire, for a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. ¹⁸ Their flesh shall be yours, as the wave offering breast and as the right thigh, it shall be yours. ¹⁹ All the wave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel give to Yahweh, have I given you and your sons and your daughters with you as a portion forever. It is a covenant of salt

forever before Yahweh to you and to your seed with you.

The Tithe

²⁰ Yahweh said to Aaron, You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel. ²¹ To the children of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, even the service of the Tent of Meeting. ²² Henceforth the children of Israel shall not come near the Tent of Meeting, lest they bear sin, and die. ²³ But the Levites shall do the service of the Tent of Meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. ²⁴ For the tithe of the children of Israel, which they offer as a wave offering to Yahweh, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said

18:20 *I am your portion and your inheritance* – The Levites had no land nor great material wealth to leave to their children; but they had this unique relationship with God to pass on. Jeremiah in depression, having lost all he had, concludes that God is his portion (Lam. 3:24), clearly alluding to this verse. Even if materially we lose all we have – our relationship with God is our true portion and inheritance, which we will eternally receive in the Kingdom. The writers of the Psalms, some of whom like David weren't Levites, could use the same Hebrew word to describe how God was their "portion" and inheritance (Ps. 16:5; 73:26; 119:57; 142:5). This should be our self-perception, whether or not we leave any material inheritance to anyone or not. Not for us the obsession with building up ownership of property, under the excuse we want to leave something to our children. Our service of God and His people is our inheritance, which we shall eternally receive back at the resurrection and the time of the Kingdom of God on earth. The priests and Levites were provided with enough to eat, but no great wealth. So it should be for all full time servants in God's house. By contrast, the priests of the surrounding tribes were generally more wealthy than the other people, and owned land, which was seen as especially holy (see Gen. 47:22).

to them, ‘Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance’.²⁵ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,²⁶ Moreover you shall speak to the Levites, and tell them, ‘When you take of the children of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall offer up a wave offering of it for Yahweh, a tithe of the tithe.’²⁷ Your wave offering shall be reckoned to you, as though it were the grain of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the winepress.²⁸ Thus you also shall offer a wave offering to Yahweh of all your tithes, which you receive of the children of Israel; and of it you shall give Yahweh’s wave offering to Aaron the priest.²⁹ Out of all your gifts you shall offer every wave offering of Yahweh, of all its best, even the holy part of it out of it’.³⁰ Therefore you shall tell them, ‘When you heave its best from it, then it shall be reck-

oned to the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the winepress.’³¹ You shall eat it in every place, you and your households; for it is your reward in return for your service in the Tent of Meeting.³² You shall bear no sin by reason of it, when you have heaved from it the best of it, and you shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel, that you not die’.

CHAPTER 19 Apr. 4

The Red Heifer

Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,² This is the statute of the law which Yahweh has commanded: Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without spot, in which is no blemish, and which was never yoked.³ You shall give her to Eleazar the priest, and he shall bring her forth outside of the camp, and one

18:26 The Levites numbered 22,000 males over one month old (3:34); they were to receive the tithe of 600,000 grown men from the other tribes (1:46). This may appear to mean that the Levites were to be extremely well provided for. However it’s more likely that this is an example of where God foresaw the likely failure of His people to obey His Law fully, and built into that very Law some provision for this. In this we see His sensitivity to our human failure.

18:30 The tithes were to be paid to the Levites, not the priests. The priests survived by eating the sacrifices made by Israel. It’s therefore incorrect for modern church leaders to demand a tithe be paid to them because they are equivalent of the priests. In any case, we are to be a community of priests (1 Pet. 2:5). The tithes were produce from the land, not money; although seeing money existed in some form, God could have commanded money to be given them. But the tithe was of agricultural produce, simply so that the Levites would have something to eat as they concentrated on God’s service – not in order to make them wealthy.

19:2 This sacrifice was to provide purification from death through its ashes, which were to be mixed with water (:9), perhaps the running water from the rock, which water followed them through the wilderness – for what other source of “running [Heb. ‘springing’] water” (:17) could they have had in the wilderness? It speaks very clearly of Christ’s death; for He was without blemish and never came under the yoke of sin;

shall kill her before his face. ⁴ Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle her blood toward the front of the Tent of Meeting seven times. ⁵ One shall burn the heifer in his sight: her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn; ⁶ and the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer. ⁷ Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the evening. ⁸ He who burns her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the evening. ⁹ A man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up outside of the camp in a clean place; and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water for impurity. It is a sin offering. ¹⁰ He who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening. It shall be to the children of Israel, and to the stranger who lives as a foreigner among them, for a statute forever. ¹¹ He who touches the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. ¹² The same shall purify himself with water on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean; but if

he doesn't purify himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. ¹³ Whoever touches a dead person, the body of a man who has died, and doesn't purify himself, defiles the tent of Yahweh; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet on him. ¹⁴ This is the law when a man dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent, and everyone who is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. ¹⁵ Every open vessel, which has no covering bound on it, is unclean. ¹⁶ Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain with a sword, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. ¹⁷ For the unclean they shall take of the ashes of the burning of the sin offering; and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: ¹⁸ and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent, and on all the vessels, and on the persons who were there, and on him who touched the bone, or the slain, or the dead, or the grave. ¹⁹ The clean person shall sprinkle on the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day, and on the seventh day he shall purify him; and he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at evening. ²⁰ But the man

He too was killed outside the camp of Israel (:3 cp. Heb. 13:12). Heb. 9:13 specifically alludes to how the ashes of this heifer were typical of Christ's sacrifice.

19:6 *Wood, and hyssop, and scarlet* – All associated with the crucifixion of Christ.

19:13 The sacrifice of the red heifer, like that of Christ, became meaningful and effective for the individual when mixed with water, which could suggest our need to appropriate the sacrifice of Christ to ourselves through baptism.

who shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of Yahweh. The water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him: he is unclean. ²¹ It shall be a perpetual statute to them. He who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening. ²² Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the soul that touches it shall be unclean until evening.

CHAPTER 20 Apr. 5

Moses and Aaron Strike the Rock and Are Punished

The children of Israel, even the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month; and the people stayed in Kadesh. Miriam died there, and was buried there. ² There was no water for the congregation. They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. ³ The people strove with Moses and spoke, saying,

We wish that we had died when our brothers died before Yahweh! ⁴ Why have you brought the assembly of Yahweh into this wilderness that we should die there, we and our animals? ⁵ Why have you made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in to this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink. ⁶ Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the Tent of Meeting, and fell on their faces, and the glory of Yahweh appeared to them. ⁷ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ⁸ Take the rod and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it give forth its water; and you shall bring forth to them water out of the rock; so you shall give the congregation and their livestock drink. ⁹ Moses took the rod from before Yahweh as He commanded him. ¹⁰ Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock and he said to them, Hear now, you rebels; shall we bring water out of this rock for you?

19:21 *Perpetual statute* – The implication is that this process of cleansing from the results of death was to be permanent; but the whole style of the command for Eleazar to kill the red heifer in :2,3 sounds as if only one red heifer was killed for all time. There is no command as to continuing to kill a red heifer, nor by whom or how often it should be done. The record may be framed to present the result of the red heifer's sacrifice as if it were eternal, clearly typifying Christ's sacrifice. Another option is that this entire ritual is to be understood in the context of the death of so many Israelites in the rebellion described in chapter 16. Chapters 17 and 18 provide the answer to the peoples' concerns arising out of that incident, and chapter 19 may also be in that context – describing how to avoid defilement by all the dead bodies which died in the plague.

20:6 When faced with unreasonable criticism and aggression, even from those amongst the people of God, our response should be not to argue back immediately, but take the situation to God.

¹¹ Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his rod twice: and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. ¹² Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, Because you didn't believe in Me, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them. ¹³ These are the waters of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with Yahweh, and He was sanctified in them.

Edom Refuses Israel Passage

¹⁴ Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying: Thus says your brother Israel: 'You know all the travail that has happened to us: ¹⁵ how our fathers went down into Egypt, and we lived in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and our fathers: ¹⁶ and when we cried to Yahweh, He heard our voice, and sent an angel, and brought

us forth out of Egypt; and behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost extremity of your border. ¹⁷ Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or through vineyard, neither will we drink of the water of the wells. We will go along the king's highway. We will not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed your border. ¹⁸ Edom said to him, You shall not pass through me, lest I come out with the sword against you. ¹⁹ The children of Israel said to him, We will go up by the highway; and if we drink of your water, I and my livestock, then will I give its price. Let me only, without doing anything else, pass through on my feet. ²⁰ He said, You shall not pass through. Edom came out against him with many people, and with a strong hand. ²¹ Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border, so Israel turned away from him.

20:11 Moses had previously struck the rock and water came out (Ex. 17:6), but this time he was asked to speak to it – yet instead, he struck it. He became over familiar with God, assuming he could do as he wished without careful respect for God's word. He failed to believe in the power of the spoken word (:12), effectively he rebelled against the commandment (27:14); he assumed that detailed obedience wasn't necessary to God's commandment; and he gave the impression that he rather than God was giving the water ("shall we bring you water...?", :10). One angry sentence can reveal so much about our attitudes. Moses had earlier asked that he be excluded from entering the land so that Israel might enter (Ex. 32:32 – see note there). In a strange way, that prayer was heard. Although Moses sinned, repeatedly we read that he didn't himself enter the land for Israel's sake (Dt. 1:37; 3:26; 4:21). They are blamed for provoking him to speak poorly (Ps. 106:33). God works through our sins in a strange way; and what we ask for in prayer, we have a way of receiving, in essence.

20:12 Although Moses didn't believe in God as he should have done, God still did the miracle. He is prepared to accept even imperfect faith.

20:21 Soon after this incident, Israel were commanded not to despise an Edomite (Dt. 23:7) – although this is just what Edom had done to them. We aren't to treat others as they treat us, but leave their judgment with God. These incidents took place in the 40th

The Death of Aaron

²² They travelled from Kadesh; and the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, came to Mount Hor. ²³ Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor, by the border of the land of Edom, saying, ²⁴ Aaron shall be gathered to his people; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah. ²⁵ Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; ²⁶ and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron shall be taken, and shall die there. ²⁷ Moses did as Yahweh commanded; and they went up into Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. ²⁸ Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain; and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. ²⁹ When all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they wept for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel.

CHAPTER 21 Apr. 5**The Bronze Serpent**

The Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the South, heard tell that Israel came by the way of Atharim; and he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive. ² Israel vowed a vow to Yahweh, and said, If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. ³ Yahweh listened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. The name of the place was called Hormah. ⁴ They travelled from Mount Hor by the way to the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom; and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. ⁵ The people spoke against God, and against Moses, Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, and there is no water; and our soul loathes this light bread. ⁶ Yahweh sent fiery snakes among the people, and they bit the people; and many people of Israel died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, We

year of their wanderings (33:38), and the commands of Deuteronomy were given at the same time.

21:2 *Then I will utterly destroy their cities* – But it was in any case a command to “utterly destroy” the Canaanites (Dt. 7:2; 12:2; 20:17). We shouldn’t consider that which is our duty to do as some kind of special dedication to God which deserves His reward. But so eager is God for relationship with His people that He all the same agreed (:3).

21:4 *By the way to the Red Sea* – Their route took them back on themselves at this point, heading back towards Egypt. This may have been the psychological trigger for their desire to be back in Egypt (:5). We must try to avoid things and situations which may stimulate a desire to leave the way to the Kingdom and return to the world.

21:7 *Moses prayed for the people* – Previously in such situations, God had just accepted Moses’ prayer. But now He asked the people to additionally make some personal effort to demonstrate their faith. Quickly dashing off a request for Christ’s mediation

have sinned, because we have spoken against Yahweh, and against you. Pray to Yahweh, that He take away the serpents from us. Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ Yahweh said to Moses, Make a fiery snake, and set it on an ensign pole; and it shall happen, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks to it, shall live. ⁹ Moses made a snake of brass, and set it on the ensign pole; and it happened, that if a snake had bitten any man, when he looked toward the snake of brass, he lived.

The Journeys of Israel

¹⁰ The children of Israel travelled, and encamped in Oboth. ¹¹ They

travelled from Oboth, and encamped at Iyeabarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sunrise. ¹² From there they travelled, and encamped in the valley of Zered. ¹³ From there they travelled, and encamped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness, that comes out of the border of the Amorites (for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites). ¹⁴ Therefore it is said in the book of the Wars of Yahweh, Vaheb in Suphah, the valleys of the Arnon, ¹⁵ the slope of the valleys that incline toward the dwelling of Ar, leans on the border of Moab. ¹⁶ From there

in the case of sin may sometimes be met by God seeking to convict us more deeply of our sin and asking us to make some more concrete effort.

21:8 This is interpreted in Jn. 3:14-16 as a symbol of Christ lifted up on the pole at His death; looking toward the snake is seen as faith in Him; and healing from the snake bite as eternal life. This is another reason for thinking that the ‘cross’ of Christ wasn’t as traditionally understood; the Greek word *stauros* translated “cross” means a tree trunk or pole. The snake was a symbol of sin – but it was as it were dead in Christ. As He hung there, He was so deeply identified with our sins (despite never sinning personally) that a snake can legitimately be used as a symbol for Him there. We are in the position of the Israelites feeling the poisonous venom rising within them, knowing they had limited time left in this life, recognizing they had indeed sinned and deserved death and yet didn’t wish to die. In an encampment of over three million people living in single storey dwellings, i.e. tents, it would have taken some people several kilometres walk to get to the bronze snake. To walk when you have been bitten by a snake is dangerous; you shouldn’t let your heart work any more than necessary so that the venom isn’t spread. So they were commanded to do that which is counter-instinctive, what is totally against worldly wisdom and sense. Our faith in Christ is similar. But it could be that the people were told about the existence of the bronze snake, and had to look toward it in faith from where they were, believing it was there, although not seeing it. This would be similar to our faith in Christ’s death. We didn’t see it, there is no physical representation of it within our sight, but we look to it from far away in time, space and understanding, and believe it was there – and believe that really, 2000 years ago, on a day in April, on a Friday afternoon, on a hill outside Jerusalem, it really did happen. We can imagine the relief of the people as they felt the temperature subside, the fever go; and their gratitude afterwards, their eager vowing to give their saved lives to God and not rebel again. These should be our emotions as we reflect on our salvation in Christ.

they travelled to Beer; that is the well of which Yahweh said to Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. ¹⁷ Then sang Israel this song: Spring up, O well; sing to it: ¹⁸ the well, which the princes dug, which the nobles of the people dug, with the sceptre, and with their poles. From the wilderness they travelled to Mattanah; ¹⁹ and from Mattanah to Nahaliel; and from Nahaliel to Bamoth; ²⁰ and from Bamoth to the valley that is in the field of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looks down on the desert ²¹ Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, ²² Let me pass through your land. We will not turn aside into field, or into vineyard; we will not drink of the water of the wells; we will go by the king's highway, until we have passed your border. ²³ Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his border; but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness, and came to Jahaz; and he fought against Israel. ²⁴ Israel struck him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, even to the children of Ammon; for the border of the children of Ammon was strong. ²⁵ Israel took all these cities; and Israel lived in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all its towns. ²⁶ For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even to the Arnon. ²⁷ Therefore those who speak in proverbs say, Come to Heshbon.

Let the city of Sihon be built and established; ²⁸ for a fire has gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon. It has devoured Ar of Moab, The lords of the high places of the Arnon. ²⁹ Woe to you, Moab! You are undone, people of Chemosh! He has given his sons as fugitives, and his daughters into captivity, to Sihon king of the Amorites. ³⁰ We have shot at them. Heshbon has perished even to Dibon. We have laid waste even to Nophah, which reaches to Medeba. ³¹ Thus Israel lived in the land of the Amorites. ³² Moses sent to spy out Jazer; and they took its towns, and drove out the Amorites who were there. ³³ They turned and went up by the way of Bashan; and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. ³⁴ Yahweh said to Moses, Don't fear him; for I have delivered him into your hand, and all his people, and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon. ³⁵ So they struck him, and his sons and all his people, until there was none left him remaining; and they possessed his land.

CHAPTER 22 Apr. 6

Balak Encourages Balaam to Curse Israel

The children of Israel travelled, and encamped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho. ² Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. ³ Moab was very afraid of the people, because they were many; and

Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. ⁴ Moab said to the elders of Midian, Now this multitude will lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field. Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time. ⁵ He sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, to Pethor, which is by the River, to the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people who came out from Egypt. Behold, they cover the surface of the earth, and they are staying opposite me. ⁶ Please come now therefore and curse this people for me; for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall prevail, that we may strike them, and that I may drive them out of the land; for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed. ⁷ The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards for the divination in their hand; and they came to Ba-

laam, and spoke to him the words of Balak. ⁸ He said to them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as Yahweh shall speak to me. The princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. ⁹ God came to Balaam and said, Who are these men with you? ¹⁰ Balaam said to God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has said to me, ¹¹ ‘Behold, the people that has come out of Egypt, it covers the surface of the earth. Now, come curse me them; perhaps I shall be able to fight against them, and shall drive them out’. ¹² God said to Balaam, You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people; for they are blessed. ¹³ Balaam rose up in the morning, and said to the princes of Balak, Go to your land; for Yahweh refuses to permit me to go with you. ¹⁴ The princes of Moab rose up, and they went to Balak, and said, Balaam refuses to come with us. ¹⁵ Balak sent yet again princes, more, and

22:3 The fear of the tribes surrounding Israel is stressed in the record, yet Israel were so fearful of *them*. The obstacles to our inheriting the Kingdom aren't as insurmountable as they appear.

22:7 The simple lesson is that God's blessing is one of those things which money can't buy.

22:8 *Lodge here this night* – He should surely have immediately sent them away. He knew that whoever cursed Abraham's seed would be cursed, and had had experience of this (:6; Gen. 12:3). The longer we keep the possibility of sinning before us, the more likely it is that we shall fall into it.

22:9 *Who are these men with you?* – God knew. It was a rhetorical question, designed to make Balaam reflect that here in his home he had the enemies of God's people. God likewise at times makes us stop and think, sometimes making us put into words out loud the situation we are really in.

22:13 *Yahweh refuses to permit me to go with you* – There's a hint of resentment against God here; and Balaam should've told them direct that he was not going to curse God's people. It's rather like us excusing ourselves from doing something sinful by telling people that our “stupid religion” doesn't allow it – rather than personally identifying ourselves with the reason why we will not do it.

more honourable than they. ¹⁶ They came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus says Balak the son of Zippor, ‘Please let nothing hinder you from coming to me: ¹⁷ for I will promote you to very great honour, and whatever you say to me I will do. Please come therefore, and curse this people for me’. ¹⁸ Balaam answered the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I can’t go beyond the word of Yahweh my God, to do less or more. ¹⁹ Now therefore, please wait also here this night, that I may know what Yahweh will speak to me more. ²⁰ God came to Balaam at night, and said to him, If the men have come to call you, rise up, go with them; but only the word which I speak to you, that you shall do. ²¹ Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his don-

key, and went with the princes of Moab. ²² God’s anger was kindled because he went; and the angel of Yahweh placed himself in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. ²³ The donkey saw the angel of Yahweh standing in the way, with his sword drawn in his hand; and the donkey turned aside out of the way, and went into the field. Balaam struck the donkey, to turn her into the way. ²⁴ Then the angel of Yahweh stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. ²⁵ The donkey saw the angel of Yahweh, and she thrust herself to the wall, and crushed Balaam’s foot against the wall; and he struck her again. ²⁶ The angel of Yahweh went further, and stood in

22:19 *Please wait also here this night* – Clearly Balaam wanted to go with them, because he loved the idea of getting the promised wealth (2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11). If he had sent them away immediately, the spiritual crisis would’ve passed. But instead, God confirmed Balaam in the sinful way he wished to go – for He now permitted Balaam to go with them, but to only speak His word (:20). By going with them – and it was a very long journey – Balaam was going deeper into temptation. This is an example of how whilst the process of temptation is internal (James 1:13-15), God can lead sinful people further into situations of temptation if this is what they wish in their hearts. Hence we should pray that God will not lead *us* into temptation (Mt. 6:13). Hence God was angry with Balaam because he went (:22), even though God told him to go (:20) – God led him further into temptation, but was angered that Balaam went that way.

22:22 *For an adversary* – The Hebrew word for adversary is “satan”. Good people, Angels, even God Himself, can be ‘satans’ or adversaries. ‘Satan’ carries no bad connotation of itself as a word; it has been loaded with this meaning by the wrong idea that there is a personal ‘satan’ out in the cosmos who is in radical opposition to God. This isn’t a Biblical idea.

22:24 The two times Balaam faces the Angel, albeit unknowingly, refer to the two times that Balak’s messengers had come to him. Balaam didn’t see God in it all; and he was angry with the donkey for perceiving God in a situation where he himself couldn’t perceive God.

22:26 The New Testament describes Balaam as rushing headlong on this journey, run-

a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. ²⁷ The donkey saw the angel of Yahweh, and she lay down under Balaam; and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff. ²⁸ Yahweh opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times? ²⁹ Balaam said to the donkey, Because you have mocked me, I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would have killed you. ³⁰ The donkey said to Balaam, Am I not your donkey, on which you have ridden all your life long to this day? Was I ever in the habit of doing so to you? He said, No. ³¹ Then Yahweh opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of Yahweh standing in the way, with his sword drawn in his hand; and he bowed his head, and fell on his face. ³² The angel of Yahweh said to him, Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come forth as an adversary, because your way is perverse before me: ³³ and the donkey saw me, and turned aside before me these three times. Unless

she had turned aside from me, surely now I would have killed you, and saved her alive. ³⁴ Balaam said to the angel of Yahweh, I have sinned; for I didn't know that you stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it displeases you, I will go back again. ³⁵ The angel of Yahweh said to Balaam, Go with the men; but only the word that I shall speak to you, that you shall speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. ³⁶ When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him to the City of Moab, which is on the border of the Arnon, which is in the utmost part of the border. ³⁷ Balak said to Balaam, Didn't I earnestly send to you to call you? Why didn't you come to me? Am I not able indeed to promote you to honour? ³⁸ Balaam said to Balak, Behold, I have come to you. Have I now any power at all to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that shall I speak. ³⁹ Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath Huzoth. ⁴⁰ Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes who were with him. ⁴¹ It happened in the morning, that Balak took Balaam, and brought

ning greedily for the money (Jude 11), in "madness" (2 Pet. 2:15). This is the effect which the hope of wealth can have upon people.

22:29 *I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would have killed you* – Moments later, Balaam sees the Angel with a sword in his hand, thinking of killing him, but refraining by grace. God was trying to teach Balaam that He is indeed gracious.

22:34 *If it displeases you, I will go back again* – Still Balaam doesn't get it. Surely he knew his journey was displeasing to God. Sometimes people are pulled up by God in their path – and still they refuse to understand. They are blinded by the immediate rather than seeing God's perspective.

22:35 Again God leads him further into temptation, seeing he didn't himself decide to return home. God was pushing him onwards down the destructive road he so eagerly chose to go.

him up into the high places of Baal; and he saw from there the utmost part of the people.

CHAPTER 23 Apr. 6

Balaam Blesses Israel

Balaam said to Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bulls and seven rams. ² Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bull and a ram. ³ Balaam said to Balak, Stand by your burnt offering, and I will go. Perhaps Yahweh will come to meet me; and whatever He shows me I will tell you. He went to a bare height. ⁴ God met Balaam, and he said to Him, I have prepared the seven altars, and I have offered up a bull and a ram on every altar. ⁵ Yahweh put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return to Balak, and thus you shall speak. ⁶ He returned to him, and behold, he was standing by his burnt offering, he, and all the princes of Moab. ⁷ He took up his parable, and said, From Aram has Balak brought me, the king of Moab from the mountains of the East. Come, curse Jacob for me, come, defy Israel. ⁸ How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? How shall I defy whom Yahweh has not defied? ⁹ For from the top of the rocks I see him, from the hills I see him; behold,

it is a people that dwells alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. ¹⁰ Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous! Let my last end be like his! ¹¹ Balak said to Balaam, What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have blessed them altogether. ¹² He answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which Yahweh puts in my mouth? ¹³ Balak said to him, Please come with me to another place, where you may see them. You shall see but the utmost part of them, and shall not see them all; and curse me them from there. ¹⁴ He took him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered up a bull and a ram on every altar. ¹⁵ He said to Balak, Stand here by your burnt offering, while I meet over there. ¹⁶ Yahweh met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Return to Balak, and say this. ¹⁷ He came to him, and behold, he was standing by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. Balak said to him, What has Yahweh spoken? ¹⁸ He took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear! Listen to Me, you son of Zippor. ¹⁹ God is not a man, that He should lie, nor the son of man, that

23:12 Clearly Balaam didn't want to say the words he did. The process of Divine inspiration means that men spoke God's word even against their will; they were moved, carried along, by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:15,16). The Bible is therefore not the words of men but those of God, and the fact some of those who gave the original words did so *against their own will* – and Balaam would be a classic example – is proof that it is indeed the word of God and not of men.

23:19 *Change His mind* – God does change His mind about some things due to His

He should change His mind. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? ²⁰ Behold, I have received a command to bless. He has blessed, and I can't reverse it. ²¹ He has not seen iniquity in Jacob, neither has He seen perverseness in Israel. Yahweh his God is with him, the shout of a king is among them. ²² God brings them out of Egypt, he has as it were the strength of the wild ox. ²³ Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob; neither is there any divination possible against Israel. Now it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What has God done! ²⁴ Behold, the people rises up as a lioness, as a lion he lifts himself up. He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drinks the blood of the slain. ²⁵ Balak said to Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all. ²⁶ But Balaam answered Balak, Didn't I tell you, saying, 'All that Yahweh speaks, that I must do?' ²⁷ Balak said to Balaam, Come now, I will take you to another place; perhaps it will please God that

you may curse me them from there. ²⁸ Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, that looks down on the desert. ²⁹ Balaam said to Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bulls and seven rams. ³⁰ Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered up a bull and a ram on every altar.

CHAPTER 24 Apr. 7

Balaam Continues to Bless Israel and Speaks of their Messiah

When Balaam perceived that it pleased Yahweh to bless Israel, he didn't go as at the other times to meet with enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. ² Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel dwelling according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came on him. ³ He took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor says, the man whose eye was closed says; ⁴ he says, who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, and having his eyes open: ⁵ How beautiful are your

great sensitivity to His people; but He will not change His basic love for them (Mal. 3:6). He will not arbitrarily decide now to curse His beloved people.

Has He spoken, and will He not make it good? – God had promised to give His people the promised land, as He has promised to give us the Kingdom, and there is no way He will renege on that promise.

23:21 *He has not seen iniquity in Jacob* – There was indeed much iniquity in Jacob – notice how Jacob's old name is used rather than the new name, Israel. They took with them the gods of Egypt, and the tabernacle of another god as well as that of Yahweh (Acts 7:43). But God did not 'see' that sin; this is an Old Testament presentiment of the 'imputed righteousness' of which Paul speaks in the New Testament. God doesn't count sin, doesn't 'see' it, in His people; for this really is what love is about, seeing someone in a positive light and not imputing their weakness to them.

23:26 *Didn't I tell you* – Again there is a resentment in Balaam, repeating God's word to others but not personally identifying with it, bemoaning the limitations of it.

24:5 *How beautiful are your tents, Jacob* – God is described in the prophets as being

tents, Jacob, and your tents, Israel!
 6 As valleys they are spread forth, as gardens by the riverside, as aloes which Yahweh has planted, as cedar trees beside the waters. 7 Water shall flow from his buckets, his seed shall be in many waters, his king shall be higher than Agag; his kingdom shall be exalted. 8 God brings him out of Egypt; he has as it were the strength of the wild ox. He shall eat up the nations his adversaries, shall break their bones in pieces and pierce them with his arrows. 9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, as a lioness; who shall rouse him up? Everyone who blesses you is blessed, everyone who curses you is cursed. 10 Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, I called you to curse my enemies, and, behold, you have altogether blessed them these three times. 11 Therefore now flee you to your place! I thought to promote you to great honour; but, behold, Yahweh has kept you back from honour. 12 Balaam said to Balak, Didn't I also tell your messengers whom you sent to me, saying, 13 'If Balak would give me his house full of sil-

ver and gold, I can't go beyond the word of Yahweh, to do either good or bad of my own mind. I will say what Yahweh says?' 14 Now, behold, I go to my people. Come, I will inform you what this people shall do to your people in the latter days. 15 He took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor says, the man whose eye was closed says; 16 he says, who hears the words of God, knows the knowledge of the Most High, and who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, and having his eyes open: 17 I see him, but not now; I see him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob, a sceptre will rise out of Israel, and shall strike through the corners of Moab, and break down all the sons of Sheth. 18 Edom shall be a possession. Seir, his enemies, also shall be a possession, while Israel does valiantly. 19 Out of Jacob shall come one who shall have dominion, and shall destroy the remnant from the city. 20 He looked at Amalek and took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall come to destruction. 21 He looked at the Kenite, and took up his parable and said, Your dwell-

in love with Israel at this time (Ez. 16:8), just as He is with us on our wilderness journey towards His Kingdom. He didn't 'see' their sin (see on 23:21).

24:10 *These three times* – Balaam ought to have perceived that each time he tried to curse Israel and ended up blessing them, it was like him trying those three times to ride his donkey down the lane with God standing in the way to block him. The same phrase “these three times” occurs three times in that record (22:28,32,33).

24:17 This star and sceptre would seem to refer to Israel's Messiah, the Lord Jesus. It seems He will yet win a resounding victory against Israel's Arab enemies, represented here by Moab, and be higher than Agag (:7), or Gog. Ez. 38:1-7 speaks of Christ's latter day conflict with Gog. It seems there will be a final conflict around the time of Christ's return, in which He will finally save Israel from all their surrounding enemies.

ing place is strong, your nest is set in the rock. ²² Nevertheless Kain shall be wasted, until Asshur carries you away captive. ²³ He took up his parable and said, Alas, who shall live when God does this? ²⁴ But ships shall come from the coast of Kittim; they shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber. He also shall come to destruction. ²⁵ Balaam rose up and went and returned to his place, and Balak also went his way.

CHAPTER 25 Apr. 7

Israel Commit Fornication with Moabite Women

Israel stayed in Shittim; and the people began to play the prostitute with the daughters of Moab; ² for they called the people to the sacrifices of their gods; and the people ate, and bowed down to their gods. ³ Israel joined himself to Baal Peor,

and the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel. ⁴ Yahweh said to Moses, Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them up to Yahweh before the sun, that the fierce anger of Yahweh may turn away from Israel. ⁵ Moses said to the judges of Israel, Everyone kill his men who have joined themselves to Baal Peor. ⁶ Behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought to his brothers a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, while they were weeping at the door of the Tent of Meeting. ⁷ When Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest saw it, he rose up from the midst of the congregation, and took a spear in his hand; ⁸ and he went after the man of Israel into the pavilion and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman through

24:25 We learn from 31:16 and Rev. 2:14 that at this time, Balaam advised Balak to entice Israel with Moabite prostitutes, so that the people would be cursed by their God for immorality. The events of chapter 25 were therefore on Balaam's advice. This desperate strategy reflects how headlong was Balaam's desire to receive the wealth promised him, and how he sacrificed the welfare of God's people upon that altar. In essence we can do the same today.

25:3 See on 24:25.

Baal Peor refers to the Baal who was worshipped at the town of Peor, near where they were now encamping (Dt. 3:29; 4:46). Each town and geographical area had its own gods, rather like today there is a geography to religion, different parts of the world or even areas within a country tend to have their local religions. The true God and His Truth is the same worldwide, which allows a unique international bond between those who know Him and are in His Son.

25:5 This command didn't need to be carried out, because Phinehas took the initiative in killing the chief offenders (:7,8) and this act so impressed God that the plague was ended (:11). Here we have an example of how God sets up one plan or purpose, but is prepared to amend or change it according to human initiative suggesting another one, as Moses did several times. We see here therefore how open God is to dialogue, to living relationship with His people.

25:8 The spear connecting Jew and Gentile in death could be seen as pointing forward to the cross of Christ.

her body. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. ⁹ Those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand. ¹⁰ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹¹ Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest has turned My wrath away from the children of Israel, in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them, so that I didn't consume the children of Israel in My jealousy. ¹² Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace: ¹³ and it shall be to him, and to his seed after him, the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was jealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel'. ¹⁴ Now the name of the man of Israel that was slain, who was slain with the Midianite woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a father's house among the Simeonites. ¹⁵ The name of the Midianite woman who was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur: he was head of the people of a fathers' house in Midian. ¹⁶ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁷ Harass the Midianites, and strike them; ¹⁸ for they harassed you with their wives, with which they have deceived you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi the daughter of the prince of Midian

their sister, who was slain on the day of the plague in the matter of Peor.

CHAPTER 26 Apr. 8

A Census Taken

It happened after the plague, that Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, ² Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers' families, all who are able to go forth to war in Israel. ³ Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho saying, ⁴ Take a census, from twenty years old and upward; as Yahweh commanded Moses and the children of Israel. These are those that came out of the land of Egypt: ⁵ Reuben, the firstborn of Israel; the sons of Reuben: of Hanoah, the family of the Hanoahites; of Pallu, the family of the Palluites; ⁶ of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; of Carmi, the family of the Carmites. ⁷ These are the families of the Reubenites; and those who were numbered of them were forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty. ⁸ The sons of Pallu: Eliab. ⁹ The sons of Eliab: Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. These are that

25:11 *Jealous with My jealousy* – God's feelings are to be ours. His colossal love for His people means that He is also therefore jealous over their devotions to any other god.

26:2 This numbering of the people just before they entered the promised land perhaps looks forward to the way that God will be aware of the exact number of those who will enter His Kingdom at the day of judgment when Christ returns. Ps. 87:6 appears to speak of a 'writing up of the people' in the last day.

26:9 *Strove against Moses... strove against Yahweh* – Moses manifested Yahweh and in this sense whatever was done to him was done to Yahweh. This doesn't mean that

Dathan and Abiram, who were renowned in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against Yahweh, ¹⁰ and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died; at which time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men, and they became a sign. ¹¹ Notwithstanding, the sons of Korah didn't die. ¹² The sons of Simeon after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites; of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites; ¹³ of Zerah, the family of the Zerahites; of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. ¹⁴ These are the families of the Simeonites, twenty-two thousand two hundred. ¹⁵ The sons of Gad after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the family of the Haggites; of Shuni, the family of the Shunites; ¹⁶ of Ozni, the family of the Oznites;

of Eri, the family of the Erites; ¹⁷ of Arod, the family of the Arodites; of Areli, the family of the Arelites. ¹⁸ These are the families of the sons of Gad according to those who were numbered of them, forty thousand five hundred. ¹⁹ The sons of Judah: Er and Onan; and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. ²⁰ The sons of Judah after their families were: of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites; of Perez, the family of the Perezites; of Zerah, the family of the Zerahites. ²¹ The sons of Perez were: of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites. ²² These are the families of Judah according to those who were numbered of them, seventy-six thousand five hundred. ²³ The sons of Issachar after their families: of Tola, the family of the Tolaites; of Puvah, the family of the Punites; ²⁴ of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites. ²⁵ These are the families of Issachar accord-

Moses was Yahweh Himself in person. Likewise Jesus carried the Name of God (Jn. 5:43) but wasn't God in person. We who are baptized into the Name are in the same situation – whatever is done to us is done to God, and our attitudes to those in His Name are our attitudes to Him (Mt. 25:40,43).

26:11 The inspired titles of the Psalms sometimes mention that the Psalm was written by the sons of Korah. They therefore dedicated themselves to God's service, not following the bad example of their father. We in Christ are a new creation, and not inevitable victims of our upbringing or bad parental example.

26:14 All these figures may seem irrelevant, but analyzing them provides confirmation that the Bible we read is indeed God's inspired word, because there is so much incidental confirmation of the truth of the record provided. The sum total of Israel at the end of their wilderness wanderings was 1,820 less than it had been at the beginning, nearly 40 years previously. But the tribe of Simeon had decreased by 37,100 (cp. 1:23). The plague of chapter 25 had killed 24,000 people for committing fornication with the Moabites (25:9); but the ringleader of that had been Zimri, a Simeonite prince (25:14). It's likely therefore that he led his tribe into the orgy with the Moabites, which resulted in so many of them being killed.

ing to those who were numbered of them, sixty-four thousand three hundred. ²⁶ The sons of Zebulun after their families: of Sered, the family of the Seredites; of Elon, the family of the Elonites; of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites. ²⁷ These are the families of the Zebulunites according to those who were numbered of them, sixty thousand five hundred. ²⁸ The sons of Joseph after their families: Manasseh and Ephraim. ²⁹ The sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir became the father of Gilead; of Gilead, the family of the Gileadites. ³⁰ These are the sons of Gilead: of Iezer, the family of the Iezerites; of Helek, the family of the Helekites; ³¹ and Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; and Shechem, the family of the Shechemites; ³² and Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites; and Hephher, the family of the Hephherites. ³³ Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. ³⁴ These are the families of Manasseh; and those who were numbered of them were fifty-two thousand seven hundred. ³⁵ These are the sons of Ephraim after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthelahites; of Becher, the family of the Becherites; of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites. ³⁶ These are the sons of Shuthelah:

of Eran, the family of the Eranites. ³⁷ These are the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those who were numbered of them, thirty-two thousand five hundred. These are the sons of Joseph after their families. ³⁸ The sons of Benjamin after their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites; of Ahiiram, the family of the Ahiiramites; ³⁹ of Shephupham, the family of the Shuphamites; of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. ⁴⁰ The sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: the family of the Ardites; of Naaman, the family of the Naamites. ⁴¹ These are the sons of Benjamin after their families; and those who were numbered of them were forty-five thousand six hundred. ⁴² These are the sons of Dan after their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These are the families of Dan after their families. ⁴³ All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those who were numbered of them, were sixty-four thousand four hundred. ⁴⁴ The sons of Asher after their families: of Imnah, the family of the Imnites; of Ishvi, the family of the Ishvites; of Beriah, the family of the Berites. ⁴⁵ Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. ⁴⁶ The name of the daughter of Asher was Serah. ⁴⁷ These are the families of the sons of Asher according to

26:43 Dan had only one son and yet by this time had become the second largest tribe in Israel. Benjamin had ten sons (Gen. 46:21) but was one of the smallest tribes. Again we see how God doesn't work through human strength or advantage; the passage of time reveals over the generations that human blessing soon fades away.

those who were numbered of them, fifty-three thousand and four hundred. ⁴⁸ The sons of Naphtali after their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the family of the Gunites; ⁴⁹ of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. ⁵⁰ These are the families of Naphtali according to their families; and those who were numbered of them were forty-five thousand four hundred. ⁵¹ These are those who were numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty. ⁵² Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ⁵³ To these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. ⁵⁴ To the more you shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer you shall give the less inheritance: to everyone according to those who were numbered of his family shall his inheritance be given. ⁵⁵ Notwithstanding, the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit it. ⁵⁶ According to the lot shall their inheritance be divided between the more and the fewer. ⁵⁷ These are those who were numbered of the Levites after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; of Merari, the family of the Merarites. ⁵⁸ These are the families of Levi: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korahites. Kohath became the father of

Amram. ⁵⁹ The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt: and she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister. ⁶⁰ To Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ⁶¹ Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before Yahweh. ⁶² Those who were numbered of them were twenty-three thousand, every male from a month old and upward; for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel. ⁶³ These are those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. ⁶⁴ But among these there was not a man of them who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. ⁶⁵ For Yahweh had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. There was not left a man of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

CHAPTER 27 Apr. 9

The Case of Zelophehad's Daughters

Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hephher the son of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah. ² They stood be-

fore Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation at the door of the Tent of Meeting, saying, ³ Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against Yahweh in the company of Korah; but he died in his own sin, and he had no sons. ⁴ Why should the name of our father be taken away from among his family, because he had no son? Give to us a possession among the brothers of our father. ⁵ Moses brought their cause before Yahweh. ⁶ Yahweh spoke to Moses saying, ⁷ The daughters of Zelophehad speak right. You shall surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brothers; and you shall cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them. ⁸ You shall speak to the children of Israel saying, 'If a man dies, and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. ⁹ If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to

his brothers. ¹⁰ If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. ¹¹ If his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his kinsman who is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it; and it shall be to the children of Israel a statute and ordinance, as Yahweh commanded Moses'.

Joshua Appointed to Replace Moses

¹² Yahweh said to Moses, Go up into this mountain of Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. ¹³ When you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered; ¹⁴ because you rebelled against My word in the wilderness of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify Me at the waters before their eyes. (These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin). ¹⁵ Moses spoke to Yahweh, saying, ¹⁶ Let Yahweh, the God of the

27:2 Considering the low status of women at that time, we see here a commendable spirit of initiative and spiritual ambition for these women to dare ask a male dominated society to change their rules to allow them to have an inheritance. We see too how God and Moses weren't at all anti-women, and responded positively. Note how the women were allowed to come directly to the decision makers, without needing to appoint a male representative for their case, as was common in surrounding cultures. The value of the human person is consistently seen throughout the Pentateuch. They asked about this matter *before* the land had been possessed, reflecting their strength of faith that God would fulfil His promise of giving His people the Kingdom; they imagined what it would be like there, and acted accordingly even before they got there, as if the land was already theirs in possession – just as we should.

27:11 One wonders why this statute had not been included within the Law of Moses. Perhaps God had reserved it in potential, waiting the initiative of these women?

27:13 Moses seeing the promised land but being unable to enter it himself points to how the Law of Moses gave a view of salvation, but couldn't bring people into it.

27:16 We see here Moses' selflessness, his concern was always for the wellbeing of

spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, ¹⁷ who may go out before them, and who may come in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; that the congregation of Yahweh be not as sheep which have no shepherd. ¹⁸ Yahweh said to Moses, Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; ¹⁹ and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and commission him in their sight. ²⁰ You shall put of your honour on him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may obey. ²¹ He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before Yahweh. At his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel

with him, even all the congregation. ²² Moses did as Yahweh commanded him; and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; ²³ and he laid his hands on him, and commissioned him, as Yahweh spoke by Moses.

CHAPTER 28 Apr. 10

Commands about Sacrifices Repeated

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Command the children of Israel, and tell them, ‘My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire, of a pleasant aroma to Me, you shall observe to offer to Me in their due season’. ³ You shall tell them, ‘This is the offering made by fire which you shall offer to Yahweh: male lambs a year old without blemish, two day by day, for a continual

God’s people rather than his own status. He didn’t ask for one of his own family members to take over the leadership; for he realized that spiritual leadership must be based upon spiritual qualification, not family connection.

27:17 *Be not as sheep which have no shepherd* – Quoted by Jesus about the crowds of Israelites in the first century (Mt. 9:36). He clearly saw those confused and misguided people, with all their wrong beliefs and attitudes, as still the congregation of God. We also learn from what Moses says and the Lord’s approval of it that God’s people need shepherds. There is an undoubted teaching regarding the need for leadership / shepherding throughout the Bible. When God’s people are leaderless, they go astray.

27:18 Because Joshua had the Spirit, Moses was told to lay his hand on him. Yet Dt. 34:9 says that Moses laid his hand on him so that Joshua might receive the Spirit. Here we see the upward spiral of spirituality at work – those who are of the Spirit are made more spiritual.

28:3 The commands about the continual burnt offering are repeated more frequently and in more detail in the Law of Moses than those about anything else or any other offering. It’s as if God perceived the likely tendency of His people to forget the regular sacrifices and focus instead on the occasional ones; and to disregard the commands about the grain offering, which was so small and yet so valuable to God. It is likewise continually stressed in the legislation that these continual sacrifices were “a pleasant aroma to Me” (:2). Spirituality is about daily discipline, not occasional acts of devotion; hourly prayer, daily Bible reading, constant spiritual mindedness, rather than occasional attendance at a church meeting. When God later asked Israel “Did you offer

burnt offering. ⁴ You shall offer the one lamb in the morning and you shall offer the other lamb at evening; ⁵ with the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil. ⁶ It is a continual burnt offering, which was ordained in Mount Sinai for a pleasant aroma, an offering made by fire to Yahweh. ⁷ Its drink offering shall be the fourth part of a hin for the one lamb. You shall pour out a drink offering of strong drink to Yahweh in the holy place. ⁸ The other lamb you shall offer at evening. As the grain offering of the morning, and as the drink offering of it, you shall offer it, an offering made by fire, of a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. ⁹ On the Sabbath day two male lambs a year old without blemish, and two tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, and the drink offering of it: ¹⁰ this is the burnt offering of every Sabbath, besides the continual burnt offering, and the drink offering of it. ¹¹ In the beginnings of your months you shall offer a burnt offering to Yahweh: two young bulls, and one ram, seven male lambs a year old without

blemish; ¹² and three tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull; and two tenth parts of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, for the one ram; ¹³ and a tenth part of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering to every lamb; for a burnt offering of a pleasant aroma, an offering made by fire to Yahweh. ¹⁴ Their drink offerings shall be half a hin of wine for a bull, and the third part of a hin for the ram, and the fourth part of a hin for a lamb: this is the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year. ¹⁵ One male goat for a sin offering to Yahweh; it shall be offered besides the continual burnt offering, and the drink offering of it.

The Passover and Firstfruits

¹⁶ In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, is Yahweh's Passover. ¹⁷ On the fifteenth day of this month shall be a feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. ¹⁸ In the first day shall be a holy gathering: you shall do no servile work; ¹⁹ but you shall offer an offering made by fire, a burnt of-

unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?" (Am. 5:25; Acts 7:42), the answer implied is that no, they did not. Hence this repetition here at the end of the wilderness journey. The whole purpose of their being given Canaan was so that they would have an environment in which to keep God's laws (Ps. 105:45). Likewise with us – if we're not interested in keeping God's principles in this life, there will be little point in our being given the Kingdom, which is likewise an arena in which we can live perfectly according to His principles.

28:9 Here for the only time in the Law it is pointed out that the Sabbath sacrifices must include a grain offering, although this principle had been given in 15:3. The theme of this chapter is that the small offerings mustn't be forgotten nor minimized in importance.

fering to Yahweh: two young bulls, and one ram, and seven male lambs a year old; they shall be to you without blemish; ²⁰ and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil: you shall offer three tenth parts for a bull, and two tenth parts for the ram. ²¹ You shall offer a tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs; ²² and one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you. ²³ You shall offer these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which is for a continual burnt offering. ²⁴ In this way you shall offer daily, for seven days, the food of the offering made by fire, of a pleasant aroma to Yahweh. It shall be offered besides the continual burnt offering, and the drink offering of it. ²⁵ On the seventh day you shall have a holy gathering: you shall do no servile work. ²⁶ Also in the day of the first fruits, when you offer a new grain offering to Yahweh in your feast of weeks, you shall have a holy gathering; you shall do no servile work; ²⁷ but you shall offer a burnt offering for a pleasant aroma to Yahweh: two young bulls, one ram, seven male lambs a year old; ²⁸ and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil, three tenth parts for each bull, two tenth parts for the one ram, ²⁹ a tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs; ³⁰ one male goat, to make atonement for you. ³¹ Besides

the continual burnt offering, and the grain offering of it, you shall offer them (they shall be to you without blemish), and their drink offerings.

CHAPTER 29 Apr. 11

The Day of Atonement

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy gathering. You shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing of trumpets to you. ² You shall offer a burnt offering for a pleasant aroma to Yahweh: one young bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old without blemish; ³ and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil, three tenth parts for the bull, two tenth parts for the ram, ⁴ and one tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs; ⁵ and one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you; ⁶ besides the burnt offering of the new moon, and the grain offering of it, and the continual burnt offering and the grain offering of it, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, for a pleasant aroma, an offering made by fire to Yahweh. ⁷ On the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy gathering; and you shall afflict your souls. You shall do no kind of work; ⁸ but you shall offer a burnt offering to Yahweh for a pleasant aroma: one young bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old (they

28:24 *Besides the continual burnt offering* – It is so often stressed, both in this chapter and elsewhere, that these continual offerings mustn't be forgotten about at the time of the greater festivals. See on :3.

28:31 *To you without blemish* – Every animal is blemished in some way, but they were to offer that which in their eyes (“to you”) was without blemish. Whilst we are to offer our best, it's only the best in our eyes, and is only accepted by grace.

shall be to you without blemish);⁹ and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil, three tenth parts for the bull, two tenth parts for the one ram,¹⁰ a tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs;¹¹ one male goat for a sin offering; besides the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the grain offering of it, and their drink offerings.

The Feast of Tabernacles

¹² On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy gathering. You shall do no servile work, and you shall keep a feast to Yahweh seven days.¹³ You shall offer a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a pleasant aroma to Yahweh: thirteen young bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old; they shall be without blemish;

¹⁴ and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil, three tenth parts for every bull of the thirteen bulls, two tenth parts for each ram of the two rams,¹⁵ and a tenth part for every lamb of the fourteen lambs;¹⁶ and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, the grain offering of it, and the drink offering of it.¹⁷ On the second day you shall offer twelve young bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish;¹⁸ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance;¹⁹ and one male goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and the grain offering of it, and their drink offerings.²⁰ On the third day eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen

29:11 *One male goat for a sin offering* – This additional sin offering on the day of Atonement isn't mentioned in the previous legislation about the day of Atonement in Lev. 16. Because Israel had failed to keep the sacrifices during the wilderness journey as they should have done (so Am. 5:25 implies), God now at the end of the wilderness journey added more sacrifices to be kept. Perhaps the Israelite was to see in this male goat a symbol of himself, worthy only of rejection – the goat being a symbol of the rejected in Mt. 25:33; and the “sin offering of atonement” as representative of the whole community's unforgiven sins. This is the great paradox – that those who consider themselves rejected will be accepted, and those who think of themselves as accepted in their own strength will be rejected. The Lord's right hand is our left hand, and vice versa, if we imagine ourselves standing before Him. Those who put themselves to *their* right hand, i.e. justify themselves, are putting themselves at His left hand; and vice versa (Mt. 25:34).

29:13 In total, the feast of Tabernacles required 70 oxen to be sacrificed. Far more animals were sacrificed in this feast than for any other. Yet this was the feast of joy – teaching that true happiness is related to sacrifice to God, rather than keeping for ourselves.

29:19 Each day of their rejoicing in God's grace toward them, Israel were to offer a sin offering as a reminder of the fact they were sinners, and all God's blessings toward them were given to a sinful people. We must never let slip our recognition of our sinfulness before God, and unworthiness in ourselves of His blessings.

male lambs a year old without blemish; ²¹ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; ²² and one male goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and the grain offering of it, and the drink offering of it. ²³ On the fourth day ten bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish; ²⁴ their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; ²⁵ and one male goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, the grain offering of it, and the drink offering of it. ²⁶ On the fifth day nine bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish; ²⁷ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; ²⁸ and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, and the grain offering of it, and the drink offering of it. ²⁹ On the sixth day eight bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish; ³⁰ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the

ordinance; ³¹ and one male goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, the grain offering of it, and the drink offerings of it. ³² On the seventh day seven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish; ³³ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; ³⁴ and one male goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, the grain offering of it, and the drink offering of it. ³⁵ On the eighth day you shall have a solemn assembly: you shall do no servile work; ³⁶ but you shall offer a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a pleasant aroma to Yahweh: one bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old without blemish; ³⁷ their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bull, for the ram, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the ordinance; ³⁸ and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, and the grain offering of it, and the drink offering of it. ³⁹ You shall offer these to Yahweh in your set feasts, besides your vows, and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your grain offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings'. ⁴⁰ Moses told the children of Israel

29:39 *Besides your vows, and your freewill offerings* – God envisaged that at the time the whole community were engaged in extra special devotion to Him, the individual might still wish to make a private sacrifice. We can't ride into God's Kingdom on the back of others, e.g. our family members or our church. Our collective devotions shouldn't lead us to think that God doesn't seek our private freewill dedication to Him.

according to all that Yahweh commanded Moses.

CHAPTER 30 Apr. 11

The Vows of Women

Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which Yahweh has commanded. ² When a man vows a vow to Yahweh, or swears an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth. ³ Also when a woman vows a vow to Yahweh and binds herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth, ⁴ and her father hears her vow and her bond with which she has bound her soul, and her father holds his peace at her; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond with which she has bound her soul shall stand. ⁵ But if her father disallow her in the day that he hears,

none of her vows or of her bonds with which she has bound her soul shall stand; and Yahweh will forgive her, because her father disallowed her. ⁶ If she has a husband while her vows are on her, or the rash utterance of her lips with which she has bound her soul, ⁷ and her husband hears it, and hold his peace at her in the day that he hears it; then her vows shall stand, and her bonds with which she has bound her soul shall stand. ⁸ But if her husband forbids her in the day that he hears it, then he shall make void her vow which is on her, and the rash utterance of her lips with which she has bound her soul; and Yahweh will forgive her. ⁹ But the vow of a widow, or of her who is divorced, everything with which she has bound her soul, shall stand against her. ¹⁰ If she vowed in her husband's house or bound her soul by a bond with an oath ¹¹ and her husband heard it,

30:3 Girls married young in Semitic cultures of the time, usually in their teens. God here foresaw the possibility of a young girl wanting to do something extra special for Him. In contemporary religions, active participation in religion was typically something for older males. But such is God's value of the human person that He eagerly anticipated young people, even children, making a special act of devotion to Him on their own initiative. Mary's teenage ambition to become the mother of Messiah is the supreme example to today's youngsters, growing up as they do in a world where selfish ambition is the order of the day as never before.

30:7 The simple principle established here is that there are times when silence means consent. The Proverbs wisely advise us not to meddle in others' business and to hold our tongue in some cases. But there are other times when not to speak up can have damaging consequences upon others, especially those less mature than ourselves.

30:9 A divorced woman was counted as genuinely single; the sin of marriage breakup is in the factors leading to the breakup of the marriage, but afterwards the person is seen by God as single. Divorce under the Law of Moses was possible only for adultery, and adultery was punishable by death. Yet God foresaw that there would be women who had done this and yet remained alive by grace, or who had been falsely accused; and correctly imagined that such women would love to make a freewill dedication of themselves to Him.

and held his peace at her, and didn't disallow her; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond with which she bound her soul shall stand. ¹² But if her husband made them null and void in the day that he heard them, then whatever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand. Her husband has made them void; and Yahweh will forgive her. ¹³ Every vow and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it or her husband may make it void. ¹⁴ But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day, then he establishes all her vows, or all her bonds which are on her. He has established them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard them. ¹⁵ But if he shall make them null and void after that he has heard them, then he shall bear her iniquity. ¹⁶ These are the statutes, which Yahweh commanded Moses, between a man and his wife and between a father and his daughter, being in her youth, in her father's house.

CHAPTER 31 Apr. 12

War with Midian

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Avenge the children of Israel for the Midianites. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people. ³ Moses spoke to the people, saying, Arm men from among you for the war, that they may go against Midian, to execute Yahweh's vengeance on Midian. ⁴ Of every tribe one thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, you shall send to the war. ⁵ So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel a thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand armed for war. ⁶ Moses sent them one thousand of every tribe to the war, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the vessels of the sanctuary and the trumpets for the alarm in his hand. ⁷ They warred against Midian, as Yahweh commanded Moses; and they killed every male. ⁸ They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of their slain: Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian:

31:2 *Avenge the children of Israel* – But in :3 we read of avenging Yahweh. The insults against God's people are against Him. Many of His children struggle today with a sense of justice not having been done to them, and a desire to see some level of justice or vengeance against their abusers. This day will come, if indeed the injustice has been done to us because of our devotion to God; because whatever is done to God's people is done to Him.

31:5 12,000 was a small army compared to what could have been raised – for there were over 600,000 fighting men numbered amongst Israel at this time. But throughout His military history, God has taken special pleasure in using small numbers to defeat far larger ones, and that principle continues in how He works today.

31:6 God chose Phinehas the priest to be the army commander, whereas Joshua was the more obvious human choice for that job at this time. But God wished to demonstrate that it is spiritual principle which must lead His people rather than human strength and appropriacy. It was Phinehas who had so well perceived the spiritual danger of the Moabites earlier (25:7).

Balaam also the son of Beor they killed with the sword. ⁹ The children of Israel took captive the women of Midian and their little ones; and all their livestock, and all their flocks, and all their goods, they took for a prey. ¹⁰ All their cities in the places in which they lived, and all their encampments, they burnt with fire. ¹¹ They took all the spoil and all the prey, both of man and of animal. ¹² They brought the captives and the prey and the spoil to Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and to the congregation of the children of Israel, to the camp at the plains of Moab which are by the Jordan at Jericho. ¹³ Moses and Eleazar the priest and all the princes of the congregation went forth to meet them outside of the camp. ¹⁴ Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds who came from the service of the war. ¹⁵ Moses said to them, Have you saved all the women alive? ¹⁶ Behold, these caused the children of Israel through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against Yahweh in the matter of Peor, and so the plague was among the congregation of Yahweh. ¹⁷ Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man by lying with him. ¹⁸ But all

the girls, who have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves. ¹⁹ Encamp outside of the camp seven days: whoever has killed any person and whoever has touched any slain, purify yourselves on the third day and on the seventh day, you and your captives. ²⁰ As to every garment, and all that is made of skin, and all work of goats' hair, and all things made of wood, you shall purify yourselves. ²¹ Eleazar the priest said to the men of war who went to the battle, This is the statute of the law which Yahweh has commanded Moses: ²² whatever gold, silver, brass, iron, tin and lead, ²³ everything that may withstand the fire you shall make to go through the fire, and it shall be clean; nevertheless it shall be purified with the water for impurity; and all that doesn't withstand the fire you shall make to go through the water. ²⁴ You shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and you shall be clean; and afterward you shall come into the camp.

Dividing the Spoils of War

²⁵ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁶ Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of animal, you, and Eleazar the priest, and the heads of the fathers' households of the congregation; ²⁷ and divide the

31:15 Moses was distressed that the Israelite army had failed to perceive the spiritual reason for the battle – it was to stop the Midianites posing a temptation to Israel with their women as they had in chapter 25. Sometimes God's people can fight His battles and even be given victory, whilst failing to perceive the spiritual intent behind the war.

31:27 *And all the congregation* – This kind of policy of sharing the spoils of war with the congregation was repeated in Israelite history (1 Sam. 30:24,25; Ps. 68:12).

prey into two parts between the men skilled in war who went out to battle, and all the congregation.²⁸ Levy a tribute to Yahweh of the men of war who went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, of the persons, of the cattle, of the donkeys, and of the flocks.²⁹ Take it of their half, and give it to Eleazar the priest, for Yahweh's wave offering.³⁰ Of the children of Israel's half, you shall take one drawn out of every fifty, of the persons, of the cattle, of the donkeys, and of the flocks, of all the livestock, and give them to the Levites, who perform the duty of the tabernacle of Yahweh.³¹ Moses and Eleazar the priest did as Yahweh commanded Moses.³² Now the prey over and above the booty which the men of war took, was six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep,³³ seventy-two thousand head of cattle,³⁴ sixty-one thousand donkeys³⁵ and thirty-two thousand persons in all, of the women who had not known man by lying with him.³⁶ The half, which was the portion of those who went out to war, was in number three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep;³⁷ and Yahweh's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and seventy-five.³⁸ The cattle were thir-

ty-six thousand, of which Yahweh's tribute was seventy-two.³⁹ The donkeys were thirty thousand five hundred, of which Yahweh's tribute was sixty-one.⁴⁰ The persons were sixteen thousand, of whom Yahweh's tribute was thirty-two persons.⁴¹ Moses gave the tribute which was Yahweh's wave offering to Eleazar the priest, as Yahweh commanded Moses.⁴² Of the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided off from the men who warred⁴³ (now the congregation's half was three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep,⁴⁴ and thirty-six thousand head of cattle,⁴⁵ and thirty thousand five hundred donkeys,⁴⁶ and sixteen thousand persons),⁴⁷ even of the children of Israel's half, Moses took one drawn out of every fifty, both of man and of animal, and gave them to the Levites, who performed the duty of the tabernacle of Yahweh; as Yahweh commanded Moses.⁴⁸ The officers who were over the thousands of the army, the captains of thousands, and the captains of hundreds, came near to Moses;⁴⁹ and they said to Moses, Your servants have taken the sum of the men of war who are under our command, and there lacks not one man of us.⁵⁰ We have

It ensured that the minority called upon to do highly visible and humanly heroic work didn't do it for themselves nor to settle their own scores, but always with an eye to benefitting the community of God's people.

31:49 *Your servants* – It's usual for military men to consider themselves as an elite in their own right. But these leading military leaders considered themselves as nothing but servants to their spiritual leader. Humility in leadership is vital amongst God's people.

31:50 *To make atonement for our souls* – Even in times of spiritual victory, we are to never lose sight of our basic sinfulness and need for atonement with God.

brought Yahweh's offering, what every man has gotten, of jewels of gold, armlets, and bracelets, signet rings, earrings, and necklaces, to make atonement for our souls before Yahweh. ⁵¹ Moses and Eleazar the priest took their gold, even all the worked jewels. ⁵² All the gold of the wave offering that they offered up to Yahweh, of the captains of thousands and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. ⁵³ (The men of war had taken booty, every man for himself.) ⁵⁴ Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds and brought it into the Tent of Meeting, for a memorial for the children of Israel before Yahweh.

CHAPTER 32 Apr. 13

Reuben and Gad Seek Immediate Inheritance

Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock. When

they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead that behold, the place was a place for livestock. ² The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses and to Eleazar the priest and to the princes of the congregation, saying, ³ Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Sebam, and Nebo, and Beon, ⁴ the land which Yahweh struck before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock. ⁵ They said, If we have found favour in your sight, let this land be given to your servants for a possession. Don't bring us over the Jordan. ⁶ Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brothers go to the war, and shall you sit here? ⁷ Why do you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which Yahweh has given them? ⁸ Your fathers did so when I sent them from Kadesh Barnea to see the land. ⁹ For when they went

32:3 These place names occur in the later Old Testament, but always with reference to the fact that Gentiles lived there. So Reuben and Gad's short term desire for inheritance didn't last for long; subsequent generations lost those lands. Although they changed the names of these cities (:38), their original names evidently stayed with them because the Gentiles re-took them from Reuben and Gad.

32:5 *Don't bring us over the Jordan* – They said this to Moses, who so dearly wished to enter the land but wasn't able to. The paradox is obvious and intentional; Moses could easily have answered their request with reference to it, but he omits all personal reference, in his selfless way; and focuses instead on the impact their choice would have on God's people as a whole. For their salvation and not his own was uppermost in his mind.

32:7 Our attitudes to possessing the Kingdom affect others; if we don't want to go over ourselves, we will discourage others. The power of example is far greater than we realize. Jesus may have referred to this incident when He condemned the Pharisees for not entering the Kingdom of God themselves and not sending forth others on their way there either (Mt. 23:13 Gk.).

up to the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which Yahweh had given them. ¹⁰ Yahweh's anger was kindled in that day, and He swore, saying, ¹¹ 'Surely none of the men who came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me - ¹² except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, because they have followed Yahweh completely'. ¹³ Yahweh's anger was kindled against Israel, and He made them wander back and forth in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, who had done evil in the sight of Yahweh, was consumed. ¹⁴ Behold, you have risen up in your fathers' place, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of Yahweh toward Israel. ¹⁵ For if you turn away from after Him, He will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and you will destroy all this people. ¹⁶ They came near to him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones; ¹⁷ but we ourselves

will be ready armed to go before the children of Israel, until we have brought them to their place, and our little ones shall dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. ¹⁸ We will not return to our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance. ¹⁹ For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan, and forward, because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side of the Jordan eastward. ²⁰ Moses said to them, If you will do this thing, if you will arm yourselves to go before Yahweh to the war, ²¹ and every armed man of you will pass over the Jordan before Yahweh, until He has driven out His enemies from before Him, ²² and the land is subdued before Yahweh; then afterward you shall return, and be guiltless towards Yahweh, and towards Israel; and this land shall be to you for a possession before Yahweh. ²³ But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against Yahweh; and be sure your sin will find you out. ²⁴ Build cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do that which has proceeded out of your mouth. ²⁵ The children of Gad and the children of Reuben spoke

32:15 At first sight this may appear unreasonable – that the whole community would be punished for the sake of the sin and short-termist thinking of two tribes. But the eternal wellbeing of others is in our hands in that our example can discourage others from entering the Kingdom, and God may not compensate for our causing them to stumble.

32:17 *Until we have brought them to their place* – They thought that their human strength would give Israel their inheritance, whereas God had promised that *He* and not they (“*we*”) would give the inheritance. Moses therefore corrects them by saying that *God* will drive out “His enemies from before Him” (:21). It was exactly because they failed to believe that *God* would do this that they preferred to stay the other side of Jordan and not enter Canaan; and they wished to share that attitude with others.

to Moses, saying, Your servants will do as my lord commands. ²⁶ Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our livestock, shall be there in the cities of Gilead; ²⁷ but your servants will pass over, every man who is armed for war, before Yahweh to battle, as my lord says. ²⁸ So Moses commanded concerning them to Eleazar the priest, and to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' households of the tribes of the children of Israel. ²⁹ Moses said to them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over the Jordan, every man who is armed to battle, before Yahweh, and the land shall be subdued before you; then you shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession; ³⁰ but if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan. ³¹ The children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered saying, As Yahweh has said to your servants, so will we do. ³² We will pass over armed before Yahweh into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us beyond the Jordan. ³³ Moses gave to them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of

the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land according to its cities and borders, even the cities of the surrounding land. ³⁴ The children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer, ³⁵ and Atrothshophan, and Jazer, and Jogbehah, ³⁶ and Beth Nimrah, and Beth Haran: fortified cities, and folds for sheep. ³⁷ The children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kiriathaim, ³⁸ and Nebo, and Baal Meon, (their names being changed), and Sibmah; and they gave other names to the cities which they built. ³⁹ The children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were therein. ⁴⁰ Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he lived therein. ⁴¹ Jair the son of Manasseh went and took his towns, and called them Havvoth Jair. ⁴² Nobah went and took Kenath, and its villages, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

CHAPTER 33 Apr. 14

The Itinerary of Israel's Journeys

These are the journeys of the children of Israel, when they went forth out of the land of Egypt by their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. ² Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of

32:38 *Their names being changed* – Nebo and Baal were the names of Canaanite gods, and Yahweh forbid His people to even mention their names (Ex. 23:13; Hos. 2:17). The principle for us is that we shouldn't surround ourselves with things which even suggest or stimulate the idea of being anything other than totally dedicated to the one true God, or which may trigger the idea of idolatry.

33:2 Moses kept this record of their journeys in the spirit of how God commanded His people to each one remember the way by which God had brought them out from Egypt

Yahweh, and these are their journeys according to their goings out. ³ They travelled from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the next day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians, ⁴ while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom Yahweh had struck among them. On their gods also Yahweh executed judgments. ⁵ The children of Israel travelled from Rameses, and encamped in Succoth. ⁶ They travelled from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness. ⁷ They travelled from Etham, and turned back to Pihahiroth, which is before Baal Zephon: and they encamped before Migdol. ⁸ They travelled from before Hahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness; and

they went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and encamped in Marah. ⁹ They travelled from Marah, and came to Elim. In Elim were twelve springs of water, and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there. ¹⁰ They travelled from Elim, and encamped by the Red Sea. ¹¹ They travelled from the Red Sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. ¹² They travelled from the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah. ¹³ They travelled from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. ¹⁴ They travelled from Alush, and encamped in Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink. ¹⁵ They travelled from Rephidim, and encamped in the wilderness of Sinai. ¹⁶ They travelled from the wilderness of Sinai, and encamped in Kibroth Hattaavah. ¹⁷ They travelled from Kibroth Hattaavah, and encamped in

to Canaan (Dt. 8:2). We need to keep at least a mental diary of how God has led us in our lives, to look back with feelings of gratitude and grace as we see how He has led us, how life for us is no mere succession of chance events, but has a definite direction and end point in entering the Kingdom.

Their goings out – The Hebrew word is used about the entire ‘going out’ of Israel from Egypt to the promised land. Our total journey from the world through the Red Sea of baptism to the Kingdom of God involves much wandering, backwards and forwards (32:13). But it’s all under God’s control and part of our total exodus from Egypt to the Kingdom. Although humanly the journey was a zig-zag and circular route, it is described in Ps. 107:7 as a “right” or ‘straight’ way – from God’s perspective.

33:4 *On their gods also Yahweh executed judgments* – Each of the plagues targeted a specific Egyptian god, and it seems that on Passover night something dramatic happened to all the gods – maybe the idols to them fell over or were destroyed. Yet Israel still took the gods of Egypt with them through the Red Sea and worshipped them on the wilderness journey (Ez. 20:7; Acts 7:43). The pull of idolatry is against all reason, and yet there is such a strong tendency within us not to devote ourselves to only one God.

33:8 Their dramatic passage through the Red Sea is described in the same way as any other stage on their journey; our baptism into Christ is our Red Sea crossing (1 Cor. 10:1,2), but the other stages of our journey are no less led by God and part of our final deliverance into His Kingdom.

HazerOTH. ¹⁸ They travelled from HazerOTH, and encamped in Rithmah. ¹⁹ They travelled from Rithmah, and encamped in Rimmon Perez. ²⁰ They travelled from Rimmon Perez, and encamped in Libnah. ²¹ They travelled from Libnah, and encamped in Rissah. ²² They travelled from Rissah, and encamped in Kehelathah. ²³ They travelled from Kehelathah, and encamped in Mount Shepher. ²⁴ They travelled from Mount Shepher, and encamped in Haradah. ²⁵ They travelled from Haradah, and encamped in Makheloth. ²⁶ They travelled from Makheloth, and encamped in Tahath. ²⁷ They travelled from Tahath, and encamped in Terah. ²⁸ They travelled from Terah, and encamped in Mithkah. ²⁹ They travelled from Mithkah, and encamped in Hashmonah. ³⁰ They travelled from Hashmonah, and encamped in Moseroth. ³¹ They travelled from Moseroth, and encamped in Bene Jaakan. ³² They travelled from Bene Jaakan, and encamped in Hor Haggidgad. ³³ They travelled from Hor Haggidgad, and encamped in Jotbathah. ³⁴ They travelled from Jotbathah, and encamped in Abronah. ³⁵ They travelled from Abronah, and encamped in Ezion Geber. ³⁶ They travelled from Ezion Geber, and encamped in the wilderness of Zin (the same is Kadesh). ³⁷ They travelled from Kadesh, and encamped in Mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom. ³⁸ Aaron the priest went up into Mount Hor at the commandment of Yahweh and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel

had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fifth month, on the first day of the month. ³⁹ Aaron was one hundred and twenty-three years old when he died in Mount Hor. ⁴⁰ The Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the South in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel. ⁴¹ They travelled from Mount Hor and encamped in Zalmonah. ⁴² They travelled from Zalmonah, and encamped in Punon. ⁴³ They travelled from Punon, and encamped in Oboth. ⁴⁴ They travelled from Oboth, and encamped in Iye Abarim, in the border of Moab. ⁴⁵ They travelled from Iyim, and encamped in Dibon Gad. ⁴⁶ They travelled from Dibon Gad, and encamped in Almon Diblathaim. ⁴⁷ They travelled from Almon Diblathaim, and encamped in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. ⁴⁸ They travelled from the mountains of Abarim, and encamped in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. ⁴⁹ They encamped by the Jordan, from Beth Jeshimoth even to Abel Shittim in the plains of Moab.

Another Appeal to Destroy Canaanite Idols

⁵⁰ Yahweh spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, ⁵¹ Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them, When you pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ⁵² then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their stone idols, destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places. ⁵³ You shall take possession of the land

and dwell therein; for I have given the land to you to possess it. ⁵⁴ You shall inherit the land by lot according to your families; to the more you shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer you shall give the less inheritance. Wherever the lot falls to any man, that shall be his. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers. ⁵⁵ But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then those you let remain of them will be as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they will harass you in the land in which you dwell. ⁵⁶ It shall happen that as I thought to do to them, so will I do to you.

CHAPTER 34 Apr. 15

The Borders of the Land

Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² Command the children

of Israel, and tell them, ‘When you come into the land of Canaan (this is the land that shall fall to you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan according to its borders), ³ then your south side shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the side of Edom, and your south border shall be from the end of the Salt Sea eastward; ⁴ and your border shall turn about southward of the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass along to Zin; and the goings out of it shall be southward of Kadesh Barnea; and it shall go forth to Hazar Addar, and pass along to Azmon; ⁵ and the border shall turn about from Azmon to the brook of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea. ⁶ For the western border, you shall have the great sea and its border: this shall be your west border. ⁷ This shall be your north border: from the great sea you

33:55 What can appear mere harmless associations with the world can in the end destroy us. Whilst we are to be in this world in the same sense as the Lord Jesus was, mixing and identifying with them to bring them too to God, the basic principle of separation from unbelievers must never be forgotten.

33:56 *As I thought to do to them, so will I do to you* – That is, drive them out of the land. And this is what happened to Israel. There is a theme in the Bible that the judgments of this world will come upon the unfaithful amongst the children of God; there’s a need to be radically different from this world or else we will share this world’s condemnation (1 Cor. 11:32; Rev. 18:4).

34:2 The land promised to Abraham was from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea, but here God redefines it as much smaller. He perhaps perceived that they simply didn’t have the spiritual vision to possess that vast area. There is so much made possible for us in prospect; maybe we will ultimately receive less than we could have had because of our limited vision in this life. Yet He encouraged the people to go exploring beyond the bounds which He here gave them, right up to the Euphrates, promising to give them whatever land they walked upon (Dt. 11:24). It seems none rose up to that challenge. God invites His people to assume that they would receive this land and make preparations as if they had – for at this time they had not yet crossed Jordan into it. We are likewise asked to believe that we have been moved into the sphere of the Kingdom of God’s Son, and have received an inheritance by reason of our being in Him (Col. 1:13; Eph. 1:11).

shall mark out for you Mount Hor; ⁸ from Mount Hor you shall mark out to the entrance of Hamath; and the goings out of the border shall be at Zedad; ⁹ and the border shall go forth to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazar Enan: this shall be your north border. ¹⁰ You shall mark out your east border from Hazar Enan to Shepham; ¹¹ and the border shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain; and the border shall go down, and shall reach to the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward; ¹² and the border shall go down to the Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the Salt Sea. This shall be your land according to its borders around it’.

The Division of the Land

¹³ Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which you shall inherit by lot, which Yahweh has commanded to give to the nine tribes and to the half-tribe; ¹⁴ for the tribe of the children of Reuben according to their fathers’ families and the tribe of the children of Gad according to their fathers’ families, have received, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have received, their inheritance. ¹⁵ The two tribes and the half-tribe have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan at Jericho eastward, toward the sunrise. ¹⁶ Yahweh spoke to Moses saying, ¹⁷ These are the names of the men who shall di-

vide the land to you for inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. ¹⁸ You shall take one prince of every tribe to divide the land for inheritance. ¹⁹ These are the names of the men: Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. ²⁰ Of the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud. ²¹ Of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon. ²² Of the tribe of the children of Dan a prince, Bukki the son of Jogli. ²³ Of the children of Joseph: of the tribe of the children of Manasseh a prince, Hanniel the son of Ephod. ²⁴ Of the tribe of the children of Ephraim a prince, Kemuel the son of Shiptan. ²⁵ Of the tribe of the children of Zebulun a prince, Elizaphan the son of Parnach. ²⁶ Of the tribe of the children of Issachar a prince, Paltiel the son of Azzan. ²⁷ Of the tribe of the children of Asher a prince, Ahihud the son of Shelomi. ²⁸ Of the tribe of the children of Naphtali a prince, Pedahel the son of Ammihud. ²⁹ These are they whom Yahweh commanded to divide the inheritance to the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

CHAPTER 35 Apr. 16

Cities for the Levites

Yahweh spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, ² Command the children of Israel that they give to the Levites from the inheritance of their

34:14, 15 The triple emphasis here that those who chose immediate inheritance east of Jordan had already received their inheritance may be behind Christ’s triple emphasis that some “have their reward” in this life rather than waiting for the future, eternal reward (Mt. 6:2,5,16).

possession some cities to dwell in, and you shall give suburbs for the cities around them to the Levites. ³ The cities shall they have to dwell in and their suburbs shall be for their livestock, and for their substance, and for all their animals. ⁴ The suburbs of the cities which you shall give to the Levites shall be from the wall of the city and outward two thousand cubits around it. ⁵ You shall measure outside of the city for the east side two thousand cubits, and for the south side two thousand cubits, and for the west side two thousand cubits, and for the north side two thousand cubits, the city being in the midst. This shall be to them for the suburbs of the cities. ⁶ The cities which you shall give to the Levites shall be the six cities of refuge, which you shall give for the manslayer to flee to: and besides them you shall give forty-two cities. ⁷ All the cities which you shall give to the Levites shall be forty-eight cities together with their suburbs. ⁸ Concerning the cities which you shall give of the possession of the children of Israel, from the many

you shall take many; and from the few you shall take few. Everyone according to his inheritance which he inherits shall give of his cities to the Levites.

Cities of Refuge

⁹ Yahweh spoke to Moses saying, ¹⁰ Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them, ‘When you pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ¹¹ then you shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person unknowingly may flee there. ¹² The cities shall be to you for refuge from the avenger, that the manslayer not die until he stands before the congregation for judgment. ¹³ The cities which you shall give shall be for you six cities of refuge. ¹⁴ You shall give three cities beyond the Jordan and you shall give three cities in the land of Canaan. They shall be cities of refuge. ¹⁵ For the children of Israel and for the stranger and for the foreigner living among them, these six cities shall be for refuge; that everyone who kills any person un-

35:2 This meant that the Levites were divided amongst the 12 tribes of Israel, enabling them to teach God’s ways to the whole nation (Lev. 10:11; Dt. 33:9,10). In this way, the curse upon Levi that his children would be scattered in Israel (Gen. 49:7) turned into a blessing for all – and God so loves to work in this way, using the consequences of sin to bring about His work, purpose and glory.

35:15 We are all in the position of the person who unintentionally killed another person and is therefore liable to death. We have all sinned, and yet as it were in the spirit of how Paul describes our sin in Romans 7 – committed against our better intentions. Heb. 6:18 speaks of us fleeing for refuge into Christ – suggesting we are the one who flees after committing manslaughter, and becoming “in Christ” by baptism is our entry into Him as our city of refuge. But we must abide in Him – for if we leave Him then we are liable to death (:26). And our final salvation from the effects of sin is guaranteed by the death of the High Priest, the Lord Jesus (:25).

intentionally may flee there. ¹⁶ But if he struck him with an instrument of iron, so that he died, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. ¹⁷ If he struck him with a stone in the hand, by which a man may die, and he died, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. ¹⁸ Or if he struck him with a weapon of wood in the hand, by which a man may die, and he died, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. ¹⁹ The avenger of blood shall himself put the murderer to death. When he meets him, he shall put him to death. ²⁰ If he thrust him from hatred, or hurled at him, lying in wait, so that he died, ²¹ or in enmity struck him with his hand, so that he died; he who struck him shall surely be put to death; he is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him. ²² But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or hurled on him anything without lying in wait, ²³ or with any stone, by which a man may die, not seeing him, and

cast it on him, so that he died, and he was not his enemy, neither sought his harm; ²⁴ then the congregation shall judge between the striker and the avenger of blood according to these ordinances; ²⁵ and the congregation shall deliver the manslayer out of the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge, where he was fled. He shall dwell therein until the death of the high priest, who was anointed with the holy oil. ²⁶ But if the manslayer shall at any time go beyond the border of his city of refuge where he flees, ²⁷ and the avenger of blood find him outside of the border of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kill the manslayer; he shall not be guilty of blood, ²⁸ because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest; but after the death of the high priest the manslayer shall return into the land of his possession. ²⁹ These things shall be for a statute and ordinance to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

35:19 The idea of blood vendettas, whereby a family member of the murdered has a legal right to hunt and kill the murderer, is widespread in primitive societies. Yet the Law of Moses seems to make provision for it. Seeing that God is presented as the ultimate avenger (see on 31:2), this may seem strange. Instead of grace and forgiveness being inculcated, revenge seems allowed. Yet the desire to repay murder with murder is so great within primitive society that it seems God made a concession to this weakness, and allowed it, whilst seeking to control it from being applied in any wrongful or doubtful context. The fact God makes concessions to human weakness doesn't mean we should eagerly make use of them; the spirit of all God's revelation to us in His word is that we should forgive and leave vengeance to Him.

35:25 The death of the High Priest enabled the 'guilty' person to be totally freed because the principle that death was required to atone for death had been thus fulfilled (:33) – as if in his death, the High Priest was taking upon himself the guilt of the sin of murder, as a total representative of the sinner. In this we see foreshadowed the representative nature of Christ's death for us.

30 Whoever kills any person, the murderer shall be slain at the mouth of witnesses; but one witness shall not testify against any person that he die. 31 Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death; but he shall surely be put to death. 32 You shall take no ransom for him who is fled to his city of refuge, that he may come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest. 33 So you shall not pollute the land in which you are: for blood, it pollutes the land; and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him who shed it. 34 You shall not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I, Yahweh, dwell in the midst of the children of Israel’.

CHAPTER 36 Apr. 17

The Need to Marry within the Same Tribe

The heads of the fathers’ households of the family of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near and spoke before Moses and before

the princes, the heads of the fathers’ households of the children of Israel. 2 They said, Yahweh commanded my lord to give the land for inheritance by lot to the children of Israel; and my lord was commanded by Yahweh to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother to his daughters. 3 If they are married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then their inheritance will be taken away from the inheritance of our fathers, and will be added to the inheritance of the tribe unto which they shall belong: so will it be taken away from the lot of our inheritance. 4 When the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they shall belong: so their inheritance will be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers. 5 Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of Yahweh, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph speaks right. 6 This is the thing which Yahweh does command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them be married to whom they will; only into the family of the tribe

36:6 *Let them be married to whom they will* – This verse is alluded to by Paul in 1 Cor. 7:39, where we read that a Christian widow can marry whom she will but only to someone “in the Lord” – in the same way as the women here could marry whom they wished, but only in the tribe of their fathers, unless they would lose their inheritance permanently. It could be that Paul is teaching that marriage within the faith, to those also “in the Lord” by baptism into Him, is so important that doing otherwise may cause us to lose the promised inheritance of the Kingdom. Marriage within the faith is indeed an important principle and ignoring it often has terrible spiritual consequences. But note that she was free to marry whom *she* wanted – in a culture where arranged marriage was the norm, God valued the dignity and free choice of the woman.

of their father shall they be married.

⁷ So shall no inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe; for the children of Israel shall all keep the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. ⁸ Every daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel shall be wife to one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may possess every man the inheritance of his fathers. ⁹ So shall no inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; for the tribes of the children of Israel shall each keep his own inher-

itance. ¹⁰ The daughters of Zelophehad did as Yahweh commanded Moses; ¹¹ for Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married to their father's brothers' sons. ¹² They were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father. ¹³ These are the commandments and the ordinances which Yahweh commanded by Moses to the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho.

DEUTERONOMY

CHAPTER 1 Apr. 18

God Tells Israel to Leave Horeb

These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah over against Suph, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab. ² It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea. ³ In the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that Yahweh had given him in commandment to them, ⁴ after he had struck Sihon the king of the Amorites who lived in Heshbon and Og the king of Bashan who lived in Ashtaroth, at Edrei. ⁵ Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses began to declare this law saying, ⁶ Yahweh our God spoke to us in Horeb saying, You have lived long enough in this mountain; ⁷ turn, and take your

journey and go to the hill country of the Amorites and to all the places near there, in the Arabah, in the hill country, in the lowland, in the South and by the seashore, the land of the Canaanites and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates. ⁸ Behold, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give to them and to their seed after them.

Leaders Appointed

⁹ I spoke to you at that time saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone; ¹⁰ Yahweh your God has multiplied you and behold, you are this day as the stars of the sky for multitude. ¹¹ May Yahweh the God of your fathers make you a thousand times as many as you are and bless you, as He has promised you! ¹² How can I myself alone bear your encumbrance

1:2 *It is eleven days' journey* – It took Israel 38 years to complete this journey, but it was only 11 days if they walked directly. Their exit from Egypt through the Red Sea represents our baptism into Christ (1 Cor. 10:1,2), and the wilderness journey is the prototype of our walk to God's Kingdom. We tend to walk around in circles as Israel did, rather than perceiving our end destination clearly and keeping our focus upon it.

1:3 *In the fortieth year* – Moses was now at the end of his life; Israel stood on the borders of the promised land, which he was disallowed from entering. He now gives his swansong, perhaps in the last month or even day of his life he gave Israel the address transcribed for us as 'Deuteronomy', literally 'the second [giving of the] law'. He repeats some of the laws he had previously given them, with some additional comments and clarifications, and shares with them his reflections upon their journey. In this book, therefore, we perceive a man at the point of spiritual maturity.

1:7 *The river Euphrates* – This was the boundary of the land promised to Abraham. But sadly Israel lacked the spiritual ambition to even go there, let alone settle and inherit the land. It may well be that we inherit the Kingdom, but not to the extent that we could do. We in this brief life are deciding the nature of how we will spend eternity.

and your burden and your strife? ¹³ Take wise men of understanding and well known according to your tribes and I will make them heads over you. ¹⁴ You answered me and said, The thing which you have spoken is good to do. ¹⁵ So I took the heads of your tribes, wise men and known, and made them heads over you, captains of thousands, captains of hundreds, captains of fifties and captains of tens and officers, according to your tribes. ¹⁶ I commanded your judges at that time, saying, Hear cases between your brothers and judge righteously between a man and his brother and the foreigner who is living with him. ¹⁷ You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike; you shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me and I will hear it, ¹⁸ I commanded you at that time all the things which you should do.

Spies Sent to Explore the Land

¹⁹ We travelled from Horeb and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw, by the way to the hill country of the Amorites, as Yahweh our God commanded us, and we came to Kadesh Barnea. ²⁰ I said to you, You have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which Yahweh our God gives to us. ²¹ Behold, Yahweh your God has set the land before you; go up, take possession, as Yahweh, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Don't be afraid, neither be dismayed. ²² You came near to me every one of you and said, Let us send men before us that they may search the land for us and bring us word again of the way by which we must go up and the cities to which we shall come. ²³ The thing pleased me well and I took twelve men of you, one man for every tribe. ²⁴ They turned and went up into the hill country and came to the valley of Eshcol and spied it out. ²⁵ They took of the fruit of the land

1:22 The sending out of the spies was a concession to human weakness; Num. 13:17-20 says that they were sent in order to find out whether the land of Canaan was a good land, and the feasibility of overcoming the people who lived there. But God had categorically given assurances on these points already; yet Israel preferred to believe the word of men than that of God. However, God made a concession to their weakness, and gave the command to send out the spies (Num. 13:2). But when Israel heard their faithless tales of woe, they decided they didn't want to inherit the Kingdom prepared for them. When we make use of concessions to human weakness, we often end up in situations of temptation which we find too strong for us. The best way is to simply go straight forward in faith in God's word of promise rather than relying on human strength.

1:25 This is a very positive perspective on what the spies said; they said that Canaan was a good land, but the inhabitants of the land were far too strong for Israel, effectively calling God a liar. Moses is very positive about Israel in Deuteronomy. It's a sign of spiritual maturity that we impute righteousness to others and seek to focus on the positive rather than for ever dwelling on the terrible failures of God's people.

in their hands and brought it down to us and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which Yahweh our God gives to us. ²⁶ Yet you wouldn't go up, but rebelled against the commandment of Yahweh your God, ²⁷ and you murmured in your tents and said, Because Yahweh hated us He has brought us forth out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. ²⁸ Where are we going up? Our brothers have made our heart melt, saying, 'The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to the sky, and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there'. ²⁹ Then I said to you, Don't dread, neither be afraid of them. ³⁰ Yahweh your God who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all that He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, ³¹ and in the wilderness, where you have seen how Yahweh your God carried you as a man carries his son in all the way that you went, until you came to this place. ³² Yet in this thing you didn't believe Yahweh your God, ³³ Who went before you in the way, to seek you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night to show you by what way you should go, and in the cloud by day. ³⁴ Yahweh heard the voice of

your words and was angry and swore saying, ³⁵ Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land, which I swore to give to your fathers, ³⁶ except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it and to him I will give the land that he has trodden on, and to his children, because he has wholly followed Yahweh. ³⁷ Also Yahweh was angry with me for your sakes saying, You also shall not go in there. ³⁸ Joshua the son of Nun who stands before you, he shall go in there; encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. ³⁹ Moreover your little ones, whom you said should be a prey, and your children, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there and to them will I give it, and they shall possess it. ⁴⁰ But as for you, turn, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea. ⁴¹ Then you answered and said to me, We have sinned against Yahweh; we will go up and fight, according to all that Yahweh our God commanded us. Every man of you put on his weapons of war and presumed to go up into the hill country. ⁴² Yahweh said to me, Tell them, 'Don't go up, neither fight, for I am not among you, lest you be struck before your enemies'. ⁴³ So I spoke to

1:43 These Israelites who had crossed the Red Sea (cp. our baptism) and were now rejected from God's Kingdom, because they themselves had said they didn't want to inherit it, now wanted more than anything else to be there. This is a major Biblical theme – that the rejected will desperately ask to be allowed in to God's kingdom; the foolish virgins will knock on the closed door begging for it to be opened (Mt. 25:11; Lk. 13:25). Our ultimate destiny is to stand before the Lord wanting to enter His Kingdom with every fibre in our being. But this must be our attitude now, for then it will be too late to change anything.

you and you didn't listen, but you rebelled against the commandment of Yahweh and were presumptuous and went up into the hill country. ⁴⁴ The Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you, as bees do, and beat you down in Seir, even to Hormah. ⁴⁵ You returned and wept before Yahweh; but Yahweh didn't listen to your voice, nor gave ear to you. ⁴⁶ So you stayed in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you remained.

CHAPTER 2 Apr. 19

Instructions to Avoid Edom, Moab and Ammon

Then we turned and took our journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea as Yahweh spoke to me, and we circled Mount Seir many days. ² Yahweh spoke to me saying, ³ You have circled this mountain long enough; turn to the north. ⁴ Command the people saying, 'You are to pass through the border of your brothers the children of Esau, who dwell in Seir, and they will be afraid of you. Take good heed to yourselves therefore, ⁵ don't meddle with them, for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as for the

sole of the foot to tread on, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau for a possession. ⁶ You shall purchase food of them for money that you may eat, and you shall also buy water of them for money that you may drink'. ⁷ For Yahweh your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand; He has known your walking through this great wilderness; these forty years Yahweh your God has been with you and you have lacked nothing. ⁸ So we passed by from our brothers the children of Esau who dwell in Seir, from the way of the Arabah from Elath and from Ezion Geber. We turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab. ⁹ Yahweh said to me, Don't bother Moab, neither contend with them in battle, for I will not give you of his land for a possession, because I have given Ar to the children of Lot for a possession. ¹⁰ (The Emim lived there before, a people great and many and tall as the Anakim; ¹¹ these also are accounted Rephaim, as the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim. ¹² The Horites also lived in Seir before, but the children of Esau succeeded them, and they destroyed them from before them and lived in their place, as Israel did to the land

2:7 *He has known your walking* – Because God 'knew' Israel's journey through the wilderness, therefore they "lacked nothing". The Hebrew language reflects certain realities about the nature of God's ways. The common Hebrew word for 'to see', especially when used about God's 'seeing', means also 'to provide' (Gen. 16:13; 22:8,14; 1 Sam. 16:17;). What this means in practice is that the fact God sees and knows all things means that He can and will therefore and thereby provide for us in the circumstances of life; for He sees and knows all things.

2:12 *The children of Esau succeeded them, and they destroyed them from before them and lived in their place* – This history had been arranged by God to encourage His people; if those in the unbelieving world could do this, then how much more could they with God behind them. God arranges our lives so that we sometimes encounter

of his possession, which Yahweh gave to them.)¹³ Now rise up and cross over the brook Zered. We went over the brook Zered.¹⁴ The days in which we came from Kadesh Barnea until we had come over the brook Zered were thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war were consumed from the midst of the camp, as Yahweh swore to them.¹⁵ Moreover the hand of Yahweh was against them, to destroy them from the midst of the camp until they were consumed.¹⁶ So it happened. When all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people,¹⁷ Yahweh spoke to me saying,¹⁸ You are today to pass over Ar, the border of Moab,¹⁹ and when you come near to the children of Ammon, don't bother them or contend with them, for I will not give you of the land of the children of Ammon for a possession, because I have given it to the children of Lot for a possession.²⁰ That also is accounted a land of Rephaim. Rephaim lived there before, but the Ammonites call them

Zamzummim,²¹ a people great and many and tall, as the Anakim; but Yahweh destroyed them before them and they succeeded them and lived in their place,²² as He did for the children of Esau, who dwell in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them and they succeeded them and lived in their place to this day;²³ and the Avvim, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorim, who came out of Caphtor, destroyed them and lived in their place.

Sihon King of Heshbon Defeated

²⁴ Rise up, take your journey and pass over the valley of the Arnon. Behold, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite king of Heshbon and his land; begin to possess it and contend with him in battle.²⁵ This day will I begin to put the dread of you and the fear of you on the peoples who are under the whole sky, who will hear the report of you and will tremble and be in anguish because of you.²⁶ I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth to

others who without faith in God have achieved great things in their lives – in order to inspire us that if they can do it, how much more can we. See on 2:21.

2:19 *Don't bother them or contend with them* – As also commanded about other areas in :5 and :9. The idea was that Israel weren't to take anything less than the real promised land; they weren't to seek to develop their own kingdom wherever seemed easier and more convenient to them. Likewise we are surrounded by temptation to have our own pseudo-Kingdom of God in this life; but we are to keep focused on the one and only true Kingdom of God which is yet to come.

2:21 If giants weren't a barrier to the children of Lot taking land for a possession, neither should they be for Israel; but they greatly feared them (Num. 13:28,33). If worldly people can achieve as they do, how much more can we with God on our side. See on 2:12.

2:24 *Contend with him* – The implication could be that Moses was disobedient to this and tried to avoid confrontation with him (:27). But we can't ultimately avoid the confrontations which God at times puts in our path (:32).

Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace saying, ²⁷ Let me pass through your land; I will go along by the highway; I will turn neither to the right hand nor to the left. ²⁸ You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat and give me water for money, that I may drink; only let me pass through on my feet, ²⁹ as the children of Esau who dwell in Seir, and the Moabites who dwell in Ar, did to me, until I shall pass over the Jordan into the land which Yahweh our God gives us. ³⁰ But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him, for Yahweh your God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into your hand, as at this day. ³¹ Yahweh said to me, Behold, I have begun to deliver up Sihon and his land before you; begin to possess, that you may inherit his land. ³² Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Jahaz. ³³ Yahweh our God delivered him up before us and we struck him and his sons and all his people. ³⁴ We took all his cities at that time and utterly destroyed every inhabited city, with the women and the little ones. We left none remaining. ³⁵ Only the

livestock we took for a prey to ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we had taken. ³⁶ From Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and the city that is in the valley, to Gilead, there was not a city too high for us; Yahweh our God delivered up all before us. ³⁷ Only to the land of the children of Ammon you didn't come near, all the side of the river Jabbok, and the cities of the hill country, and wherever Yahweh our God forbade us.

CHAPTER 3 Apr. 20

Og King of Bashan Defeated

Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan, and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. ² Yahweh said to me, Don't fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand; you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon. ³ So Yahweh our God delivered into our hand Og also, the king of Bashan and all his people, and we struck him until none remained. ⁴ We took all his cities at that time. There was not a city which

2:29 *The land which Yahweh our God gives us* – This phrase or idea occurs many times in Deuteronomy. Moses was urging the people to believe the most basic reality – that God would really give them the promised Kingdom. And we too are likewise continually encouraged by God's word. In this particular example, Moses quite openly tells a Gentile people about their destination, in the same way as we should be unashamed to speak of our hope of the Kingdom to unbelievers.

2:31 *Begin to possess* – Even on our wilderness journey, before we have possessed the Kingdom, we do have some foretastes of that Kingdom; in the same way as Israel began to possess the promised land in some limited sense whilst still in the desert.

3:2 *Into your hand* – God gives us potential victories, but we still have to fight the human battle.

we didn't take from them; sixty cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. ⁵ All these were fortified cities with high walls, gates, and bars, besides the unwalled towns very many. ⁶ We utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying every inhabited city, with the women and the little ones. ⁷ But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took for a prey to ourselves. ⁸ We took the land at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, from the valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon. ⁹ (The Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir.) ¹⁰ We took all the cities of the plain, all Gilead, and all Bashan, to Salecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. ¹¹ (For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the Rephaim; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron. Is it not in Rabbah of the children of Ammon? Nine cubits was its length and four cubits its breadth, after the cubit of a man.)

Sharing the Land

¹² This land we took in possession at that time: from Aroer which is by the valley of the Arnon, and half the hill country of Gilead and its cities I gave to the Reubenites and to the Ga-

rites; ¹³ and the rest of Gilead and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, all of Bashan. (The same is called the land of Rephaim.) ¹⁴ Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob to the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called them, even Bashan, after his own name, Havvoth Jair, to this day. ¹⁵ I gave Gilead to Machir. ¹⁶ To the Reubenites and to the Gadites I gave from Gilead to the valley of the Arnon, the middle of the valley and its border, to the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon; ¹⁷ the Arabah also, and the Jordan and its border, from Chinnereth to the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, under the slopes of Pisgah eastward. ¹⁸ I commanded you at that time, saying Yahweh your God has given you this land to possess it; you shall pass over armed before your brothers, the children of Israel, all the men of valour. ¹⁹ But your wives and your little ones and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall live in your cities which I have given you, ²⁰ until Yahweh gives rest to your brothers as to you, and they also possess the land which Yahweh your God gives them beyond the Jordan; then you shall return every man to his possession which I have given you.

3:18 *God has given you this land to possess it* – Moses has just said that *he* gave Israel their land possessions (:12,13,15,16). So often we encounter this kind of thing; Moses loves to emphasize that God is working through him, that he is identified with God and merely His agent doing His work. Likewise the language of God can be applied to all His servants and supremely to His Son. This doesn't mean that they were God in person, neither was Jesus; but it also doesn't mean that we as individuals are meaningless because God is manifest through us.

²¹ I commanded Joshua at that time saying, Your eyes have seen all that Yahweh your God has done to these two kings; so shall Yahweh do to all the kingdoms where you go. ²² You shall not fear them, for Yahweh your God, He it is who fights for you.

Moses Forbidden to Cross the Jordan

²³ I begged Yahweh at that time saying, ²⁴ Lord Yahweh, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or in earth that can do according to Your works and according to Your mighty acts? ²⁵ Please let me go over and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that good mountain, and Lebanon. ²⁶ But Yahweh was angry with me for your sakes and didn't listen to me; and Yahweh said to me, Let

it suffice you; speak no more to Me of this matter. ²⁷ Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward, and see with your eyes, for you shall not go over this Jordan. ²⁸ But commission Joshua and encourage him and strengthen him, for he shall go over before this people and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you shall see. ²⁹ So we stayed in the valley over against Beth Peor.

CHAPTER 4 Apr. 21

Moses Commands the People to Obey God

Now Israel, listen to the statutes and to the ordinances which I teach you. Do them so that you may live and go in and possess the land which Yahweh, the God of your fathers gives you. ² You must not add

3:21 We are given some foretastes of the Kingdom of God even in this life; just as their victories in the wilderness were foretastes of the greater victories they would have against the inhabitants of Canaan.

3:25 Moses knew God well enough to know that He is capable of changing His stated intentions; for Moses had persuaded God not to destroy Israel as He once planned in His wrath. God is open to dialogue, He isn't the impervious 'Allah' of Islam who must be merely submitted to; and this gives our prayer life real energy and zest, knowing that we're not simply firing requests at God in the hope we might get at least some response; we can dialogue with God, wrestling in prayer over specific, concrete situations and requests.

3:26 *For your sakes* – Moses says this several times. Although he spoke Deuteronomy in his spiritual maturity at the end of his life, it could be argued that like all of us, he died with some spiritual point of weakness; and in his case it would have been his failure to own up fully to his sin of striking the rock, still blaming it on others even at the end of his life. But Moses will be saved; without any complacency, we all the same shouldn't think that we won't be saved because we have weaknesses we failed to overcome, and likewise we shouldn't assume others won't be saved because they can't recognize what to us is an obvious failure in their behaviour or personality.

4:2 *So that you may keep the commandments* – The last message of Jesus, like that of Moses, emphasizes we are not to add to nor subtract from God's word (Rev. 22:19).

to the word which I command you, neither must you take away from it, so that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your God which I command you. ³ Your eyes have seen what Yahweh did because of Baal Peor; for all the men who followed Baal Peor, Yahweh your God has destroyed them from the midst of you. ⁴ But you who were faithful to Yahweh your God are all alive this day. ⁵ Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances as Yahweh my God commanded me, that you should do so in the midst of the land where you go in to possess it. ⁶ Keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations who shall hear

all these statutes and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people! ⁷ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to them as Yahweh our God is whenever we call on Him? ⁸ What great nation is there that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? ⁹ Only take heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes saw and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; therefore make them known to your children and your children's children. ¹⁰ Remember the day that you stood before Yahweh your God in Horeb, when Yahweh said to me Assemble me the people and I will

The commandments we have been given are designed by God to be a system of living which brings us to Him as He wishes. Jesus was perfect before God not just because He kept the commandments fully, but because the life elicited by that obedience produced a totally God-like person. If we omit some commandments and add others, then this will not be the end result. They are intended to synthesize together to produce a truly spiritual character and way of life. If we ignore some of them and add others then we will actually find obedience to the commandments *in toto* far more difficult. See on 11:22.

4:9, 29, 39 *Your heart* – Time and again in Deuteronomy, Moses speaks of the state of the *heart*. He warns them against allowing a bad state of heart to develop, he speaks often of how apostasy starts in the heart. Moses makes a total of 49 references to the heart / mind of Israel in Deuteronomy, compared to only 13 in the whole of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. This was perhaps his greatest wish as he faced death; that God's people should develop a spiritual *mind* and thereby manifest the Father and come to salvation. He saw the state of our mind as the key to spiritual success. But do we share this perspective? There is so much in our modern world which is mind-corrupting. Perceiving the importance of spiritual mindedness is a sign of our spiritual maturity.

Therefore make them known to your children – The very process of teaching or explaining something to others makes us fully conscious of the material we are teaching; and so preaching or teaching our children God's principles enables us to be the more conscious of them and to ourselves remember them. The whole concept of evangelization is partly for our benefit.

4:10 The LXX uses the word *ekklesia* eight times in Deuteronomy, but not once in Moses' other words (4:10; 9:10; 18:16; 23:1,2,3,8; 32:1). Responsibility for the whole

make them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they live on the land and that they may teach their children. ¹¹ You came near and stood under the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the heart of the sky, with darkness, cloud and thick darkness. ¹² Yahweh spoke to you out of the midst of the fire; you heard the voice of words, but you saw no form; you only heard a voice. ¹³ He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments, and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. ¹⁴ Yahweh commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and ordinances that you might do them in the land you go over to possess.

Idols Forbidden

¹⁵ Take therefore good heed to yourselves, for you saw no kind of form on the day that Yahweh spoke to you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire.

¹⁶ Do not corrupt yourselves and make yourself an engraved image in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, ¹⁷ the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies

in the sky, ¹⁸ the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. ¹⁹ Do not lift up your eyes to the sky and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the army of the sky, be drawn away and worship them and serve them, which Yahweh your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole sky. ²⁰ But Yahweh has taken you and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be to Him a people of inheritance, right up to this day. ²¹ Furthermore, Yahweh was angry with me for your sakes and swore that I should not go over the Jordan, and that I should not go in to that good land which Yahweh your God gives you for an inheritance; ²² but I must die in this land. I must not go over the Jordan; but you shall go over and possess that good land. ²³ Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of Yahweh your God which He made with you, and make you an engraved image in the form of anything which Yahweh your God has forbidden you. ²⁴ For Yahweh your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

family God had redeemed was a mark of Moses' maturity. Both as the community of believers and as individuals, this will be a sign of our maturity too.

4:16 Engraved image – God's people are to accept Him as He is in His word, rather than try to create God in a form which seems attractive to us. As we read His word, it is not for us to say 'I don't think God would be like *that*, He will be like *this*, which is how I imagine He ought to be'. And it is not for us to work around those words of His which are inconvenient to us by forced, out of context interpretation, dismissing their inspiration or using other tricks of the human intellect. By doing so we are effectively making a graven image, fashioning God as we want Him to be rather than accepting Him as He is.

4:24 Yahweh your God is a consuming fire – This is quoted about us in Heb. 12:29 with a slight change of pronoun; "*Your* (Israel's) God" becomes "*our* God". The God

Punishments for Idolatry

²⁵ When you father children and children's children and you have been long in the land and corrupt yourselves and make an engraved image in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of Yahweh your God, to provoke Him to anger, ²⁶ I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you shall soon utterly perish from off the land you go over the Jordan to possess; you shall not prolong your days on it, but shall utterly be destroyed. ²⁷ Yahweh will scatter you among the nations and you shall be left few in number among the nations where Yahweh shall lead you away. ²⁸ There you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. ²⁹ But from there you shall seek Yahweh your God and you will find Him, when you search after Him with all your heart and with all your soul. ³⁰ When you are oppressed and all these things have

come on you, in the latter days you shall return to Yahweh your God and listen to His voice; ³¹ for Yahweh your God is a merciful God; He will not fail you neither destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them. ³² For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and from the one end of the sky to the other, whether there has been anything like this great thing, or has been heard like it? ³³ Did a people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as you have heard, and live? ³⁴ Or has God tried to take a nation for Himself from the midst of another nation by trials, by signs and by wonders, by war and by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, according to all that Yahweh your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? ³⁵ It was shown to you so that you might know that Yahweh is God and that there is none else besides Him.

of the Christian believers is the Old Testament Yahweh God of Israel; in this we see the significance of studying the accounts of how our God revealed Himself in the Old Testament.

4:27 *Left few in number among the nations* – Israel were indeed disobedient and were scattered throughout the provinces of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires. “There you will serve gods...” (:28) – but the prophets (especially Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) condemned them for this. There is a downward spiral in spirituality, whereby if people choose to go to false gods, the true God confirms them in their delusions.

This is why followers of false religions are so totally convinced they are right, everything makes sense to them within the theological system they adopt – because God confirms them in the delusion they have chosen (2 Thess. 2:11).

4:30 *In the latter days you shall return* – This is one of many indications that just before Christ returns, at least some Jews will repent and turn to the Father and His Son in truth. We should therefore always give special attention to witnessing the Gospel to Jewish people, because their repentance will be one factor which brings about Christ's return.

³⁶ Out of heaven He made you hear his voice so that He might instruct you, and on earth He made you see His great fire and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. ³⁷ Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their seed after them and brought you out with His presence, with His great power, out of Egypt, ³⁸ to drive out nations from before you greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as at this day. ³⁹ Know therefore this day and lay it to your heart, that Yahweh He is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is none else. ⁴⁰ You must keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you this day, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which Yahweh your God gives you forever.

Cities of Refuge

⁴¹ Then Moses set apart three cities beyond the Jordan toward the east ⁴² that the manslayer might flee there, who kills his neighbour unawares, and didn't hate him in time past, and that fleeing to one of these cities he might live: ⁴³ Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country for the Reubenites; Ramoth in Gilead

for the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites. ⁴⁴ This is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel; ⁴⁵ these are the testimonies, the statutes and the ordinances, which Moses spoke to the children of Israel when they came forth out of Egypt, ⁴⁶ beyond the Jordan, in the valley over against Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel struck, when they came forth out of Egypt. ⁴⁷ They took his land in possession, and the land of Og king of Bashan, the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise, ⁴⁸ from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, to Mount Sion (the same is Hermon), ⁴⁹ and all the Arabah beyond the Jordan eastward, even to the sea of the Arabah, under the slopes of Pisgah.

CHAPTER 5 Apr. 22

The Ten Commandments

Moses called to all Israel and said to them, Hear, Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I speak in your ears this day, that you may learn them and observe to do them. ² Yahweh our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. ³ Yahweh didn't make this covenant with our fathers but with us, even us, who are

4:37, 38 *Brought you out... to bring you in* – Our separation from this world isn't merely negative. We are separated *from* the world so that we might be separated *unto* the things of God. These two ideas are found together in the Hebrew word for 'holiness'.

5:1 *Learn them and observe... them* – Learning / understanding God's principles is the way towards being obedient to them. None of His laws are mere senseless tests of our obedience or submission to Him; they have specific intention.

5:3 *Didn't make this covenant with our fathers* – We must read in an ellipsis here; clearly the idea is that what God had done at Sinai wasn't *only* between Him and the

all of us here alive this day. ⁴ Yahweh spoke with you face to face on the mountain out of the midst of the fire, ⁵ (I stood between Yahweh and you at that time to show you the word of Yahweh, for you were afraid because of the fire, and didn't go up onto the mountain) saying, ⁶ I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ⁷ You must have no other gods before Me. ⁸ You must not make an engraved image for yourself, any likeness of what is in heaven above, or what is in the earth beneath, or what is in the water under the earth. ⁹ You must not bow down yourself to them nor serve them, for I Yahweh your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the

fourth generation of those who hate Me, ¹⁰ and showing loving kindness to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments. ¹¹ You must not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. ¹² Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as Yahweh your God commanded you. ¹³ You shall labour six days and do all your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God in which you must not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your livestock, nor the stranger who is within your gates; so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as

people there at that time, but also with all His subsequent people. In our Bible study we must be aware that we are reading translations of languages which often rely on understanding the idiom for their real meaning to be delivered to us the readers. In Hebrew especially, we often have to read in an ellipsis; and this verse is a parade example.

5:5 The way Moses in his spiritual maturity in Deuteronomy sees Israel as far more righteous than they were reflects the way the Lord imputes righteousness to us. He says here that Israel didn't go near the mountain because they were afraid of the fire, whereas Ex. 19:21-24 teaches that Israel at that time were not so afraid of the fire, and were quite inclined to break through the dividing fence and gaze in unspiritual fascination at a theophany which was beyond them. Counting others as righteous rather than endlessly holding them to their failings is the way of grace; and is the mark of maturity.

5:9 *Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children* – Throughout Ez. 18 God clarifies that He doesn't punish children for the sin of their parents; He deals with people on an individual level. However, the effect of sin is often felt in the society of subsequent generations, and in the process of how that works out, God is there enabling and permitting it to happen; in the same way as we all suffer the consequence of Adam's sin and yet can still be God's acceptable children.

5:11 We take on the Name of the Lord by baptism into that Name, just as Israel carried God's Name as a people in Old Testament times. Our relationship with Him is not to be a vain thing to us, a mere social club we joined, a casual association – it is to be our life, at the very core of our being.

you. ¹⁵ You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm, therefore Yahweh your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. ¹⁶ Honour your father and your mother as Yahweh your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land which Yahweh your God gives you. ¹⁷ You must not murder. ¹⁸ Neither must you commit adultery. ¹⁹ Neither must you steal. ²⁰ Neither must you give false testimony against your neighbour. ²¹ Neither must you covet your neighbour's wife, neither shall you desire your neighbour's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's. ²² These words Yahweh spoke to all your assembly on the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud and the thick darkness, with a great voice; and He added no more. He wrote them on two tablets of stone

and gave them to me. ²³ When you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness as the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders, ²⁴ and you said, Behold, Yahweh our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God does speak with man and he lives. ²⁵ Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of Yahweh our God any more, then we shall die. ²⁶ For who is there of all humanity that has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire as we have, and has lived? ²⁷ Go near and hear all that Yahweh our God shall say, and tell us all that Yahweh our God shall tell you, and we will hear it and do it. ²⁸ Yahweh heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me and Yahweh said to me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you;

5:21 The Law of Moses was the only legal code to criminalize internal attitudes; nobody knows who covets what in their hearts, and there was no legal apparatus to punish this particular transgression of law. But the Law of Moses was a direct covenant between God and every individual amongst His people, and to Him they were personally responsible and answerable.

5:22 When Moses commented about the commandments that God “added no more”, he foresaw his people's tendency to add the Halachas of their extra commandments. . . In this his time of spiritual maturity he could foresee the spiritual problems they would have in their hour by hour life, and Moses foresaw that they would not cope well with them. Sensitivity to others' likely failures and concern for them is another indicator of spiritual maturity.

5:27 We too have a tendency to shy away from a direct relationship with God through His word, and prefer a system of human mediators to bring God to us – as we see in the established churches. But God wants to have direct contact with us through the medium of His word.

they have well said all that they have spoken. ²⁹ Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! ³⁰ Go, tell them, Return to your tents. ³¹ But as for you, stand here by Me and I will tell you all the commandments, the statutes and the ordinances, which you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess. ³² You must observe to do therefore as Yahweh your God has commanded you; you must not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. ³³ You must walk in all the way which Yahweh your God has commanded you, in order that you may live and that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess.

CHAPTER 6 Apr. 23

The Command to Love God

Now these are the commandments, the statutes and the ordinances which Yahweh your God commanded to teach you, that you might do them in the land which you go over to possess, ² in order that you might fear Yahweh your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, yes you, your son and your son's son, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. ³ Hear therefore, Israel, and observe to do it, so that it may be well with you and that you may increase mightily, as Yahweh the God of your fathers has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁴ Hear, Israel: Yahweh is our God; Yahweh is one; ⁵ and you shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all

6:3 *The God of your fathers* – It's been observed that the phrase "The God of [somebody]", or similar, occurs 614 times in the Old Testament, of which 306 are in Deuteronomy. Our very personal relationship with God was therefore something else which Moses came to grasp in his spiritual maturity.

That it may be well with you – Moses really wanted Israel's well-being, he saw so clearly how obedience would result in blessing (see also 12:28). This is a major theme of Moses in Deuteronomy. There was therefore a real sense of pleading behind his frequent appeal for Israel to "hear" God's words. "*Hear, Israel*" must have had a real passion behind it in his voice, uncorrupted as it was by old age. He didn't rattle it off as some kind of Sunday School text. At least four times Moses interrupts the flow of his speech with this appeal: "*Hear, Israel*" (5:1; 6:3,4; 9:1; 20:3). At the end of his life, Moses saw the supreme significance of our attitude to God's word, and so he pleads with God's people: Hear the word, love the word, make it your life. For in this is your salvation. And Jesus (in passages like Jn. 6) makes just the same urgent appeal to us.

6:4 The fact there is only one God means that He is to have our total loyalty and love (:5). If there were two gods, each would have 50%. But the one God demands our total devotion.

6:5 Some time, read through the book of Deuteronomy in one or two sessions. You'll see many themes of Moses in Deuteronomy. It shows how Moses felt towards Israel, and how the Lord Jesus feels towards us, and especially how he felt towards us just before his death. For Jesus was the prophet like unto Moses. "Love" and the idea of

your soul and with all your might. ⁶ These words which I command you this day shall be on your heart; ⁷ and you must teach them diligently to your children and talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them for a sign on your hand and they shall be for memorials between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the door posts of your house and on your gates. ¹⁰ When Yahweh your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers to give you, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, great and good cities which you didn't build, ¹¹ houses full of all good things which you didn't fill, and wells dug out which you didn't dig, vineyards and olive trees which you didn't plant, and you shall eat and be full - ¹² then beware lest you forget Yahweh, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ¹³ You must fear Yahweh your God and you shall serve Him and shall swear by His name. ¹⁴ You must not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you, ¹⁵ for Yahweh your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of Yahweh your God shall be kindled against you and He shall destroy you from off the face of the land. ¹⁶ You must not test Yahweh your God as you tested Him in Massah. ¹⁷ You

must diligently keep the commandments of Yahweh your God and His testimonies and His statutes which He has commanded you. ¹⁸ You must do that which is right and good in the sight of Yahweh, that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess the good land which Yahweh swore to your fathers, ¹⁹ to thrust out all your enemies from before you, as Yahweh has spoken. ²⁰ When your son asks you in time to come, What do the testimonies, the statutes and the ordinances which Yahweh our God has commanded you mean? ²¹ then you shall tell your son, We were Pharaoh's bondservants in Egypt and Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, ²² and Yahweh showed great and awesome signs and wonders on Egypt, on Pharaoh and on all his house, before our eyes. ²³ He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He swore to our fathers. ²⁴ Yahweh commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Yahweh our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as at this day. ²⁵ It shall be righteousness to us if we observe to do all these commandments before Yahweh our God, as He has commanded us.

CHAPTER 7 Apr. 23

The Nations to Be Driven Out

When Yahweh your God brings you into the land where you

love occurs far more in Deuteronomy than in the other books of the Law. "Fear the Lord your God" of Exodus becomes "love the Lord your God" in Deuteronomy. Moses perceived that love is indeed the bond or proof of spiritual maturity (Col. 3:14).

7:1 God and Moses had stated that the Canaanite tribes would only be cast out if Israel

go to possess it and casts out many nations before you, the Hittite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ² and when Yahweh your God delivers them up before you and you defeat them, then you must utterly destroy them. You must make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them, ³ neither shall you arrange marriages with them; your daughter you shall not give to his son, nor shall you take his daughter for your son. ⁴ For he will turn away your son from following me to serve other gods; so the anger of Yahweh would be kindled against you and He would destroy you quickly. ⁵ But you must deal with them like this: break down their altars and dash their pillars in pieces and cut down their Asherim poles and burn their engraved images with fire. ⁶ For you are a holy people to Yahweh your

God; Yahweh your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession above all peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷ Yahweh didn't set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any people, for you were the fewest of all peoples; ⁸ but because Yahweh loves you and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, therefore has Yahweh brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹ Know therefore that Yahweh your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps covenant and loving kindness with them who love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations, ¹⁰ and repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them; He will not be slack to him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face. ¹¹ You must therefore keep the command-

were obedient, but here Moses enthuses that those tribes would indeed be cast out – so positive was he about Israel's obedience (see too 6:18,19). And yet on the other hand he realistically was aware of their future failures. He said those positive words genuinely, because he simply loved Israel, and had the hope for them which love carries with it. Throughout his speech in Deuteronomy, Moses is *constantly* thinking of Israel in the land; he keeps on telling them how to behave when they are there, encouraging them to be strong so that they will go into the land. Roughly 25% of the verses in Moses' speech speak about this. Israel's future inheritance of the Kingdom absolutely filled Moses' mind as he faced up to his own death. And remember that his speech was the outpouring of 40 years meditation. Their salvation, them in the Kingdom, totally filled his heart; just as like Paul we should enthuse about others' salvation, not simply our own. And likewise with the Lord Jesus. Psalms 22 and 69 show how His thoughts on the cross, especially as he approached the point of death, were centred around our salvation.

7:7, 9, 13 Analyzing usage of the word "love" in the Pentateuch reveals that "love" was a great theme of Moses at the end of his life (Moses uses it 16 times in Deuteronomy, and only four times in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers). Love is indeed the proof of spiritual maturity (Col. 3:14).

ment, the statutes and the ordinances which I command you this day, to do them.

Blessings for Obedience

¹² If you listen to these ordinances and keep and do them, Yahweh your God will keep with you the covenant and the loving kindness which He swore to your fathers. ¹³ He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your body and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your livestock and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your fathers to give you. ¹⁴ You will be blessed above all peoples. There shall not be male or female barren among you or among your livestock. ¹⁵ Yahweh will take away from you all sickness, and none of the evil diseases of Egypt which you know, will He put on you, but will lay them on all those who hate you. ¹⁶ You shall consume all the peoples whom Yahweh your God shall deliver up unto you; your eye shall not pity them, neither shall you serve their gods,

for that will be a snare to you. ¹⁷ If you say in your heart, These nations are more than I, how can I dispossess them?, ¹⁸ you shall not be afraid of them; you shall well remember what Yahweh your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, ¹⁹ the great trials which your eyes saw and the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand and the stretched out arm by which Yahweh your God brought you out; so shall Yahweh your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. ²⁰ Moreover Yahweh your God will send the hornet among them until those who are left and hide themselves perish from before you. ²¹ You shall not be scared of them, for Yahweh your God is in the midst of you, a great and awesome God. ²² Yahweh your God will cast out those nations before you by little and little; you may not consume them at once, lest the animals of the field increase on you. ²³ But Yahweh your God will deliver them up before you and will confuse them with a great confusion until they are destroyed. ²⁴ He will deliver their kings into your hand and you shall make their name per-

7:16 Despite such great love for Israel, Moses knew them so well that he fully appreciated that they were extremely prone to weakness. This is one of the major themes of Moses in Deuteronomy. He did not turn a blind eye to their sins; Deuteronomy is punctuated with reminders of how grievously they had sinned during their journey, and yet at the same time Moses is so positive about them – setting a wonderful pattern for us in how to deal with others. Time and again he comments on how easily they will be tempted to disobey commandments. “Take heed” runs like a refrain throughout Moses’ speech. He warns them here not to “take pity” on false teachers, but to purge them from the community (7:16; 13:8; 19:13,21; 25:12). Not once in the earlier giving of the Law does this warning occur. Moses had come to know Israel so well that he could see how they were tempted to fail, and so he warned them forcibly against it. The way Jesus knows our thought processes, the mechanism of our temptations, is wondrously prefigured here.

ish from under the sky; no man shall be able to stand before you, until you have destroyed them. ²⁵ You must burn the engraved images of their gods with fire. You must not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourself, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to Yahweh your God. ²⁶ You must not bring an abomination into your house and become a devoted thing like it. You shall utterly detest it and you shall utterly abhor it, for it is a devoted thing.

CHAPTER 8 Apr. 24

Do Not Forget

You must observe to do all the commandments which I command you this day, that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers. ² You shall remember all the way which Yahweh your God

has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble you, to prove you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ He humbled you and allowed you to suffer hunger, and fed you with manna, which you didn't know, neither did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh. ⁴ Your clothing didn't grow old on you, neither did your foot swell, these forty years. ⁵ You shall consider in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so Yahweh your God chastens you. ⁶ You must keep the commandments of Yahweh your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. ⁷ For Yahweh your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of springs and underground water gushing into valleys

8:3 *Man does not live by bread only* – The passages quoted by Jesus in the desert to strengthen Himself against His human desires (“the devil”) are all from the same part of Deuteronomy, regarding Israel’s experience in the wilderness. Jesus clearly saw a parallel between His experiences and theirs. The description of Him as being in the wilderness with beasts and Angels (Mk. 1:13) is another connection with Israel’s experience in the wilderness – they were plagued there by “wild beasts” (32:19-24). Jesus was led up of the spirit for forty days in the wilderness, as Israel were led forty years by a Spirit-Angel. The mind of Jesus was likewise proved by the temptations. Jesus overcame by quoting the Scriptures that were in His heart (Ps. 119:11). Jesus also was allowed to hunger, to reinforce His understanding of the fact that we are to live not by physical food but by the word of God. The reference to Israel being ‘chastened’ (:5) in the desert recall how God chastened His Son, Jesus (2 Sam. 7:12; Ps. 89: 32). Thus Jesus showed us how to read and study the Word – He thought Himself into the position of Israel in the wilderness, and therefore took the lessons that can be learnt from their experiences to Himself in His wilderness trials.

8:4 God has likewise promised to provide us on our wilderness journey with basic clothing and food (Ps. 37:25). We should be content with this, and instead of giving our strength to earn money to tickle our taste buds and buy fine clothing, instead give our lives to serving God.

and hills; ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, vines, fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees and honey; ⁹ a land in which you shall eat bread without scarcity. You shall not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you may dig copper. ¹⁰ When you shall eat and be full, then you shall bless Yahweh your God for the good land which He has given you. ¹¹ Beware lest you forget Yahweh your God in not keeping His commandments, His ordinances and His statutes which I command you this day; ¹² lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and lived therein, ¹³ and when your herds and your flocks multiply and your silver and your gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart be lifted up and you forget Yahweh your God, Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; ¹⁵ Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with fiery serpents, scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; Who brought you forth water out of the rock of flint; ¹⁶ Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers didn't know, that He might humble you and that He might prove you, to do you good

at your latter end; ¹⁷ and lest you say in your heart, My power and the might of my hand has given me this wealth. ¹⁸ But you must remember Yahweh your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as at this day. ¹⁹ If you forget Yahweh your God, and walk after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ As the nations that Yahweh makes to perish before you, so you too shall perish, because you wouldn't listen to the voice of Yahweh your God.

CHAPTER 9 Apr. 24

Israel Not Given the Land for Their Righteousness

Hear, Israel: you are to pass over the Jordan this day to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and walled up to the sky, ² a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know and of whom you have heard say, Who can stand before the sons of Anak? ³ Know therefore this day that Yahweh your God is He who goes over before you as a devouring fire. He will destroy them and He will bring them down before you; so you

8:9 *You may dig copper* – But in Judges and 1 Samuel we read several times of how Israel hardly had any iron weapons and were dominated by the Philistines who did. So this was a potential for them – they *could* have had this blessing, but like us so often, they chose to be satisfied with the minimum and didn't realize it for themselves.

9:3 Moses uses the name “Yahweh” over 530 times in Deuteronomy, often with some possessive adjective, e.g. “Yahweh *your* God” or “Yahweh *our* God”. Now at the end of his life, he saw the wonder of personal relationship between a man and his God. Jacob reached a like realization at his peak.

shall drive them out and make them perish quickly, as Yahweh has spoken to you. ⁴ Don't say in your heart, after Yahweh your God has thrust them out from before you, For my righteousness Yahweh has brought me in to possess this land; because Yahweh drives them out before you because of the wickedness of these nations. ⁵ Not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart do you go in to possess their land, but for the wickedness of these nations Yahweh your God drives them out from before you, and that He may establish the word which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. ⁶ Know therefore that Yahweh your God doesn't give you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people. ⁷ Remember, don't forget, how you provoked Yahweh your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you went forth out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place you have been rebellious against Yahweh.

The Golden Calf

⁸ Also in Horeb you provoked Yahweh to wrath and Yahweh was angry

with you to destroy you. ⁹ When I had gone up onto the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which Yahweh made with you, then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water. ¹⁰ Yahweh delivered to me the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words which Yahweh spoke with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. ¹¹ At the end of forty days and forty nights Yahweh gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant. ¹² Yahweh said to me Arise, get down quickly from here, for your people whom you have brought out of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made themselves a molten image. ¹³ Furthermore Yahweh spoke to me saying, I have seen this people and truly it is a stiff-necked people; ¹⁴ let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under the sky, and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they. ¹⁵ So I turned and came down from the mountain, and

9:14 Despite knowing their weakness and his own righteousness, Moses showed a marvellous softness and humility in the speeches which are recorded in Deuteronomy. Here he does not mention how fervently he had prayed for them, so fervently that God changed His expressed intention; Moses *does not mention how he offered his physical and eternal life for their salvation*. That fine act and desire by Moses went unknown to Israel until the book of Exodus came into circulation. And likewise, the depth of Christ's love for us was unrecognised by us at the time. Moses had such humility in not telling in Israel in so many words how fervently he had loved them; for this really is love. The spiritual culture and love of the Lord Jesus is even greater.

Let Me alone – This reflects the amazingly close relationship between God and Moses. It's as if God is saying: 'I know you might persuade Me to change My mind on this

the mountain was burning with fire, and the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands. ¹⁶ I looked and truly, you had sinned against Yahweh your God; you had made yourselves a molten calf; you had turned aside quickly out of the way which Yahweh had commanded you. ¹⁷ I took hold of the two tablets and cast them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes. ¹⁸ I fell down before Yahweh as at the first, forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you sinned, in doing that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh to provoke him to anger. ¹⁹ For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which Yahweh was angry against you to destroy you. But Yahweh listened to me that time also. ²⁰ Yahweh was very angry with Aaron to destroy him, and I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. ²¹ I

took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burnt it with fire and stamped it, grinding it very small until it was as fine as dust, and I cast its dust into the brook that descended out of the mountain. ²² (At Taberah and at Massah and at Kibroth Hattaavah you provoked Yahweh to wrath. ²³ When Yahweh sent you from Kadesh Barnea, saying Go up and possess the land which I have given you, then you rebelled against the commandment of Yahweh your God, and you didn't believe Him, nor listen to His voice. ²⁴ You have been rebellious against Yahweh from the day that I knew you).

Moses Begs God Not to Destroy Israel

²⁵ So I fell down before Yahweh the forty days and forty nights because Yahweh had said He would destroy you. ²⁶ I prayed to Yahweh and said

one, but please, don't try, I might give in, when really they do need to be destroyed'. We too can have this level of intimacy with God.

Blot out their name – Moses prayed that *his* name would be 'blotted out' instead (Ex. 32:32). To be blotted out of the book God had written may have been understood by Moses as asking for him to be excluded from an inheritance in the promised land; for later, a 'book' was written describing the various portions (Josh. 18:9). The connection is made explicit in Ez. 13:9. If Israel were to be blotted out there and then in the wilderness, then Moses wanted to share this experience, such was his identity with his ungrateful people; and yet this peak of devotion is but a dim shadow of the extent of Christ's love for us. In 9:18 he says that his prayer of Ex. 32:32 *was heard* – in that he was not going to enter the land, but they would. Hence his urging of them throughout Deuteronomy to go ahead and enter the land – to experience what his self-sacrifice had enabled. In this we see the economy of God, and how He works even through sin. On account of Moses' temporary rashness of speech, he didn't enter the land. And yet by this, his prayer was heard. He was temporarily blotted out of the book, so that they might enter the land. This is why Moses stresses now at the end of his life that he wouldn't enter the land *for Israel's sake* (1:37; 3:26; 4:21). He saw that his sin had been worked through, and the essential reason for him not entering was because of the offer he had made. It "went badly with him *for their sakes*" (Ps. 106:32).

Lord Yahweh, don't destroy Your people and Your inheritance that You have redeemed through Your greatness, that You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ²⁷ Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Don't look at the stubbornness of this people, nor at their wickedness, nor their sin, ²⁸ lest the land You brought us out from say, 'Because Yahweh was not able to bring them into the land which He promised to them and because He hated them He has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness'. ²⁹ Yet they are Your people and Your inheritance, which You brought out by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm.

CHAPTER 10 Apr. 25

New Stone Tablets

At that time Yahweh said to me, Cut two tablets of stone like the first and come up to Me onto the mountain and make an ark of wood. ² I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke, and you shall put them within that ark. ³ So I made an ark of acacia wood and cut two tablets of stone like the first, and went up onto the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand. ⁴ He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which Yahweh

spoke to you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly, and Yahweh gave them to me. ⁵ I turned and came down from the mountain and put the tablets into the ark which I had made, and there they are as Yahweh commanded me. ⁶ (The children of Israel travelled from Beeroth Bene Jaakan to Moserah. There Aaron died and there he was buried, and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his place. ⁷ From there they travelled to Gudgodah and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of brooks of water. ⁸ At that time Yahweh set apart the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, to stand before Yahweh to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day. ⁹ Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers; Yahweh is his inheritance according as Yahweh your God spoke to him.) ¹⁰ I stayed on the mountain, as at the first time, forty days and forty nights and Yahweh listened to me that time also; Yahweh would not destroy you. ¹¹ Yahweh said to me Arise, take your journey before the people, and they shall go in and possess the land, which I swore to their fathers to give to them.

Warning to Respect God

¹² Now Israel, what does Yahweh your God require of you, but to fear

10:11 Moses led God's people to the land, the Kingdom, but couldn't himself take them in there – the Law with which he was associated revealed the Kingdom, but it needed Joshua / Jesus to actually bring them into it.

10:12 Alluded to in Mic. 6:8, where walking in God's ways is understood as walking in humility; and 'loving God' is expanded into loving to show justice and mercy. We can be tempted to think that we can 'love God' within our own hearts by accepting

Yahweh your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him and to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ to keep the commandments of Yahweh and His statutes, which I command you this day for your good? ¹⁴ Behold, to Yahweh your God belongs heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth, with all that is in it. ¹⁵ It's just that Yahweh had a delight in your fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, even you above all peoples, as it is at this day. ¹⁶ Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked. ¹⁷ For Yahweh your God, He is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, the mighty and the awesome, who doesn't respect persons nor take reward. ¹⁸ He executes justice for the fatherless and widow and loves the foreigner, in giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹ Therefore love the foreigner, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. ²⁰ You must fear Yahweh your God; you must serve Him and cling to Him and you shall swear by His name. ²¹ He is your praise and He is your God, Who has done for you these great and awesome things

which your eyes have seen. ²² Your fathers went down into Egypt with seventy persons, and now Yahweh your God has made you as the stars of the sky for multitude.

CHAPTER 11 Apr. 25

Command to Love God

Therefore you must love Yahweh your God and keep His instructions, His statutes, His ordinances and His commandments always. ² Know this day - for I don't speak with your children who have not known, and who have not seen the chastisement of Yahweh your God - His greatness, His mighty hand and His outstretched arm; ³ His signs and His works, which He did in the midst of Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land; ⁴ and what He did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots; how He made the water of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued after you, and how Yahweh has destroyed them to this day; ⁵ and what He did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place; ⁶ and what He did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben, how the earth opened

His existence and reading the Bible. But it has to be more than that; to love God is to love others, to be merciful to the irritating and ungracious (:18). We cannot love God without loving our brethren (1 Jn. 3:17; 4:21). To love God in this way is in the end 'for our own good' (:13).

10:22 This was an initial, primary fulfilment of the promises to Abraham; we too have some foretastes of the Kingdom life even now.

11:4 *Destroyed them to this day* – We are to understand each victory and achievement of God as somehow ongoing right down to our own day and our own lives and experience. This is what makes the Bible a *living* word for us. This explains why David repeatedly refers to the miracle at the Red Sea as if this had affected him personally, to the extent that he could ecstatically rejoice because of it.

its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households and their tents and every living thing that followed them in the midst of all Israel. ⁷ Your eyes have seen all the great work of Yahweh which He did. ⁸ Therefore you must keep all the commandment which I command you this day, that you may be strong and go in and possess the land where you go over to possess it, ⁹ and that you may prolong your days in the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers to give to them and to their seed, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ For the land where you go in to possess it isn't as the land of Egypt that you came out from, where you sowed your seed and watered it with your foot, as a garden of herbs; ¹¹ but the land you go over to possess is a land of hills and valleys which drinks water of the rain of the sky, ¹² a land which Yahweh your God cares for. The eyes of Yahweh your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

Blessings for Obedience

¹³ If you will listen diligently to my commandments which I command

you this day, to love Yahweh your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹⁴ I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine and your oil. ¹⁵ I will give grass in your fields for your livestock and you shall eat and be full. ¹⁶ Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived and you turn aside, and serve other gods and worship them, ¹⁷ and the anger of Yahweh be kindled against you and He shut up the sky, so that there shall be no rain, and the land shall not yield its fruit and you perish quickly from off the good land which Yahweh gives you. ¹⁸ Therefore you must lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them for a sign on your hand and they shall be for memorials between your eyes. ¹⁹ You must teach them to your children, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. ²⁰ Write them on the door posts of your house and on your gates, ²¹ that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your

11:10 *Go in... came out* – See on 4:37,38.

11:11 The people were often reminded that they were about to “go over [Jordan] to possess” the land, as if they were on the banks of Jordan almost.

11:16 There are so many other examples of Moses showing his recognition of exactly *how* Israel were likely to be tempted (Dt. 6:11-13; 8:11-20; 9:4; 11:16; 12:13,19,23,30; 13:1-4; 14:27; 15:9,18; 17:11,12 (“will”),14,16,17; 21:18; 22:1-4,18; 23:21; 25:8). See on 7:16. We can take comfort in God’s sensitivity to us in an age unlike any other and apparently with its own unprecedented temptations.

11:21 *As the days of the heavens upon the earth* – This is the essence of the New Testament idea of the “Kingdom of Heaven” [not, the Kingdom *in* Heaven] coming upon earth at Christ’s return.

children, in the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers to give them, as the days of the heavens upon the earth. ²² For if you will diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love Yahweh your God, to walk in all His ways and to cleave to Him, ²³ then will Yahweh drive out all these nations from before you and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves. ²⁴ Every place on which the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours, from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river Euphrates, to the hinder sea shall be your border. ²⁵ No man will be able to stand before you. Yahweh your God will lay the fear of you and the dread of you on all the land that you will tread on, as He has spoken to you. ²⁶ Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ the blessing, if you will listen to the commandments of Yahweh your God which I command you this day, ²⁸ and the curse if you will not listen to the

commandments of Yahweh your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods which you have not previously known. ²⁹ When Yahweh your God brings you into the land where you go to possess it, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. ³⁰ Aren't they beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh? ³¹ For you are to pass over the Jordan to go in to possess the land which Yahweh your God gives you, and you shall possess it, and dwell therein. ³² You shall observe all the statutes and the ordinances which I set before you this day.

CHAPTER 12 Apr. 26

God's Choice of a Place to Worship

These are the statutes and ordinances which you shall observe to do in the land which Yahweh, the

11:22 The idea of 'cleaving' to God is a big theme of Moses in Deuteronomy (4:4; 10:20; 13:4,17; 28:21,60; 30:20); the only other time Moses uses the word in his writings is in Gen. 2:24, concerning a man cleaving to his wife. Moses seems to have been suggesting to Israel that their covenant relationship with God meant they were *marrying God*. This was a real paradigm breaker. We may be used to such things. But against the theological background of the time, not to say the generally low level of spirituality among Israel, this was a shocking idea – that a nation's God was not distant from them and just occasionally involved, but married to them placing them as equal partners with Him in the relationship. It reflected the heights to which Moses had risen. *All this commandment* – Note the singular. Israel weren't to add to or reduce the commandments because they were as a body of commandment intended to enable a complete life before God. See on 4:2.

11:24 *The river, the Euphrates* – The entire territory promised to Abraham could've been given to them if they had bothered to go there; but they settled just for the fertile land along the Mediterranean coast. They, like us so often, lacked any sense of spiritual ambition.

God of your fathers, has given you to possess all the days that you live on the earth. ² You must surely destroy all the places in which the nations that you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree, ³ and you must break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire. You must cut down the engraved images of their gods and destroy their names out of that place. ⁴ You shall not do so to Yahweh your God. ⁵ But to the place which Yahweh your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, to His dwelling place you shall seek, and there you shall come ⁶ and bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes,

the wave offering of your hand, your vows, your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock. ⁷ There you shall eat before Yahweh your God and you shall rejoice in all that you put your hand to, you and your households, in which Yahweh your God has blessed you. ⁸ You shall not do all the things that we do here this day, every man whatever is right in his own eyes, ⁹ for you haven't yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which Yahweh your God gives you. ¹⁰ But when you go over the Jordan, and dwell in the land which Yahweh your God causes you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you, so that you dwell in safety, ¹¹ then to the place which Yahweh your God shall

12:3 *Burn with fire... cut down* – The Lord's description of the rejected being cut down and thrown into the fire (Mt. 7:19) is surely referring to these words (cp. 7:5), where the idols of the world were to be hewn down and thrown into the fire. The Lord understood that those who worship idols are like unto them (Ps. 115:8; 135:18). Because all idols [of whatever kind] will be destroyed in the last day, all who worship them will have to share their destruction. And yet we can be hewn down by God's word now (Hos. 6:5) rather than wait for God to do it to us by the condemnation process. We must cut off (s.w. hew down) our flesh *now* (Mt. 5:30; 18:8 cp. 7:19).

12:5 Worldly religion is made as convenient as possible for the worshipper to come and participate in; the shrines of the Canaanite gods were everywhere in the land, whereas Yahweh insisted that there was one specific place to where His people should come to worship Him. This was perhaps partly to inspire national unity within the family of God. The pagan shrines were each different; they had no uniformity between them, as archaeologists have demonstrated. But the one true God has principles of worship and service which don't vary geographically and are consistently the same because truth is truth and in that sense doesn't vary from place to place nor context to context.

12:10 *He gives you rest* – Several times Moses describes Israel's inheritance of the land as entering "rest", mindful of how God had sworn that they would not enter into that rest, and yet he had pleaded with God to change His mind about that (Ps. 95:11; Heb. 3:11), even though Israel at the time didn't realize the intensity of pleading and self-sacrifice for them which was going on up in the mountain. Just as we don't appreciate the extent of the Lord's mediation for us, that we might enter the final "rest" (Heb. 4:9).

choose, to cause His name to dwell there, you must bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the wave offering of your hand and all your chosen vows which you vow to Yahweh. ¹² Rejoice before Yahweh your God, you and your sons, your daughters, your male servants, your female servants and the Levite who is within your gates, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you. ¹³ Be careful not to offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see, ¹⁴ but in the place which Yahweh shall choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you. ¹⁵ Notwithstanding, you may kill and eat flesh within all your gates after all the desire of your soul, according to the blessing of Yahweh your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and the hart. ¹⁶ Only you must not eat the blood. Pour it out on the earth as water. ¹⁷ You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or new wine or oil, or the firstborn of your herd or of your flock, nor any of

your vows which you vow, nor your freewill offerings, nor the wave offering of your hand; ¹⁸ but you must eat them before Yahweh your God in the place which Yahweh your God shall choose, you and your son, your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God in all that you put your hand on. ¹⁹ Take heed to yourself that you don't forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land.

Blood not to be Eaten

²⁰ When Yahweh your God enlarges your border, as He has promised you, and you say I want to eat meat, because your soul desires to eat meat, you may eat meat, after all the desire of your soul. ²¹ If the place which Yahweh your God shall choose to put His name there is too far from you, then you shall kill of your herd and of your flock which Yahweh has given you, as I have commanded you; you may eat within your gates, after all the desire of your soul. ²² As the gazelle and the hart is eaten, so you shall eat of it; the unclean and

12:13 We can't worship God any way we like, thinking that the fact we accept His existence and even worship Him means that we are somehow free to do it as we think.

12:16 The blood was understood as representing life (:23; Lev. 17:11). We are not to take life to ourselves; not merely in that we aren't to murder, but we also aren't to assume that our lives, or any life, is in fact ours to use or dominate for ourselves. Our lives and those of others are God's, and we cannot take any life to ourselves.

12:18 *In all that you put your hand on* – Whatever they put their hand on to give to God they were to give with joy; for God *loves* cheerful giving, and hates reluctant or manipulated 'giving' (2 Cor. 9:7).

12:20 Vegetarianism is a matter of personal choice, but it certainly isn't commanded by God – indeed, quite the opposite (1 Tim. 4:3).

the clean may eat of it alike. ²³ Only be sure that you don't eat the blood, for the blood is the life; you shall not eat the life with the flesh. ²⁴ You must not eat it; pour it out on the earth as water. ²⁵ You must not eat it, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, when you do that which is right in the eyes of Yahweh. ²⁶ Only your holy things which you have and your vows, you shall take and go to the place which Yahweh shall choose, ²⁷ and you shall offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, on the altar of Yahweh your God. The blood of your sacrifices must be poured out on the altar of Yahweh your God, and you shall eat the flesh. ²⁸ Observe and hear all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever, when you do that which is good and right in the eyes of Yahweh your God. ²⁹ When Yahweh your God cuts off the nations from before you, where you go in to dispossess them, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, ³⁰ take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods saying, How do

these nations serve their gods? I will do likewise. ³¹ You must not do so to Yahweh your God, for every abomination to Yahweh, which He hates, have they done to their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they burn in the fire to their gods. ³² Whatever I command you, you must observe to do. You must not add to it, nor take away from it.

CHAPTER 13 Apr. 27

Warning against Idolatry

If there should arise in the midst of you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the sign or the wonder comes to pass of which he spoke to you saying, Let us go after other gods (which you have not previously known) and let us serve them, ³ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams, for Yahweh your God proves you, to know whether you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ You must walk after Yahweh your God and fear Him and keep His commandments and obey His voice, and you must serve Him and cleave to Him. ⁵ That prophet or that dreamer of dreams must be put to death, because he has spoken

13:3 The reasoning here is helpful with respect to the claims made by some to perform supernatural feats. Even if it seems they might have done so, that isn't a good enough reason to believe them; our loyalty to the one true God must not be swayed by apparently impressive deeds or predictions by those who don't believe in Him.

13:5 Moses' frequent references to the way in which the Exodus had separated Israel from Egypt show the colossal difference there is between us and this world as a result of our Red Sea baptism into Christ (13:5; 15:15; 16:12; 1 Cor. 10:1,2); as our Lord in His time of dying was so strongly aware of the way in which He was redeeming us from this present evil world (Gal. 1:4).

rebellion against Yahweh your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to draw you aside out of the way which Yahweh your God commanded you to walk in. So you must put away the evil from the midst of you. ⁶ If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom or your friend, who is as your own soul, entices you secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which you have not known, you nor your fathers, ⁷ of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near to you or far off from you, from the one end of the land to the other end of the land, ⁸ you must not consent to him nor listen to him. Neither shall your eye pity him, neither shall you spare, neither shall you conceal him, ⁹ but you must surely kill him. Your hand shall be first on him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. ¹⁰ You must stone him to death with stones because he has sought to draw you away from Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ¹¹ All

Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall not do any more such wickedness as this is in the midst of you. ¹² If you hear concerning one of your cities which Yahweh your God gives you to dwell there saying, ¹³ Certain bad men have gone out from the midst of you and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying Let us go and serve other gods, which you have not known, ¹⁴ then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently. Behold, if it is true and certain that such abomination is done in the midst of you, ¹⁵ you must surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly and all that is therein and its livestock, with the edge of the sword. ¹⁶ You shall gather all its spoil into the midst of its street and shall burn with fire the city and all its spoil, everything, to Yahweh your God, and it shall be a heap forever. It shall not be built again. ¹⁷ Nothing of the devoted thing must cling to your hand, that Yahweh may turn from the fierceness of His anger and show you mercy and have compassion on you and multiply you, as He has sworn to your fathers, ¹⁸ when you listen

13:6 So often family loyalties deflect a person from their loyalty to the one true God. The same has always been the case. Our spiritual family should ultimately be more meaningful to us than our natural family; that at least is the ideal, although all families have their dysfunctions, including our spiritual family.

13:14 *You shall inquire and make search and ask diligently* – Allegations of misbehaviour or wrong teaching within the family of God must be taken seriously and not pushed under the carpet. But they aren't to be acted upon without a very careful investigation, during which the love which believes and hopes all things is paramount. This passage cannot be used as a reason to divide from those who have a slightly different Biblical interpretation of something than we do, whilst believing in and worshipping the same Lord. The situation envisaged is if someone were seeking to draw Yahweh's people away to a totally different god (:13).

to the voice of Yahweh your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you this day, to do that which is right in the eyes of Yahweh your God.

CHAPTER 14 Apr. 27

Clean and Unclean Food

You are the children of Yahweh your God. You must not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. ² For you are a holy people to Yahweh your God, and Yahweh has chosen you to be a people for His own possession above all peoples who are on the face of the earth. ³ You must not eat any abominable thing. ⁴ These are the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, ⁵ the hart and the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the chamois. ⁶ Every animal that has a split hoof and chews the cud among the animals, you may eat. ⁷ Nevertheless these you must not eat of those that chew the cud or of those which have a split hoof: the camel, the hare and the rabbit. Because they chew the cud but don't have a split hoof, they are unclean to you. ⁸ The pig, because it has a split hoof but doesn't chew the cud, is unclean to

you; of their flesh you shall not eat and their carcasses you shall not touch. ⁹ These you may eat of all that are in the waters: whatever has fins and scales may you eat. ¹⁰ Whatever doesn't have fins and scales you must not eat; it is unclean to you. ¹¹ Of all clean birds you may eat. ¹² But these are the ones you must not eat: the eagle, the vulture and the osprey, ¹³ the red kite, the falcon and the kite after its kind, ¹⁴ every raven after its kind, ¹⁵ the ostrich, the owl, the seagull and the hawk after its kind, ¹⁶ the little owl, the great owl and the horned owl, ¹⁷ the pelican, the vulture and the cormorant, ¹⁸ the stork and the heron after its kind and the hoopoe and the bat. ¹⁹ All winged creeping things are unclean to you; they shall not be eaten. ²⁰ Of all clean birds you may eat. ²¹ You must not eat of anything that dies of itself; you may give it to the foreigner living among you who is within your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner, for you are a holy people to Yahweh your God. You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

Tithes

²² You must surely tithe all the increase of your seed which comes

14:1 Whilst there is nothing morally wrong with cutting the skin, the idea was that Israel weren't to even appear associated with pagan rituals for the dead. We likewise should naturally not want to even appear like worshippers of any other god (of whatever kind) when Yahweh is our only God.

14:4 See notes on Lev. 11 for commentary on the clean and unclean food regulations.

14:21 *You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk* – This was likely a pagan ritual which Israel weren't to follow. It may also be that God's sensitivity to the feelings of animals is coming out here; and He wishes us to live lives regulated by sensitivity to all of creation. See on 20:19.

forth from the field year by year. ²³ You shall eat before Yahweh your God, in the place which He shall choose to cause His name to dwell there, the tithe of your grain, of your new wine and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock, that you may learn to respect Yahweh your God always. ²⁴ If the way is too long for you, so that when Yahweh your God shall bless you, you are not able to carry it because the place which Yahweh your God shall choose to set His name there is too far from you, ²⁵ then you must turn it into money and take the money in your hand and go to the place which Yahweh your God shall choose, ²⁶ and you may spend the money on whatever your soul desires, cattle or sheep, wine or strong drink, or whatever your soul asks of you, and you may eat there before

Yahweh your God, and rejoice, you and your household. ²⁷ The Levite who is within your gates you must not forsake, for he has no portion or inheritance with you. ²⁸ At the end of every three years you must bring forth all the tithe of your increase in the same year and store it within your gates, ²⁹ and the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the foreigner living among you and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates, shall come and shall eat and be satisfied, that Yahweh your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

CHAPTER 15 Apr. 28

The Year for Cancelling Debts

At the end of every seven years you must make a release. ² This is the method of the release: every

14:26 *Rejoice, you and your household* – There was to be joy in giving to God rather than any sense of resentment; and the families (“your household”) were to have this explained to them so that even the children learnt to rejoice in giving rather than being selfish. Again we see God’s emphasis on the need for giving to be done cheerfully; He simply *loves* cheerful giving (2 Cor. 9:7).

14:27 There were three separate tithes commanded under the Law of Moses. Yet the tithing churches have simply said: ‘There’s something about tithing in the Old Testament. So, hey, give us 10% of your money!’. The first was the Levitical tithe of 10% on 100% of the produce for the first six years and was destined for the Levites and priests (see too 12:19). The second tithe was the Festival tithe of 10% on the 90% remaining produce after the Levitical tithe. This tithe had to be eaten in the presence of the Lord and was collected on the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th years only. The third tithe was the tithe of the poor to be collected on the 3rd and 6th years only (14:22-29; 26:12-15; Am. 4:4-5). No tithe was collected on the 7th year or Sabbatical year. The farmers were to let the land rest in that year. The tithe consisted of fruit, grain, wine and later animals that are treated as produce from the land. It never consisted of money. Tithes were conducted annually and were based upon one’s produce increase for the year. This just isn’t talking about putting paper money or cheques on an offering plate each week as demanded by the tithing churches.

15:2 *He must not demand it of his neighbour and his brother because Yahweh’s re-*

creditor shall release that which he has lent to his neighbour. He must not demand it of his neighbour and his brother because Yahweh's release has been proclaimed. ³ Of a foreigner you may exact it, but whatever of yours is with your brother you must release. ⁴ However there shall be no poor among you, for Yahweh will surely bless you in the land which Yahweh your God gives you for an inheritance to possess it ⁵ if only you diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, to observe to do all this commandment which I command you this day. ⁶ For Yahweh your God will bless you, as He promised you, and you will lend to many nations but you shall not borrow; and you will rule over many nations but they shall not rule over you. ⁷ If a poor man, one of your brothers, is with you within any of your gates in your land which

Yahweh your God gives you, you must not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, ⁸ but you must surely open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, that which he lacks. ⁹ Beware that there is not a wicked thought in your heart saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand, and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing and he cries to Yahweh against you, it is sin to you. ¹⁰ You must surely give to him, and your heart must not be grieved when you give to him, because for this Yahweh your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you put your hand to. ¹¹ For the poor will never cease out of the land, therefore I command you, saying, You must surely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and to your poor, in your land.

lease has been proclaimed – The final release was in the death of Christ releasing us from all our sins, which are likened to debts in the New Testament. We are therefore not to “demand” recompense for sin from others because of the great release proclaimed. Jesus foresaw the difficulty of doing this, and urges us to pray constantly that we forgive or release our debtors (Mt. 6:12). The year of release was proclaimed on the day of atonement, in the same way as the cross has initiated a time of release from sin. The idea of ‘proclaiming’ this release or forgiveness is behind the language Luke uses to record the great commission, to proclaim this wonderful news to absolutely everybody – that their debt is cancelled.

15:4 Moses knew that there would always be poor people in the land, even though if the Law was properly kept this would not be the case (:4, 11). Having reminded them that if they were obedient, “there shall be no poor among you; for Yahweh will surely bless you”, Moses goes on to comment that “the poor will never cease out of the land” – and he gives the legislation cognisant of this (:4,11). Moses realized by the time of Deuteronomy that they wouldn’t make it to the blessings which were potentially possible. And yet he speaks so positively of how they would inherit the Kingdom. God recognizes that His people won’t totally make it spiritually nor receive all the blessings they could, and yet this doesn’t mean they won’t be saved. This is a comfort for us in our spiritual incompleteness; and it also means that we shouldn’t expect the community of God’s people to be perfect. Even God doesn’t expect that, and the very structure of His own law foresaw that.

Freeing Slaves

¹² If your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you must let him go free from you. ¹³ When you let him go free from you, you must not let him go empty. ¹⁴ You must furnish him generously out of your flock, out of your threshing floor and out of your winepress; as Yahweh your God has blessed you, you shall give to him. ¹⁵ You must remember that you were a bondservant in the land of Egypt and Yahweh your God redeemed you, therefore I command you this today. ¹⁶ If he tells you I will not go out from you because he loves you and your house, because he is well with you, ¹⁷ then you shall take an awl and thrust it through his ear to the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also to your female servant you shall do likewise. ¹⁸ It must not seem hard to you, when you let him go free from you, for he was worth double the hire of a hireling; he has served you six years; and Yahweh your God will bless you in all that you do.

Firstborn Animals Belong to God

¹⁹ All the firstborn males that are born of your herd and of your flock you must sanctify to Yahweh your God; you must do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. ²⁰ You must eat it before Yahweh your God year by year in the place which Yahweh shall choose, you and your household. ²¹ If it has any blemish, is lame or blind or has any defect whatever, you must not sacrifice it to Yahweh your God. ²² You must eat it within your gates. The unclean and the clean shall eat it alike, as the gazelle and as the hart. ²³ Only you must not eat its blood. You must pour it out on the ground as water.

CHAPTER 16 Apr. 29***The Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread***

Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover to Yahweh your God, for in the month of Abib Yahweh your God brought you forth out of Egypt by night. ² You must sacrifice the Passover to Yahweh your God from the flock and the herd, in

15:15 One of the most repeated themes of Moses in Deuteronomy is the way he keeps on telling them to “remember” all the great things which God had done for them on their wilderness journey, and especially the wonder of how He had redeemed them as children (his audience had been under twenty years old when they went through the Red Sea). Moses really wanted them to overcome the human tendency to forget the greatness of God as manifested earlier in our lives and spiritual experience. Our tendency as the new Israel is just the same – to forget the wonder of baptism, of how God reached out His arm to save us.

16:2 This seems to imply that now, in the ‘second law’ Moses was giving in Deuteronomy, the Passover sacrifice didn’t necessarily have to be a lamb, and it could be boiled not just roasted (:7). See on 20:14. So eager is God for our fellowship that He is prepared to make concessions to our human situations; and we should have that spirit in dealing with others.

the place which Yahweh shall choose to cause His name to dwell there. ³ You must eat no leavened bread with it. You must eat unleavened bread with it seven days, the bread of affliction, for you came forth out of the land of Egypt in haste, that you may remember the day when you came forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. ⁴ No yeast shall be seen with you in all your borders seven days, neither shall any of the flesh, which you sacrifice the first day at evening, remain all night until the morning. ⁵ You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which Yahweh your God gives you, ⁶ but at the place which Yahweh your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell in, there you must sacrifice the Passover at evening, at the going down of the sun, at the time that you came forth out of Egypt. ⁷ You must roast and eat it in the place which Yahweh your God shall choose; and you shall turn in the morning and go to your tents. ⁸ For six days you must eat unleavened bread. On the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to Yahweh your God; you shall do no work.

The Feast of Weeks

⁹ You must count for yourselves seven weeks: from the time you be-

gin to put the sickle to the standing grain you shall begin to number seven weeks. ¹⁰ You must keep the feast of weeks to Yahweh your God with a tribute of a freewill offering, which you shall give according as Yahweh your God blesses you. ¹¹ You shall rejoice before Yahweh your God, you, your son, your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your gates and the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, who are among you, in the place which Yahweh your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there. ¹² You must remember that you were a bondservant in Egypt, and you shall observe and do these statutes.

The Feast of Tents

¹³ You must keep the feast of tents seven days after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and from your winepress, ¹⁴ and you shall rejoice in your feast, you, your son and your daughter, your male servant, your female servant and the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates. ¹⁵ You must keep a feast to Yahweh your God seven days in the place which Yahweh shall choose. Because Yahweh your God will bless you in all your increase and in all the work

16:7 *You shall turn in the morning and go to your tents* – At the first Passover, which they were re-living, they left Egypt at night and in the morning went into the promised land. They were to imagine their homes as in a sense the promised land; there the principles of the Kingdom were to be upheld so that the home became a small imitation of the Kingdom. That principle applies to us too.

16:15 Moses was so positive about them, as we should be about others too. “God will bless you”, even though these blessings were conditional upon their obedience

of your hands, you shall be altogether joyful. ¹⁶ Three times in a year must all your males appear before Yahweh your God in the place which He shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread, in the feast of weeks and in the feast of tents. They must not appear before Yahweh empty: ¹⁷ every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Yahweh your God which He has given you.

Judges

¹⁸ You shall make judges and officers in all your gates which Yahweh your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. ¹⁹ You must not twist justice, you must not respect persons, neither must you take a bribe; for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. ²⁰ You must follow that which is altogether just, that you may live, and inherit the land which Yahweh your God gives you.

Warning against Idolatry

²¹ You must not plant for yourselves an Asherah of any kind of tree be-

side the altar of Yahweh your God, which you shall make for yourselves. ²² Neither shall you set yourself up a pillar, which Yahweh your God hates.

CHAPTER 17 Apr. 30

You must not sacrifice to Yahweh your God an ox or a sheep in which is a blemish or anything imperfect, for that is an abomination to Yahweh your God. ² If there is found in the midst of you, within any of your gates which Yahweh your God gives you, a man or woman who does that which is evil in the sight of Yahweh your God in transgressing His covenant, ³ and has gone and served other gods and worshipped them, or the sun or the moon or any of the army of the sky, which I have not commanded, ⁴ and it is told you and you have heard of it, then you must inquire diligently. Behold, if it is true and certain that such abomination is done in Israel, ⁵ then you must bring forth that man or that woman who has done this evil thing to your gates, even the man or the woman, and you shall stone them to death

(28:1,4,12). Moses was this confident of them, as Paul was confident of the obedience of the Corinthians despite it seeming humanly unlikely (2 Cor. 10:6). It's far easier to have a negative attitude about people than a positive one; but God's grace and imputing of righteousness to us personally should help us be positive about others.

16:17 *The blessing of Yahweh your God which He has given you* – Notice the past tense. Moses often speaks of the “blessing” which God would give them for obedience; but he here speaks of the future blessing of obedience in the prophetic perfect, so confident was he that they would receive it. The blessings of the Kingdom were already obtained for us on the cross. It's for us to as it were claim them.

16:21 Moses in Deuteronomy adds a whole series of apparently ‘minor’ commands which were designed to make obedience easier to the others already given. Thus he tells them not to plant a grove of trees near the altar of God – because he knew this would provoke the possibility of mixing Yahweh worship with that of the surrounding world.

with stones. ⁶ At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall he who is to die be put to death. At the mouth of one witness he must not be put to death. ⁷ The hand of the witnesses must be first on him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from the midst of you.

Judging

⁸ If there arises a matter too hard for you in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within your gates, then go up to the place which Yahweh your God shall choose, ⁹ and come to the priests the Levites and to the judge who shall be in those days and ask. They shall show you the sentence of judgment. ¹⁰ You must do according to the sentence which they shall show you from that place which Yahweh shall choose, and you must observe to do according to all that they shall teach you; ¹¹ according to the law which they shall teach

you and according to the judgment which they shall tell you, that you shall do. You must not turn aside from the sentence which they shall show you, to the right hand or to the left. ¹² The man who does presumptuously in not listening to the priest who stands to minister there before Yahweh your God, or to the judge, that man shall die, and you must put away the evil from Israel. ¹³ All the people shall hear and fear and do no more presumptuously.

Rules for a King

¹⁴ When you have come to the land which Yahweh your God gives you and shall possess it, and dwell therein and say, I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me, ¹⁵ you must surely set him king over yourselves whom Yahweh your God shall choose; one from among your brothers you shall set king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. ¹⁶ Only he must not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to

17:6 Insisting on more than one witness before accepting the truth of an allegation meant that gossip and slander were limited; and Jesus applies this principle to dealing with disputes within His church (Mt. 18:16). Those who served other gods had to die on the testimony of two or three witnesses. This idea is twice alluded to in the New Testament in the context of making the decision to cease fellowship with someone (Mt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1). The implication is that death under the Old Covenant pointed forward to first century church discipline under the New Covenant. But we must note that the reason for this was serving other gods and wilful departing from covenant relationship with the Lord – not minor reasons.

17:14 Moses often reminds them that he knows they will turn away from the Covenant he had given them (e.g. 30:1; 31:29). Here he shows that he knew that one day they would want a king, even though God was their king. He had such sensitivity to their weakness and likely failures, and in some areas he makes concessions to them.

17:16 Moses commands any future king not to send God's people to Egypt to buy horses because he could see that this would tempt them to go back to Egypt perma-

Egypt, so that he may multiply horses, because Yahweh has said to you, You shall not go back that way again.

¹⁷ Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, so that his heart will not turn away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

¹⁸ When he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he must write for himself a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites. ¹⁹ It shall be with him and he must read from it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear Yahweh his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them. ²⁰ Thus his heart will not be raised up above his brothers, and he will not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the

left, so that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel.

CHAPTER 18 May 1

Offerings for Priests and Levites

The priests the Levites, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they will eat the offerings of Yahweh made by fire as their inheritance. ² They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; Yahweh is their inheritance, as He has spoken to them.

³ This shall be the priest's due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether ox or sheep. They shall give to the priest the shoulder, the two cheeks and the stomach.

⁴ The first fruits of your grain, your

nently. There are many other example of this kind of thing (14:24; 15:18; 17:17-19; 18:9; 20:7,8). The point is that Moses had thought long and hard about the ways in which Israel would be tempted to sin, and his words and innermost desire were devoted to helping them overcome. Glorious ditto for the Lord Jesus whom he typified (18:18). Note that the king was warned not to get horses for himself from Egypt because the very act of sending Israelites back into Egypt might tempt them to return there; we are to be sensitive to the spiritual effect our actions may have upon others.

17:16-20 This has strong relevance to Solomon. He did multiply silver, gold, horses and wives; his heart *was* turned away (:16,17= 2 Chron. 9:20). Yet this passage says that if he studied the Law all his life, this would *not* happen, and also his heart would not be “lifted up above his brethren” (:20). Solomon’s whipping of the people and sense of spiritual and material superiority (2 Chron. 10:11; Ecc. 1:16; 2:7,9) shows how his heart *was* lifted up. Yet Solomon knew the Law, despite his explicit disobedience to the commands concerning wives, horses etc. But his knowledge of the word didn’t bring forth the true humility which it was intended to. Solomon *assumed* he wasn’t proud; he *assumed* God’s word was having its intended effect upon him, when it wasn’t. Such spiritual assumption is a temptation for every child of God. God’s intention that the king of Israel should personally copy out all the commandments of the Law was “to the end that his heart will not *be raised up* above his brothers” – i.e. reflecting upon the many requirements of the Law would’ve convicted the King of his own failure to have been fully obedient, and therefore his heart would be humbled. And soon after this statement, we are hearing Moses reminding Israel that Messiah, the prophet like unto Moses, was to *be raised up* (18:18). Human failure, and recognition of it, prepares us to accept Christ.

new wine and your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep you shall give him. ⁵ For Yahweh your God has chosen him out of all your tribes to stand to minister in the name of Yahweh, him and his sons forever. ⁶ If a Levite comes from any of your gates out of all Israel, where he lives as a foreigner, and comes with all the desire of his soul to the place which Yahweh shall choose, ⁷ then he shall minister in the name of Yahweh his God as all his brothers the Levites do, who stand there before Yahweh. ⁸ They shall have similar portions to eat, besides that which comes from his father's inheritance.

Warnings against Sorcery

⁹ When you have come into the land which Yahweh your God gives you, you must not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations. ¹⁰ There must not be found with you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices sorcery or an enchanter, a sorcerer, ¹¹ a charmer, a consulter with a familiar spirit, a wizard or a nec-

romancer. ¹² For whoever does these things is an abomination to Yahweh, and because of these abominations Yahweh your God drives them out from before you. ¹³ You should be without blame before Yahweh your God. ¹⁴ For these nations that you shall dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery and to diviners; but as for you, Yahweh your God has not allowed you to do so.

The Prophet to Come

¹⁵ Yahweh your God will raise up to you a prophet like me, from the midst of you, of your brothers. You are to listen to him. ¹⁶ This is according to all that you desired of Yahweh your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Yahweh my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, so that I do not die. ¹⁷ Yahweh said to me, They have well said that which they have spoken. ¹⁸ I will raise them up a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put My words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. ¹⁹ Whoever will not

18:6 God encourages us to make special devotions to Him. Thus the Levites could choose to leave their areas in the provinces and go and serve at the sanctuary. We must ask what special devotion we could make in response to His grace.

18:18 Christ was the prophet like unto Moses (Acts 3:22). Moses was the shepherd of the flock of Israel, leading them on God's behalf through the wilderness towards the promised land (Is. 63:12), as Christ leads us after baptism to the Kingdom. It was only through Moses' leadership that they reached Canaan (10:11). As Moses very intensely manifested God to the people, so he foreshadowed the supreme manifestation of the Father in the Son. The commands of Moses were those of God (7:11; 11:13,18; and 12:32 concerning Moses' words is quoted in Rev. 22:18,19 concerning God's words); his voice was God's voice (15:5; 28:1), as with Christ. Israel were to show their love of God by keeping Moses' commands (11:13); as the new Israel do in their response to the word of Christ.

listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him. ²⁰ But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. ²¹ If you say in your heart, How shall we know the word which Yahweh has not spoken? ²² When a prophet speaks in the name of Yahweh, if the thing doesn't follow or happen, that is the thing which Yahweh has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you shall not be afraid of him.

CHAPTER 19 May 2

Cities of Refuge

When Yahweh your God shall cut off the nations whose land

Yahweh your God gives you, and you succeed them and dwell in their cities and in their houses, ² you must set apart three cities for you in the midst of your land, which Yahweh your God gives you to possess. ³ You shall prepare the way, and divide the borders of your land which Yahweh your God causes you to inherit, into three parts, that any manslayer may flee there. ⁴ This is the case of the manslayer that shall flee there and live. Whoever kills his neighbour unawares and didn't hate him in time past, ⁵ as when a man goes into the forest with his neighbour to chop wood, and his hand fetches a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the handle and hits his neighbour so that he dies; he shall flee to one of these cities

18:22 This is why the prophecies of Christ and of the last days all had some limited fulfilment in the lifetimes of the prophets who gave the prophecies.

19:2 The person who committed something worthy of death but didn't as it were wilfully do it represents each of us. The language of the city of refuge therefore becomes applicable to Christ, our refuge from the results of our sin (Heb. 6:18).

19:3 The command to prepare a way along which to flee to the cities of refuge is expressed with the very same Hebrew words used about God through the Angels preparing a way for Israel to flee along, out of Egypt to the promised land (Ex. 23:20). This was obviously done purely at God's initiative. But now, Israel were asked to do the same – to prepare a way for others' salvation. When we reflect upon our own way of escape from this world, it's clear enough that it was by grace. Our response to that grace must be like Israel's – to prepare a way for others to flee, when they like us find themselves in a situation that is spiritually against them, although not of their conscious choice. In fact, if Israel were indifferent to preparing the way for others' salvation, then innocent blood would be shed and they would be responsible for it (:10). Indifference to providing others with a way of escape from their sin and death means we are actually guilty of their lack of salvation. And yet we tend to think that committed sin is all we have to worry about / avoid. The lesson here, however, bites far more caustically and insistently into our comfort zone. If we are indifferent to marking out the way of escape for others, their blood will be upon our heads. Our chief excuses for not witnessing enthusiastically basically amount to laziness, indifference, not getting our act together because we don't see we have to... when actually, there is an intense urgency about our task.

and live, ⁶ lest the avenger of blood pursue the manslayer while his heart is hot and overtake him because the way is long, and strike him mortally, whereas he was not worthy of death because he didn't hate him in time past. ⁷ Therefore I command you, saying, You must set apart three cities for yourselves. ⁸ If Yahweh your God enlarges your border as He has sworn to your fathers, and gives you all the land which He promised to give to your fathers, ⁹ if you keep all this commandment to do what I command you this day, to love Yahweh your God and walk always in His ways, then you shall add three cities more for yourselves besides these three, ¹⁰ so that innocent blood will not be shed in your land which Yahweh your God gives you for an inheritance, and so guilt for blood be upon you. ¹¹ But if any man hates his neighbour, and lies in wait for him and rises up against him and strikes him mortally so that he dies, and he flees into one of these cities, ¹² then the elders of his city must send and bring him from there, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood that he may die. ¹³ Your eye shall not pity him, but you must put away the innocent blood from Israel, that it

may go well with you. ¹⁴ You must not remove your neighbour's landmark, which those of old time have set, in your inheritance which you shall inherit, in the land that Yahweh your God gives you to possess it.

Witnesses

¹⁵ One witness must not rise up against a man for any iniquity or for any sin that he commits. At the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses shall a matter be established. ¹⁶ If an unrighteous witness rises up against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, ¹⁷ then both the men in the controversy shall stand before Yahweh, before the priests and the judges who shall be in those days. ¹⁸ The judges shall make diligent inquisition, and if the witness is a false witness and has testified falsely against his brother, ¹⁹ then you must do to him as he had thought to do to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from the midst of you. ²⁰ Those who remain shall hear and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil in the midst of you. ²¹ Your eyes must not pity; life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

19:6 *The avenger of blood* – But Israel were not to avenge (Lev. 19:18). But they *could* avenge, and provisions were made for their human desire to do so in some cases (see too Num. 35:12). These provisions must also be seen as a modification of the command not to murder. The highest level was *not* to avenge; but for the harshness of men's hearts, a concession was made *in some cases*, and on *God's* prerogative. *We* have no right to assume that prerogative. Rather than continually make use of God's many concessions to human weakness, we should seek to live on a higher level.

19:9 Israel would be provided with more cities of refuge if they were obedient; the way of escape from sin would become easier, as it does for us the more we are obedient to God's principles.

CHAPTER 20 May 3**Rules for War**

When you go forth to battle against your enemies and see horses, chariots and a people more than you, you must not be afraid of them, for Yahweh your God is with you, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. ² When you draw near to the battle, the priest shall approach and speak to the people ³ and tell them, Hear, Israel, you draw near this day to battle against your enemies; don't let your heart faint; don't be afraid or tremble, neither be scared of them, ⁴ for Yahweh your God goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. ⁵ The officers must speak to the people saying, Any man who has built a new house and has not dedicated it, let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it. ⁶ Any man who has planted a vineyard and has not eaten its fruit, let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man eat its fruit. ⁷ Any man who has pledged to be married to a wife and has not taken her, let him

go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man take her. ⁸ The officers shall speak further to the people and say, Any man who is fearful and fainthearted, let him go and return to his house, lest his brother's heart melt as his heart. ⁹ When the officers have made an end of speaking to the people, they shall appoint captains of armies at the head of the people. ¹⁰ When you draw near to a city to fight against it, proclaim peace to it. ¹¹ If it makes you an answer of peace and opens to you, then all the people who are found therein shall become tributary to you and shall serve you. ¹² If it will make no peace with you but wishes to make war against you, then you shall besiege it. ¹³ When Yahweh your God delivers it into your hand, you must strike every male of it with the edge of the sword, ¹⁴ but the women and the little ones, the livestock and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall take for a prey to yourself, and you shall eat the spoil of your enemies, which Yahweh your God has given you. ¹⁵ Thus you must do to all the cities which are very far off

20:1-4 He foresaw how they would see horses and chariots and get frightened; such was Moses' sensitivity to his people.

20:14 The softness of Moses, the earnestness of his desire for their obedience, his eagerness to work with them in their humanity, is shown by the concessions to human weakness which he makes in Deuteronomy (with God's confirmation, of course). When they attacked a foreign city, OK, Moses says, you can take the women for yourselves – even though this is contrary to the spirit of earlier commands (see too 21:11). Likewise with the provisions for having a human king (17:17) and divorce (24:1-4). He knew the hardness of Israel's hearts, their likelihood to give way to temptation, and so he made concessions contrary to the principles behind other parts of the Law (Mt. 19:8). See on 16:2. The fact God makes concessions to us doesn't mean we can eagerly use them in some spirit of minimalistic service; we should seek to serve God on the highest level we can. The fact there are these different levels – rather than a de-

from you, which are not of the cities of nearby nations. ¹⁶ But of the cities of these peoples that Yahweh your God gives you for an inheritance, you must save alive nothing that breathes; ¹⁷ you must utterly destroy them: the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as Yahweh your God has commanded you, ¹⁸ so that they do not teach you to do after all their abominations, which they have done to their gods; so would you sin against Yahweh your God. ¹⁹ When you besiege a city a long time in making war against it to take it, you must not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them, for you may eat of them, and you shall not cut them down. Is the tree of the field a man, that it should be besieged by you? ²⁰ Only the trees which you know are not trees for food you shall destroy; cut them down. And you shall build bulwarks against the city that makes war with you until it falls.

CHAPTER 21 May 4

Regulations Concerning Unsolved Murder

If anyone is found slain in the land which Yahweh your God gives you to possess, lying in the field and it isn't known who has struck him, ² then your elders and your judges must come forth and measure to the cities which are around him who is

slain. ³ The elders of the city which is nearest to the slain man shall take a heifer of the herd, which hasn't been worked with and which has not drawn the yoke, ⁴ and the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer to a valley with running water, which is neither ploughed nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley. ⁵ The priests the sons of Levi must come near, for them Yahweh your God has chosen to minister to Him and to bless in the name of Yahweh, and according to their word shall every controversy be decided. ⁶ All the elders of that city who are nearest to the slain man must wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley, ⁷ and they shall say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. ⁸ Forgive, Yahweh, your people Israel whom You have redeemed, and don't allow innocent blood to be among Your people Israel. The guilt of blood shall be forgiven them. ⁹ So you shall put away the innocent blood from the midst of you, when you do that which is right in the eyes of Yahweh.

Marrying a Captive

¹⁰ When you go forth to battle against your enemies and Yahweh your God delivers them into your hands and you carry them away captive ¹¹ and see among the captives a

mand for unthinking submission to a law for the sake of it – encourages us to express our *love* for God.

20:19 Here again we see God's desire that we should be sensitive to the natural creation. See on 14:21.

21:11 See on 20:14. The legislation in :11-14 is unique amongst the surrounding na-

beautiful woman, and you have a desire to her and would take her to you as a wife, ¹² then you shall bring her home to your house. She must shave her head and pare her nails ¹³ and put off the clothing of her captivity and remain in your house and bewail her father and her mother a full month. After that you shall go in to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife. ¹⁴ If you have no delight in her, then you must let her go where she will, but you must not sell her at all for money. Since you have humbled her, you must not deal with her as a slave.

The Right of a Firstborn

¹⁵ If a man has two wives, the one beloved and the other hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated, and if the firstborn son be hers who was hated, ¹⁶ then in the day that he causes his sons to inherit that which he has, he must not make the son of the beloved the firstborn before the son of the hated, who is the firstborn. ¹⁷ He shall acknowledge the firstborn, the

son of the hated, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.

A Rebellious Son

¹⁸ If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father nor the voice of his mother and, though they chasten him, will not listen to them, ¹⁹ then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him and bring him out to the elders of his city and to the gate of his town. ²⁰ They shall tell the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. ²¹ All the men of his city must stone him to death with stones. So you shall put away the evil from the midst of you, and all Israel shall hear and fear. ²² If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and is put to death and you hang him on a tree, ²³ his body must not remain all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him the same day (for cursed of God is he who is hanged on a tree), so

tions, where women were seen as objects of booty and were treated with far less sensitivity than this and usually raped in this situation. Likewise the law of :18-21 teaches equal reverence for *both* parents and not just the father.

21:17 This means that in a situation where there were two sons, the younger son's share was one third. In the parable of the prodigal son, the younger son is given *half*—such was the Father's love for him. This element of unreality in the parable is to signpost the amazing level of love the Father has for us; even when He knows that we will waste what He gives, still He gives, and gives generously.

21:23 *Cursed of God is he who is hanged on a tree* — These words have been misunderstood as meaning that the Lord Jesus as a living being was under one of the Law's curses of condemnation. This cannot be. Crucifixion was a Roman, not Jewish method. The Deuteronomy passage was not written with reference to crucifixion, but rather to the custom of displaying the already dead body of a sinner on a pole as a witness and warning. Sin brought the curse; and so every sinful person who died for their

that you don't defile your land which Yahweh your God gives you for an inheritance.

CHAPTER 22 May 5

Various Laws

You must not see your brother's ox or his sheep go astray and hide yourself from them; you must surely bring them again to your brother. ² If your brother isn't near to you, or if you don't know him, then you shall bring it home to your house and it shall be with you until your brother seeks after it, and you shall restore it to him. ³ So you must do with his donkey and with his garment and with every lost thing of your brother's, which he has lost and you have found; you must not keep it to yourself. ⁴ You must not see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen down by the way and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him

to lift them up again. ⁵ A woman must not wear men's clothing neither should a man put on women's clothing, for whoever does these things is an abomination to Yahweh your God. ⁶ If a bird's nest happens to be before you in the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the hen sitting on the young or on the eggs, you must not take the hen with the young. ⁷ You must surely let the hen go, but the young you may take to yourself, that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days. ⁸ When you build a new house you must make a battlement for your roof, so that you don't bring blood on your house if anyone falls from there. ⁹ You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole fruit be forfeited, the seed which you have sown, and the increase of the vineyard. ¹⁰ You shall not plough with an ox and a donkey

sin was bearing the curse of God. They were to be buried quickly, as a sign of God taking no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Jesus died the death of a sinner; He bore our sins, and therefore our curse (Gal. 3:13,14). Every condemned sinner whose body had been displayed had been a type of the sinless Son of God. He was exhibited there for a few hours, totally united with sinful man. And then, because God had no pleasure in this condemnation of sin, the body was taken and buried.

22:1 One theme of Deuteronomy is the way in which Moses visualizes commonplace daily incidents which he could foresee occurring in Israel's daily life: here, coming across a stray animal on the way home from work; the man cutting down the tree and the axe head flying off and hitting someone; finding a dead body in a lonely field; a man with two wives treating one as his favourite; seeing your neighbour struggling to lift up his sick animal; coming across a bird's nest and being tempted to take the mature bird as well as the chicks home for supper; being tempted not to bother building a battlement around the flat roof of your new house; the temptation to take a bag with you and fill it up with your neighbour's grapes; the need to have weapons which could be used for covering excrement (19:5; 21:1,15; 22:1,2,4,6,8; 23:13,24,25; 24:5,6,10,15,19; 25:11,13). The sensitivity of Moses was just fantastic! His eager imagination of his people in daily life, his understanding of their everyday temptations, so superbly typifies that of Jesus.

together. ¹¹ You shall not wear mixed stuff, wool and linen together. ¹² You shall make yourselves fringes on the four borders of your garment with which you cover yourself.

Marriage Laws

¹³ If any man takes a wife and goes in to her and hates her ¹⁴ and accuses her of shameful things and brings up an evil name on her and says, I took this woman and when I came near to her I didn't find in her the tokens of virginity, ¹⁵ then shall the father of the young woman and her mother take and bring forth the tokens of the young woman's virginity to the elders of the city in the gate. ¹⁶ The young woman's father shall tell the elders, I gave my daughter to this man to wife and he hates her, ¹⁷ and behold, he has accused her of shameful things saying, 'I didn't find in your daughter the tokens of virginity', and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. They shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. ¹⁸ The elders of that city must take the man and chastise him ¹⁹ and they shall fine him one hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought up an evil name on a virgin of Israel, and she shall be his wife; he may not divorce her all his days. ²⁰ But if this thing is true, that the tokens of virginity were not found in the young woman, ²¹ then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house and the men of her city must stone her to death with stones, because she has done folly

in Israel, to play the prostitute in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from the midst of you. ²² If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then they must both of them die, the man who lay with the woman and the woman. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. ²³ If there is a young woman who is a virgin pledged to be married to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her, ²⁴ then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and you must stone them to death with stones; the woman, because she didn't cry, being in the city, and the man, because he has humbled his neighbour's wife. So you shall put away the evil from among you. ²⁵ But if the man finds the woman who is pledged to be married in the field, and the man forces her and lies with her, then the man only who lay with her must die, ²⁶ but to the woman you shall do nothing; there is in the woman no sin worthy of death. For as when a man rises against his neighbour and kills him, even so is this matter; ²⁷ for when he found her in the field, the betrothed woman cried and there was none to save her. ²⁸ If a man finds a woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and lays hold on her and lies with her and they are found, ²⁹ then the man who lay with her must give to the woman's father fifty shekels of silver and she shall be his wife, because he has humbled her; he may not put her away all his days. ³⁰ A man must not take his father's wife, and shall not uncover his father's skirt.

CHAPTER 23 May 6***People Excluded from the Assembly***

He who is wounded in the testicles, or has his privy member cut off, must not enter into the assembly of Yahweh. ² An illegitimate person must not enter into the assembly of Yahweh; even to the tenth generation shall none of his enter into the assembly of Yahweh. ³ An Ammonite or a Moabite must not enter into the assembly of Yahweh; even to the tenth generation shall none belonging to them enter into the assembly of Yahweh forever. This is ⁴ because they didn't meet you with bread and water in the way, when you came forth out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. ⁵ Nevertheless Yahweh your God wouldn't listen to Balaam, but Yahweh your God turned the curse into a blessing to you, because Yahweh your God loved you. ⁶ You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days forever. ⁷ You must not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. You must not abhor an Egyptian, because you lived as a foreigner in his land. ⁸ The children of the third generation who are born to them may enter into the assembly of Yahweh.

Keeping the Camp Clean

⁹ When you go forth to camp against your enemies, you must keep yourselves from every evil thing. ¹⁰ If there is among you any man who is not clean by reason of that which happens to him by night, he must go outside the camp. He shall not come within the camp, ¹¹ but when evening comes on he must bathe in water, and when the sun is down he shall come within the camp. ¹² You must have a place also outside the camp where you shall go to relieve yourself, ¹³ and you must have a trowel among your weapons, and when you relieve yourself you must dig with it and turn back and cover that which comes from you; ¹⁴ for Yahweh your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy so that He may not see an unclean thing in you and turn away from you.

Various Laws

¹⁵ You must not deliver to his master a servant who has escaped from his master to you. ¹⁶ He shall dwell with you, in the midst of you in the place which he shall choose within one of your gates, where it pleases him best.

23:1 Males who could not procreate were barred from the congregation, possibly in prototype of how spiritual procreation was to be a vital characteristic of the future Israel. To bring forth spiritual children in the course of our life before God is expected of us. Israel were seen by the Lord as the tree by the roadside (Mt. 21:19), whose fruit should have been for all that passed by (23:24). But because there was not even the glimmer of this kind of giving of fruit, they were condemned by the Lord.

23:15 This was to remind them how they were escaped slaves. God wanted them to continually remember the way He had saved them (see too :7), and His law was designed to repeatedly prod their conscience about this in daily life. He wants us to live today in constant awareness of our salvation.

You must not oppress him. ¹⁷ There must be no prostitute of the daughters of Israel. Neither should there be a sodomite of the sons of Israel. ¹⁸ You must not bring the hire of a prostitute or of a male prostitute into the house of Yahweh your God for any vow, for both of these are an abomination to Yahweh your God. ¹⁹ You must not lend on interest to your brother, interest of money, of food or of anything that is lent. ²⁰ To a foreigner you may lend on interest, but to your brother you shall not lend on interest, so that Yahweh your God may bless you in all that you put your hand to in the land where you go in to possess it. ²¹ When you make a vow to Yahweh your God you must not be slack to pay it, for Yahweh your God will surely require it of you and it would be sin upon you. ²² But if you forbear to vow, that will be no sin upon you. ²³ That which has gone out of your lips you must observe and do, according as you have vowed to Yahweh your God, as a freewill offering which you have promised with your mouth. ²⁴ When you come into your

neighbour's vineyard you may eat your fill of grapes at your own pleasure, but you must not put any in your vessel. ²⁵ When you come into your neighbour's standing grain you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not move a sickle to your neighbour's standing grain.

CHAPTER 24 May 7

Law for Divorce

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if she finds no favour in his eyes because he has found some unseemly thing in her, he shall write her a bill of divorce and give it into her hand and send her out of his house. ² When she has departed out of his house she may go and be another man's wife. ³ If the latter husband hates her and writes her a bill of divorce and gives it to her and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband who took her to be his wife dies, ⁴ her former husband who sent her away may not take her again to be his wife after she is defiled, for that is abomination before Yahweh. You shall not cause the land to sin,

23:18 Prostitution was forbidden under the Law (:17), but this is another tacit recognition made by Moses that such failure would still occur. We see here how Moses forbade something and then went on to give legislation recognizing that it would still occur.

23:20 Christ in His parable told the rejected man that he should at least have given His money to others on usury (Mt. 25:27). He may have meant that the man should at least have done *something* even if he broke the letter of the law; or He may have meant that if the man had at least shared the Gospel with the Gentiles and got some fruit for Christ, all his other lack of achievement would've been overlooked.

24:1 In the case of adultery a man could have his wife killed; apply the trial of jealousy of Num. 5; forgive her; or divorce her, as allowed for here. We have choices as to how we respond to human failure against us, and the very existence of the choices is in order to exercise our spirituality.

24:4 The prophets describe God divorcing Israel for her infidelity and yet still asking her to return to Him. He chose this metaphor to reflect the level of His desperate love

which Yahweh your God gives you for an inheritance.

Various Laws

⁵ When a man takes a new wife he shall not go into the army, neither must he be assigned any business. He shall be free at home for one year and shall please his wife whom he has taken. ⁶ No man may take the mill or the upper millstone as pledge, for he takes a life in pledge. ⁷ If a man is found stealing any of his brothers of the children of Israel, and he deals with him as a slave or sells him, then that thief must die. So you shall put away the evil from among you. ⁸ Take heed that in the plague of leprosy you observe diligently to do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you. As I commanded them, so you shall observe to do. ⁹ Remember what Yahweh your God did to Miriam by the way as you came forth out of Egypt. ¹⁰ When you lend your neighbour any kind of loan, you must not go into his house to get his pledge. ¹¹ You shall stand outside and the man to whom you

lent shall bring the pledge outside to you. ¹² If he is a poor man you must not sleep with his pledge; ¹³ you must surely restore to him the pledge when the sun goes down so that he may sleep in his garment and bless you, and it shall be righteousness to you before Yahweh your God. ¹⁴ You must not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is of your brothers or of the foreigners who are in your land within your gates. ¹⁵ Each day you must give him his hire. The sun must not go down on it for he is poor and sets his heart on it, lest he cry against you to Yahweh and it be sin to you. ¹⁶ The fathers must not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers. Every man shall be put to death for his own sin. ¹⁷ You must not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, nor take a widow's clothing in pledge, ¹⁸ but you must remember that you were a bondservant in Egypt and Yahweh your God redeemed you from there, therefore I command you to do this.

for His people – that He would do what His own law declared to be abomination to Him. That same kind of love is what He has for us today.

24:10 Moses does not repeat every single commandment in the Law. Rather are there several themes of Moses in Deuteronomy presented. His choice of which ones he does repeat indicates his feelings towards Israel. His sensitivity towards the weakest and poorest of Israel comes out in this, and is a sign of his maturity. He was reaching the spirit of the Lord Jesus, who said that the weakest of His brethren represented Him (Mt. 25:40). Moses for all his wealthy background and high status amongst Israel could enter into the sense of shame and embarrassment of the poor man when a richer man enters his home. The Law in Ex. 22:26 did not stipulate that the house of the poor man should not be entered; by making this point in his farewell speech, Moses was showing his sensitivity, his ability now to enter into the feelings of the poorest of God's people. He typified in this the sensitivity of God's son to our spiritual poverty. In some things we all have some advantage over others; some 'wealth' which they

Kindness to the Needy

¹⁹ When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, do not go back to get it. It shall be for the foreigner, for the fatherless and for the widow, so that Yahweh your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ When you beat your olive tree do not go over the boughs again. It shall be for the foreigner, for the fatherless and for the widow. ²¹ When you harvest your vineyard do not glean it afterwards yourselves. It shall be for the foreigner, for the fatherless and for the widow. ²² You shall remember that you were a bondservant in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing.

CHAPTER 25 May 8***More Laws***

If there is a controversy between men, and they come to judgment

and the judges judge them, then they must justify the righteous and condemn the wicked. ² If the wicked man is worthy to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence according to his wickedness, by number. ³ Forty stripes he may give him. He must not exceed this number. If he should beat him with many more than forty stripes, then your brother may seem vile to you. ⁴ You shall not muzzle the ox when he treads out the grain. ⁵ If brothers dwell together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead should not be married outside to a stranger. Her husband's brother should go in to her and take her to him as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. ⁶ The firstborn whom she bears shall succeed in the name of his brother who is dead, so that his name is not blotted out of Israel. ⁷ If the man

don't have; for even the wealthiest person has some area of spiritual poverty in their lives. We are not to shame them, but to be sensitive to how they might feel if that poverty is exposed before us.

25:3 There's a tendency in us to be harsh in punishing others for their sin. This is psychologically explainable by our conscience for our own sins, and subconsciously realizing we deserve punishment; we then eagerly transfer this guilt and need for punishment onto others. Instead we are to confess our sins and believe that the final judgment for our sin was in Christ upon the cross; and if we believe this to the point of really feeling it, we will never punish anyone more than required, indeed we will be gracious to them as God has been to us.

25:4 Moses' sensitivity is shown by the kind of laws he added in Deuteronomy; e.g. "You shall not muzzle the ox when he treads out the grain". This is quoted by Paul as being actually part of the Law (1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18), showing that Moses was so attune with the mind of God that these practical extensions which his sensitivity led him to command Israel were indeed the inspired commandments of God. In the same way as we should not appear unreasonable to men (:3), so we should not to animals. There are other examples of sensitivity to the natural creation in Deuteronomy in 14:21; 20:19 [see notes there].

25:5 This tacitly allowed polygamy. Here we have an example where one principle [the one man: one woman ideal of Eden] is in conflict with another [to build up the

doesn't want to take his brother's wife, then she shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, My husband's brother refuses to raise up to his brother a name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me. ⁸ Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he stands and says, I don't want to take her; ⁹ then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders and loose his shoe from off his foot, spit in his face, and say, So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house. ¹⁰ His name shall be called in Israel', The house of him who had his shoe untied'. ¹¹ When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draws near to deliver her husband out of the hand of him who strikes him, and puts forth her hand and takes him by the private parts, ¹² then you shall cut off her hand, your eye shall have no pity. ¹³ You must not have in your bag different weights, a great and a small. ¹⁴ You must not have in your house different measures, a great and a small. ¹⁵ You shall have a perfect and just weight. You shall have a

perfect and just measure, that your days may be long in the land which Yahweh your God gives you. ¹⁶ For all who do such things, all who do unrighteously, are an abomination to Yahweh your God. ¹⁷ Remember what Amalek did to you by the way as you came forth out of Egypt, ¹⁸ how he met you by the way and struck the hindmost of you, all who were feeble behind you, when you were faint and weary, and he didn't fear God. ¹⁹ Therefore when Yahweh your God has given you rest from all your enemies all around in the land which Yahweh your God gives you for an inheritance to possess it, you must blot out the memory of Amalek from under the sky. Do not forget.

CHAPTER 26 May 9

Giving the Firstfruits to God

When you come into the land which Yahweh your God gives you for an inheritance, and possess it and dwell in it, ² take of the first of all the fruit of the ground which you bring in from your land that Yahweh your God gives you, and put it in a basket and go to the place which Yahweh your God shall choose to

family name of your childless brother]. God could have arranged ethics in a simpler manner; but He has allowed and in this case encouraged the development of such conflicts in order that we think and reason things through, and make whatever decision we do consciously and from our own desire rather than merely in mindless submission to a commandment.

25:11 The principle from this is that each person has a weakness, an exposed point in their lives or character, which we are aware of. We are not to use that to unfair advantage – because if we were touched in that way, we likewise could not endure. And God saves His weak people and has historically been angry with those who do such things (:18).

25:14 *In your house* – To avoid temptation it's best to not even possess things which we may be tempted to misuse.

cause His name to dwell there. ³ You shall come to the priest who will be in those days and tell him, I declare this day to Yahweh your God that I have come to the land which Yahweh swore to our fathers to give us. ⁴ The priest shall take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of Yahweh your God. ⁵ You shall answer and say before Yahweh your God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father and he went down into Egypt and lived there, few in number, and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. ⁶ The Egyptians behaved badly with us, afflicted us and laid on us hard bondage, ⁷ and we cried to Yahweh, the God of our fathers and Yahweh heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression, ⁸ and Yahweh brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm and with great terror, with signs and wonders; ⁹ and He has brought us into this place and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ Now, behold, I have brought the first of the fruit of the ground which You, Yahweh, have given me. You shall set it down before Yahweh your God, and worship before Yahweh your God. ¹¹ You shall rejoice in all the good which Yahweh your God has given to you and to your house; you and the Levite and the foreigner who is in the midst of you.

Tithes

¹² When you have made an end of tithing all your increase in the third year, which is the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the foreigner, to the fatherless and to the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled. ¹³ You shall say before Yahweh your God, I have put away the holy things out of my house and have given them to the Levite and to the foreigner, to the fatherless and to the widow, according to all Your commandment which You have commanded me. I have not transgressed any of Your commandments, neither have I forgotten them. ¹⁴ I have not eaten of it in mourning, neither have I put away any of it while unclean, nor given any of it for the dead. I have listened to the voice of Yahweh my God. I have done according to all that You have commanded me. ¹⁵ Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the ground which You have given us, as You swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Keep the Commands

¹⁶ This day Yahweh your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances. You shall therefore keep and do them with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹⁷ You have undertaken to Yahweh this day to be your God and that you will walk in

26:5 *A Syrian ready to perish* – Israel were to recognize that their Arab brethren were in fact their cousins, and Jacob their ancestor was at one time no more than a starving, desperate, homeless, wandering Arab. That they had been given a fruitful land was therefore a great grace to them.

His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments and His ordinances and listen to His voice.¹⁸ And Yahweh has undertaken to you this day that you shall be a people for His own possession, as He has promised you, in order that you should keep all His commandments,¹⁹ so as to make you high above all nations that He has made, in praise, in name and in honour, and that you might be a holy people to Yahweh your God, as He has spoken.

CHAPTER 27 May 10

The Altar on Mount Ebal

Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day.² On the day

when you pass over the Jordan to the land which Yahweh your God gives you, you must set up great stones and plaster them with plaster³ and write on them all the words of this law, when you have passed over, that you may go in to the land which Yahweh your God gives you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Yahweh, the God of your fathers has promised you.⁴ When you have passed over the Jordan, I command you this day that you shall set up these stones, in Mount Ebal, and you shall plaster them with plaster.⁵ There you shall build an altar to Yahweh your God, an altar of stones. You shall lift up no iron on them.⁶ You shall build the altar of Yahweh your God of uncut stones and you shall offer burnt of-

26:18 God declared Israel “a people for His own possession... *in order that* you should keep all His commandments”. But God had put it the other way around when He told Israel that *if* they kept His commandments, *then* they would be “a people for His own possession” (Ex. 19:5). This conditional promise is now referred to by Moses as having been fulfilled – Israel became His “own possession” by status even though they did *not* keep His commandments (7:6; 14:2 s.w.; Ps. 135:4). God said that *if* they were obedient, *then* they would be His special people. Yet He counted them as His special people even though they were not obedient. And He did this so that they would be so touched by this grace that they *would* be obedient. We are to live out in practice what we have been made in status by our gracious Father. The very fact He counts us as in Christ, as the spotless bride of His Son, must be both felt and lived up to by us. The way He counts righteousness to us is a wonderful motivation to live it out as far as we can.

27:4 The word “commandments” occurs 43 times in Deuteronomy, and only 19 times in the other three records of the Law; “remember” occurs 16 times compared to 8 times in the other three. And yet Moses commanded Israel specifically to engrave the law on tables of plaster, not stone, knowing that they would soon be washed away; thus he wished to teach Israel [or try to] the temporary nature of the Law (27:4-8). Like Paul in his time of dying, Moses saw the importance of obedience, the harder side of God; yet he also saw in real depth the surpassing *love* of God, and the grace that was to come, beyond Law. See on 7:7.

27:5, 6 God wants us to serve Him in simplicity without trying to make our altars externally beautiful as if to impress a human eye.

ferings thereon to Yahweh your God. ⁷ You shall sacrifice peace offerings and shall eat there and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God. ⁸ You must write on the stones all the words of this law very plainly. ⁹ Moses and the priests and Levites spoke to all Israel, saying, Keep silence and listen, Israel: this day you have become the people of Yahweh your God. ¹⁰ You must therefore obey the voice of Yahweh your God and do His commandments and His statutes which I command you this day.

Curses from Mount Ebal

¹¹ Moses commanded the people the same day saying, ¹² These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people when you have passed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. ¹³ These shall stand on Mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali. ¹⁴ The Levites shall answer and tell all the men of Israel with a loud voice, ¹⁵ ‘Cursed is the man who makes an engraved or molten image, an abomination to Yahweh, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and secretly sets it up’. All the people shall answer and say ‘Amen’. ¹⁶ ‘Cursed is he who dishonours his father or his mother’. All the

people shall say ‘Amen’. ¹⁷ ‘Cursed is he who removes his neighbour’s landmark’. All the people shall say ‘Amen’. ¹⁸ ‘Cursed is he who makes the blind wander out of the way’. All the people shall say ‘Amen’. ¹⁹ ‘Cursed is he who deprives the foreigner, fatherless and widow of justice’. All the people shall say ‘Amen’. ²⁰ ‘Cursed is he who lies with his father’s wife, because he has uncovered his father’s skirt’. All the people shall say ‘Amen’. ²¹ ‘Cursed is he who lies with any kind of animal’. All the people shall say ‘Amen’. ²² ‘Cursed is he who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother’. All the people shall say ‘Amen’. ²³ ‘Cursed is he who lies with his mother-in-law’. All the people shall say ‘Amen’. ²⁴ ‘Cursed is he who strikes his neighbour in secret’. All the people shall say ‘Amen’. ²⁵ ‘Cursed is he who takes a bribe to kill an innocent person’. All the people shall say ‘Amen’. ²⁶ ‘Cursed is he who doesn’t confirm the words of this law to do them’. All the people shall say ‘Amen’.

CHAPTER 28 May 11

Blessings for Obedience

If you will listen diligently to the voice of Yahweh your God, to ob-

27:6, 7 Eating upon a heap of unhewn stones was understood as a sign of having made a covenant on mutually agreed terms and being at peace with each other (Gen. 31:46,47). Our eating before God at the breaking of bread meeting is something similar.

27:15 *Secretly sets it up* – The list of sins which follow in :15-25 are all matters of the heart or things which are not seen by others. The people were confirming their acceptance of the fact that God sees and knows all things, and there really would be a judgment for them.

serve all His commandments which I command you this day, Yahweh your God will set you on high above all the nations of the earth. ² All these blessings shall come on you and be with you, if you will listen to the voice of Yahweh your God. ³ You shall be blessed in the city and you shall be blessed in the field. ⁴ You shall be blessed in the fruit of your body, the fruit of your ground, the fruit of your animals, the increase of your livestock and the young of your flock. ⁵ Your basket and your kneading trough shall be blessed. ⁶ You shall be blessed when you come in and you shall be blessed when you go out. ⁷ Yahweh will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be struck before you. They will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways. ⁸ Yahweh will command the blessing on you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to; He will bless you in the land which Yahweh your God gives you. ⁹ Yahweh will establish you for a holy people to Himself as He has sworn to you, if you will keep the commandments of Yahweh

your God and walk in His ways. ¹⁰ All the peoples of the land will see that you are called by the name of Yahweh and they will be afraid of you. ¹¹ Yahweh will make you prosperous in the fruit of your body and in the fruit of your livestock and in the fruit of your ground, in the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers to give you. ¹² Yahweh will open to you His good treasure in the sky, to give the rain of your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations and you shall not borrow. ¹³ Yahweh will make you the head and not the tail, and you shall only be above and you shall not be beneath, if you will listen to the commandments of Yahweh your God which I command you this day, to observe and to do, ¹⁴ and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Curses for Disobedience

¹⁵ But if you will not listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, to observe to do all His commandments

28:10 *You are called by the name of Yahweh* – Whatever carried the name of a person was seen as his property. If a city was conquered, it bore the name of the conqueror (2 Sam. 12:28); the names of owners were on their property (Ps. 49:12). So to bear God's Name is to recognize His complete ownership and even conquest of us. And yet there's a significant twist to all this in Is. 43:1: "I have called you by *your* name, because you are mine". It seems like a slip – we expect God to say that He has called us by *His* Name, because we are His. But no – He wishes us to bear both His Name and our own name, He doesn't wish to subsume us beneath His ownership and manifestation to the point that we are not significant as persons.

28:12 *You shall lend to many nations* – Money lending worldwide has been a feature of Jewish existence over the centuries, and yet this is here predicted as happening only if they were obedient. They have been disobedient, and yet it's as if God loves to advertise His grace to the world by still blessing the disobedient.

and His statutes which I command you this day, all these curses shall come on you and consume you. 16 You shall be cursed in the city and you shall be cursed in the field. 17 Your basket and your kneading trough shall be cursed. 18 The fruit of your body, the fruit of your ground, the increase of your livestock and the young of your flock shall be cursed. 19 You shall be cursed when you come in and you shall be cursed when you go out. 20 Yahweh will send on you cursing, confusion and rebuke in all that you put your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the evil of your doings by which you have forsaken Him. 21 Yahweh will make the pestilence cleave to you until He has consumed you from off the land into which you now go in to possess it. 22 Yahweh will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation and with fiery heat; with the sword, with blight and with mildew, and they shall pursue you until you perish. 23 Your sky that is over your head shall be brass and the earth that is under you shall be iron. 24 Yahweh will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from the sky shall it come down on you until you are destroyed. 25 Yahweh will cause you to be struck before your enemies. You shall go out one way against them but shall flee seven

ways before them, and you shall be tossed back and forth among all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 Your dead body shall be food to all birds of the sky and to the animals of the earth, and there shall be none to frighten them away. 27 Yahweh will strike you with the boil of Egypt and with the tumours, the scurvy and the itch, from which you cannot be healed. 28 Yahweh will strike you with madness, blindness and astonishment of heart. 29 You shall grope at noonday, as the blind gropes in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways. You shall be only oppressed and robbed always and there shall be none to save you. 30 You will betroth a wife and another man shall lie with her. You will build a house and not dwell therein. You will plant a vineyard and not use its fruit. 31 Your ox will be slain before your eyes and you shall not eat of it. Your donkey will be violently taken away from before your face and shall not be restored to you. Your sheep will be given to your enemies and you will have none to save you. 32 Your sons and your daughters will be given to another people and your eyes will look and fail with longing for them all day long; and there shall be no power in your hand. 33 The fruit of your ground and all your labours shall a nation which you don't know eat up, and you will be only oppressed and

28:24 *The rain of your land powder and dust* – This has not yet been fulfilled; maybe because God in His grace has not punished His people according to all their sins. Or it could be that it has yet to be fulfilled in the final tribulation to come upon Israel. Nuclear fallout would fulfil these words – and likewise those of Is. 29:6, describing the invasion of latter day Babylon / Assyria, which have yet to be accurately fulfilled.

crushed always, ³⁴ so that you will be mad because of the sight your eyes shall see. ³⁵ Yahweh will strike you in the knees and in the legs with a sore boil of which you cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head. ³⁶ Yahweh will bring you and your king whom you will set over you to a nation that you have not known, you nor your fathers, and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone. ³⁷ You will become an astonishment, a proverb and a byword among all the peoples where Yahweh shall lead you away. ³⁸ You will carry much seed out into the field and gather little in, for the locust shall consume it. ³⁹ You will plant vineyards and dress them but you shall neither drink of the wine nor harvest them, for the worm shall eat them. ⁴⁰ You will have olive trees throughout all your borders but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil, for your olives shall drop off. ⁴¹ You will father sons and daughters but they shall not be yours, for they will

go into captivity. ⁴² All your trees and the fruit of your ground shall the locust possess. ⁴³ The foreigner who is in the midst of you shall mount up above you higher and higher and you shall come down lower and lower. ⁴⁴ He will lend to you and you shall not lend to him; he will be the head and you shall be the tail. ⁴⁵ All these curses will come on you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you didn't listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you, ⁴⁶ and they shall be to you and your seed a sign and a wonder forever. ⁴⁷ Because you didn't serve Yahweh your God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart because of the abundance of all things, ⁴⁸ therefore you shall serve your enemies whom Yahweh shall send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness and in want of all things and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you. ⁴⁹ Yahweh will

28:36 *There you shall serve other gods* – Israel and Judah are strongly rebuked by the prophets for their choice to do this, and are begged to cease doing so. But their free-will choice to sin was in fact a result of being cursed by God; they were led into sin, as it were, by God confirming them in the downward spiral they had chosen to be part of. In this case, if they didn't want to be cursed, then they simply had to stop living out the curse in their lives.

28:47 Israel would be rejected and cursed if they didn't serve God "with gladness". Service to God must be done with joy; if we lose the rejoicing of our hope, we lose the hope itself (Heb. 3:6). Joy is therefore a vital characteristic of God's true people.

28:47, 48 Moses offered Israel the choice of bondservitude to either Yahweh or their enemies. The whole of Romans 6 plays on this idea. We are slaves to sin, and through entering Christ by baptism, we become slaves of righteousness. Total freedom to do what *we* personally want is not possible. We are slaves, we can't serve two masters. So why not serve Christ rather than the Biblical devil? Jesus spoke of His servants having a light yoke (Mt. 11:30). The Bible minded among His hearers would have thought back to the threatened punishment of an iron yoke for the disobedient (:48). 'It's a

bring a nation against you from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flies; a nation whose language you will not understand; ⁵⁰ a nation of fierce face who will not respect the person of the old nor show favour to the young. ⁵¹ It will eat the fruit of your livestock and the fruit of your ground until you are destroyed. It will not leave you grain, new wine or oil, the increase of your livestock or the young of your flock, until it has caused you to perish. ⁵² It will besiege you in all your gates until your high and fortified walls come down in which you trusted, throughout all your land. It will besiege you in all your gates throughout all your land which Yahweh your God has given you. ⁵³ You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters, whom Yahweh your God has given you, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemies shall distress you. ⁵⁴ The man who is tender among you and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother and toward the wife

of his heart and toward the remnant of his children whom he has remaining, ⁵⁵ so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and in the distress with which your enemy shall distress you in all your gates. ⁵⁶ The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye will be evil toward the husband of her heart and toward her son and her daughter, ⁵⁷ and toward her young one who comes out from between her feet and her children whom she shall bear; for she will eat them secretly, for want of all things in the siege and in the distress with which your enemy shall distress you in your gates.

Further Warnings

⁵⁸ If you will not observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and fearful name, YAHWEH

yoke either way', they would have concluded. But the Lord's yoke *even in this life* is light, and has promise of the life which is to come! The logic of taking it, with the restrictions it inevitably implies (for it is a yoke), is simply overpowering.

28:50-57 Moses not only repeats all the curses of Lev. 26 to them, but he adds even more, under inspiration. Presumably the Angel had explained in one of their conversations how Israel would suffer even greater punishment than that outlined in Lev. 26. Notice that Lev. 26 and Dt. 28 are not strictly parallel. Moses in his spiritual maturity urged Israel to be the more fully aware of the nature and reality of Divine punishment for human sin; his increased focus upon grace and salvation didn't mean that he increasingly ignored the harder side of God – but rather the opposite was the case.

28:58 For all Moses' desire for Israel's obedience, there are some subtle differences in his attitude to law and obedience between Deuteronomy, and the law earlier given. Thus in Leviticus 26 it was stressed that obedience would bring blessing; whilst here, :58 says that obedience results in fearing the awesome Name of Yahweh and His glory. Fear shouldn't lead to obedience; but obedience leads a man to *know and fear his*

YOUR GOD, ⁵⁹ then Yahweh will make your plagues terrible and the plagues of your seed, great plagues and of long continuance, and severe sicknesses and of long continuance. ⁶⁰ He will bring on you again all the diseases of Egypt which you feared, and they shall cling to you. ⁶¹ Also Yahweh will bring on you every sickness and every plague which is not written in the book of this law, until you are destroyed. ⁶² You will be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of the sky for multitude, because you didn't listen to the voice of Yahweh your God. ⁶³ As Yahweh rejoiced over you to do you good and to multiply you, so Yahweh will rejoice over you to cause you to perish and to destroy you. You will be plucked from off the land where you go in to possess it. ⁶⁴ Yahweh will scatter you among all peoples, from the one end of the earth to the other end of the earth, and there you shall serve other gods which you have not known – you nor your fathers – gods of wood and stone. ⁶⁵ Among

these nations you shall find no ease and there shall be no rest for the sole of your foot. Yahweh will give you there a trembling heart and failing of eyes and pining of soul, ⁶⁶ and your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear night and day and shall have no assurance of your life. ⁶⁷ In the morning you will say, I wish it were evening! and at evening you will say, I wish it were morning! for the fear of your heart which you shall fear and for the sight of your eyes which you shall see. ⁶⁸ Yahweh will bring you into Egypt again with ships by the way of which I said to you, You shall see it no more again, and there you shall sell yourselves to your enemies for bondservants and for bondmaids, and no man will buy you.

CHAPTER 29 May 12

The Covenant

These are the words of the covenant which Yahweh commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides

God and His Name. This is blessing enough. Like Jacob and Job, Moses came to a fine appreciation of Yahweh's Name at his latter end, perceiving that the wonder of relationship with God far eclipses any material blessing we may receive from Him in this life. To respect or fear the Name doesn't mean to remember that God's Name is 'Yahweh'. It refers to his character (Ex. 34:4-6). The Lord Jesus fed off the majesty of the Name of Yahweh (Mic. 5:4) – this was how inspirational He found the things of the Name. To fear the Name of Yahweh involved practical obedience to "all the words of this law". Meditation and sustained reflection upon the characteristics of God as epitomized and memorialized in His Name will of itself lead to a conforming of personality to that same Name. If we declare that Name to others, they too have the chance to be transformed by it – thus Moses comments that "I will proclaim the name of Yahweh; you, ascribe greatness to our God" (32:3).

28:68 God's promise that Israel would never again see Egypt was therefore conditional, and thus capable of being broken; although those conditions aren't mentioned when He makes the promise in 17:16; Ex. 14:13.

the covenant which He made with them in Horeb. ² Moses called all Israel and said to them, You have seen all that Yahweh did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land; ³ the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and those great wonders. ⁴ But Yahweh has not given you a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this day. ⁵ I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not grown old on you and your shoes have not grown old on your feet. ⁶ You have not eaten bread neither have you drunk wine or strong drink, that you may know that I am Yahweh your God. ⁷ When we came to this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon and Og the king of Bashan came out against us to battle and we struck them, ⁸ and we took their land and gave it for an inheritance to

the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of the Manassites. ⁹ Keep therefore the words of this covenant and do them, so that you may prosper in all that you do. ¹⁰ You stand this day, all of you, before Yahweh your God: your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel, ¹¹ your little ones, your wives and the foreigner who is in the midst of your camps, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water. ¹² You wish to enter into covenant with Yahweh your God and into His oath, which Yahweh your God makes with you this day, ¹³ that He may establish you this day to Himself for a people and that He may be to you a God, as He spoke to you and as He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. ¹⁴ Not only with you do I make this covenant and this oath, ¹⁵ but with

29:10 Moses on that last day of his life addressed the whole assembly of Israel; and yet he so often speaks in the singular (“thee” rather than “ye” in the KJV), as if to emphasize that the laws and covenant he was giving them was to them *personally*. This is made clear in:10,12: “You (plural) stand this day, all of you, before Yahweh... that you (singular) may enter into covenant with Yahweh”. That covenant was made anew by God to each generation and individual. We cannot hide within a family or a church. We are individually responsible to God and will personally be saved. In the same spirit, Moses points out that Yahweh is the only God that can be personally *known*; all the idols could not be known personally (:26). No fewer than 137 times in Scripture we read the phrase “my God”. This was used in a public, unashamed way by many of God’s children (it was a particular favourite of Nehemiah, David and Paul).

29:10-13 This is a very long sentence; from now until the end of his speech in Deuteronomy, Moses uses (in the Hebrew text) very long sentences, at times with unclear syntax – as if he was getting increasingly intense and excited as he speaks of the utter realities to which we stand personally related by our covenant with God.

29:12 For Israel in covenant with God, absolutely nothing – not sex, menstruation, the content of clothing fabric, diet – could fall outside the scope of their covenant relationship. And so in principle it is with us under the new covenant. Such a relationship also precludes the worship of *any* other God. The covenant we have entered has constant and binding claims upon our loyalty; and it also speaks of God’s constant and passionate commitment to us.

him who stands here with us this day before Yahweh our God and also with him who is not here with us this day. ¹⁶ For you know how we lived in the land of Egypt and how we came through the midst of the nations through which you passed, ¹⁷ and you have seen their abominations and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them. ¹⁸ This covenant is made lest there should be among you man or woman, family or tribe, whose heart turns away this day from Yahweh our God, to go to serve the gods of those nations; lest there should be among you a root that bears gall and wormwood, ¹⁹ who, when he hears the words of this curse blesses himself in his heart saying I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, to destroy the moist with the dry. ²⁰ Yahweh will not pardon him, but then the anger of Yahweh and His jealousy will smoke against that man, and all the curse that is written in this book shall lie on him, and Yahweh will blot out his name from under the sky. ²¹ Yahweh will separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that is written in this book of the law.

Result of Breaking the Covenant

²² The generation to come, your children who shall rise up after you and the foreigner who will come from

a distant land, shall see the plagues of the land and the sicknesses with which Yahweh has made it sick. ²³ The whole land is sulphur, salt and burning, that it is not sown nor giving produce and no grass grows therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which Yahweh overthrew in His anger and in his wrath. ²⁴ They and all the nations shall say, Why has Yahweh done thus to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean? ²⁵ Then men shall say, Because they forsook the covenant of Yahweh the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, ²⁶ and went and served other gods and worshipped them, gods that they didn't know and that He had not given to them. ²⁷ Therefore the anger of Yahweh was kindled against this land, to bring on it all the curse that is written in this book; ²⁸ and Yahweh rooted them out of their land in anger in wrath and in great indignation and cast them into another land, as at this day. ²⁹ The secret things belong to Yahweh our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

CHAPTER 30 May 13

Blessings after Repentance

When all these things have come on you, the blessing and the

29:18 Applied in Heb. 12:15 to those within the church who discourage others from total commitment to God. Those who don't totally commit to Him will poison others by their attitude and cause them to fall away from God's grace; and we must be keenly aware of this, because there are such people around – so says Heb. 12:15.

curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where Yahweh your God has driven you, ² and return to Yahweh your God and obey His voice according to all that I command you this day, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul; ³ then Yahweh your God will turn your captivity and have compassion on you. He will return and gather you from all the peoples where Yahweh your God has scattered you. ⁴ If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of the heavens, from there will Yahweh your God gather you, and from there He will bring you back. ⁵ Yahweh your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed and you shall possess it, and He will do you good and multiply you above your fathers. ⁶ Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed, to love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. ⁷ Yahweh your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you and persecuted you. ⁸ You shall return and obey the voice of Yahweh and do all His commandments which

I command you this day. ⁹ Yahweh your God will make you plenteous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your livestock and in the fruit of your ground, for good. Yahweh will again rejoice over you for good, as He rejoiced over your fathers, ¹⁰ if you will obey the voice of Yahweh your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if you turn to Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

The Choice of Life or Death

¹¹ For this commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. ¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it back down to us and make us hear it, that we may do it? ¹³ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go down into the deeps for us and bring it up to us and make us hear it, that we may do it? ¹⁴ But the word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. ¹⁵ Behold, I have set before you this day

30:3 God's attempt to regather Judah from captivity *before* they had repented therefore indicates His grace, operating at times beyond the conditions which He has stated in His own word.

30:11-14 Moses assures them that full obedience to his Law is possible (even if finally nobody achieved it). It wasn't as if they had to climb up to Heaven or go down beneath the sea, they had to simply from the heart obey it as a way of life and thinking. In Rom. 10:6-9 Paul quotes this passage, having observed that in practice nobody has actually succeeded in fully keeping the Law. He says that the going up to Heaven was done by Christ at His ascension, and going beneath the sea and returning by Christ at His resurrection; and so what remains is not to keep the Mosaic law but to believe in the word of Christ; and the "life" promised here (:15) will be *eternal* life for those in Christ.

life and good, and death and evil. ¹⁶ I command you this day to love Yahweh your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments, His statutes and His ordinances, that you may live and multiply, and that Yahweh your God may bless you in the land where you go in to possess it. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you will not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you this day, that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land, where you pass over the Jordan to go in to possess it. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that you may live, you and your seed. ²⁰ Love Yahweh your God, to obey His voice and to cling to Him; for He is your life and the length of your days, that you

may dwell in the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give them.

CHAPTER 31 May 14

The Appointment of Joshua

Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. ² I am one hundred and twenty years old this day. I can no more go out and come in, and Yahweh has said to me, ‘You shall not go over this Jordan’. ³ Yahweh your God, He will go over before you. He will destroy these nations from before you and you shall dispossess them. Joshua shall go over before you, as Yahweh has spoken. ⁴ Yahweh will do to them as He did to Sihon and to Og, the kings of the Amorites and to their land, whom He destroyed. ⁵ Yahweh will deliver them up before you and you shall do to them according to all the commandments which I have command-

30:15 Moses pleaded with them to see that “this day... this day... this day” he set before them life and death, forgiveness or salvation (:15-19). He saw the urgent importance of deciding now, in this moment, for the Lord. The Lord Jesus had His mind on this when He told the thief with the same emphasis that “this day” He could pronounce that he would be saved, not condemned (Lk. 23:46). He felt like Moses, but greater than Moses, in that He not only set before men the choice, but could grant them the salvation they sought.

30:17 The heart that *turns away* from God by free choice then becomes *drawn away* by other forces.

30:19 Finely aware of the seriousness of our relationship with God, Moses intensely pleads with Israel to “choose life”, not with the passivity which may appear from our armchair reading of this passage. For he knew that the majority of Israel would not choose life.

31:2 That Moses lived to 120 with full faculties was as unusual then as it would be today; because lifespans at that time were around 70 years, and those older than seventy usually had weakened faculties as happens today too (Ps. 90:10). Moses says there in Ps. 90:10 that “*our* years” are 70 – even though he himself had much longer life, and would’ve been writing Psalm 90 at well over 80 years old. We see here the empathy which comes from love, and his sense of identity with God’s people. All this is a pat-

ed you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, don't be afraid nor be scared of them, for Yahweh your God, He it is who goes with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you. ⁷ Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which Yahweh has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. ⁸ It is Yahweh who goes before you. He will be with you. He will not fail you neither forsake you. Don't be afraid neither be dismayed.

Command to Read the Law Every Seven Years

⁹ Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests the sons of Levi, who bore the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh, and to all the elders of Israel. ¹⁰ Moses commanded them saying, At the end of every seven years, in the set time of the year of release, in

the feast of tents, ¹¹ when all Israel has come to appear before Yahweh your God in the place which He shall choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. ¹² Assemble the people, men, women and the little ones and your foreigner who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear Yahweh your God and observe to do all the words of this law; ¹³ and that their children, who have not known, may hear and learn to fear Yahweh your God as long as you live in the land where you go over the Jordan to possess it.

God Predicts the People's Failure

¹⁴ Yahweh said to Moses, Behold, your life will end shortly. Call Joshua and present yourselves in the Tent of Meeting, so that I may commission him. Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁵ Yahweh appeared in

tern for us in our relationships and feelings toward others, but it also typifies Christ's ultimate sensitivity, empathy and identity with the limitations of our humanity.

31:6 *He will not fail you nor forsake you* – Specifically applied to each of us in Heb. 13:5, in the context of appealing for us not to be covetous, worrying, as it were, how we are to cope on our journey into the Kingdom.

31:9 It takes about four hours to read through the book of Deuteronomy out loud. The many references in Deuteronomy to “this day” (see on 30:15) suggest Moses spoke it all on the last day of his life. It was a very busy day – he spoke Deuteronomy, wrote a copy of it (or of the entire Law; notice how Dt. 24 was *written* by Moses, Mk. 10:5), sings a Song to that silent multitude (surely with a lump in his throat, especially at points like 32:15), and then he turns and climbs the mountain to see the land and meet his death. The fact it all happened on his birthday just adds to the pathos of it all (:2). The huge amount of work which he did on that last day of his life looks forward to Christ's huge achievement in the day of His death. No wonder Yahweh describes that day of Moses' death with an intensive plural: “Your days (an intensive plural, i.e. the one great time / day) are made ready that you must die” (:14). May our last day be as intensely productive as his.

31:14 The day of our death is made ready ahead of time by God.

the Tent in a pillar of cloud. The pillar of cloud stood over the door of the Tent. ¹⁶ Yahweh said to Moses, Behold, you shall lay down to sleep with your fathers, and this people shall rise up and play the prostitute after the strange gods of the land where they go to be among them, and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. ¹⁷ Then My anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and I will hide My face from them and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall come on them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Haven’t these evils come on us because our God is not among us?’ ¹⁸ I will surely hide My face in that day for all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods. ¹⁹ Now therefore write this song for yourselves and teach it to the children of Israel. Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel. ²⁰ For when I have brought them into the land which I swore to their fathers, flowing with milk and honey, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them, and despise Me and break My covenant. ²¹ When many evils and troubles have come on them, this song shall testify before them as a witness, for it shall not be forgotten

out of the mouths of their seed; for I know their imagination which they plan this day, before I have brought them into the land which I swore. ²² So Moses wrote this song the same day and taught it to the children of Israel. ²³ He commissioned Joshua the son of Nun and said, Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you. ²⁴ When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book, ²⁵ he commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of Yahweh saying, ²⁶ Take this book of the law and put it in the side of the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh your God, that it may be there for a witness against you. ²⁷ For I know your rebellion and your stiff neck; even while I am alive with you this day you have been rebellious against Yahweh, and how much more after my death? ²⁸ Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to witness against them. ²⁹ For I know that after my death you will utterly corrupt yourselves and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you, and evil will happen to you in the latter days, because you will do that which is evil in the sight of Yahweh, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands.

31:19, 21 God recognized the power of music by arranging things in this way; He knew they would sing this to themselves and the words would influence them. We must ensure that the music we listen to and hum to ourselves is leading us to repentance and to God, rather than the other way; because music and lyrics are powerful.

The Song of Moses

³⁰ Moses spoke in the ears of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song, until they were finished.

CHAPTER 32 May 15

Give ear, you heavens, and I will speak. Let the earth hear the words of my mouth. ² My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall condense as the dew, as the small rain on the tender grass, as the showers on the herb. ³ For I will proclaim the name of Yahweh. Ascribe greatness to our God ⁴ the Rock; His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice; a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is He. ⁵ They have dealt corruptly with Him; they are not His children any more because of their blemish. They are a perverse and crooked generation. ⁶ Do you thus repay Yahweh, foolish people and unwise? Isn't He

your father who has bought you? He has created you and established you. ⁷ Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask your father and he will show you, your elders and they will tell you. ⁸ When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the children of men, He set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel. ⁹ For Yahweh's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. ¹⁰ He found him in a desert land, in the waste howling wilderness. He embraced him, He cared for him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. ¹¹ As an eagle that stirs up her nest and flutters over her young, He spread abroad his wings. He took them, He carried them on His feathers. ¹² Yahweh alone led him, there was no foreign god with Him. ¹³ He made him ride in victory on the high

32:3 As Christ declared God's Name just before His death (Jn. 17:26), so did Moses (Dt. 32:3 LXX). Moses saw at the end of his life that there was no third way: it was either complete dedication and salvation, or rebellion and condemnation. See on 28:58.

32:5 *A perverse and crooked generation* – This description of Israel is quoted about the world in Phil. 2:15. If God's people worship this world's idols, then they are counted by God as the world.

32:10 *As the apple of His eye* – One of the most sensitive spots on the body. Anyone who even comes near God's people stimulates a natural response from God, so sensitive is He to our pain in this life.

32:11 *Carried them on His feathers* – The allusion is to how the eagle teaches its young to fly. The eagle appears from earth to be carrying the young on her wings, but actually she is throwing them into the air and teaching them to fly within the draft from her own wings. This is a beautiful picture of how God works through His Spirit to teach us independent flight, rather than simply carrying us. As the truly good parent, He seeks to give us independence and teach this to us in the course of our wilderness journey.

32:12 Although there was no pagan god with Yahweh at the time of the exodus, there was with Israel – for they took the idols of Egypt with them through the Red Sea, just

places of the earth and fed him with the increase of the field. He caused him to suck honey out of the rock, oil out of the flinty rock, ¹⁴ butter of the herd and milk of the flock with fat of lambs, rams of the breed of Bashan and goats, with the finest of the wheat. Of the blood of the grape you drank wine. ¹⁵ But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked. You have grown fat. You have grown fat. You have become covered with flesh. Then he forsook God who made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. ¹⁶ They moved Him to jealousy with strange gods, they provoked Him to anger with abominations. ¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons, not God, to gods that they didn't know, to new gods that came up recently, which your fathers didn't fear. ¹⁸ Of the Rock who became your father you are unmindful, and have forgotten God who gave you birth. ¹⁹ Yahweh saw and abhorred, because of the provocation of His sons and His

daughters. ²⁰ He said, I will hide My face from them. I will see what their end shall be, for they are a very perverse generation, children in whom is no loyalty. ²¹ They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God. They have provoked Me to anger with their vanities. I will move them to jealousy with those who are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. ²² For a fire is kindled in My anger, which burns to the lowest Sheol. It devours the earth with its increase, and sets the foundations of the mountains on fire. ²³ I will heap evils on them. I will spend my arrows on them. ²⁴ They shall be wasted with hunger and devoured with burning heat and bitter destruction. I will send the teeth of animals on them and the poison of crawling things of the dust. ²⁵ Outside, the sword shall bereave and inside, terror shall be on both young man and virgin, the nursing infant with the grey-haired man. ²⁶ I said I would

as we are tempted to take the world with us through the waters of baptism rather than seeing it as cut off from us (Ez. 20:7,8).

32:13 Tragically, Israel went back to those very “high places” to worship the local idols, as the prophets so often lament.

32:15 *Jeshurun grew fat and kicked* – Moses in Deuteronomy so many times warns that Israel would become unfaithful to God once they became prosperous. This is a major theme with him. Any request for material prosperity must be made knowing that really this is not for the best spiritually. And God must struggle with those requests as a parent does with a request for something which they want to give, because they love their child, but know that it will almost certainly be misused. It's no surprise therefore that the majority of God's people have been poor – it is the poor who respond to the Gospel (Mt. 11:5), and the wealthy are a minority amongst us (1 Cor. 1:26).

32:17 *Demons, not God, to gods that they didn't know* – Demons are associated with idols, and they are not the gods which they are believed to be (:21; 1 Cor. 10:20). The language of demon possession we meet in the Gospel records is therefore the language of the day to describe healing of illnesses attributed to demons; but demons have no real existence because there is only one God.

scatter them afar, I would make their memory to cease from among men,²⁷ but I feared the provocation of the enemy, lest their adversaries should judge wrongly, lest they should say, ‘Our hand is exalted, Yahweh has not done all this’.²⁸ For they are a nation without wisdom; there is no understanding in them.²⁹ Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!³⁰ How one could have chased a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight, had not their Rock sold them and Yahweh delivered them up!³¹ For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.³² For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, of the fields of Gomorrah. Their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter.³³ Their wine is the poison of serpents, the deadly venom of asps.³⁴ Isn’t this laid up in store with Me, sealed up among My treasures?³⁵ Vengeance is Mine and punishment, at the time when their foot slides; for the day of their calamity is at hand. The things that are to come on them shall make haste.³⁶ For Yahweh will judge His people and have compassion on His servants when He sees that their power is gone, that there is none remaining, shut up or left at large.³⁷ He will say, Where are their gods, the rock in

which they took refuge,³⁸ which ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you! Let them be your protection.³⁹ See now that I, even I, am He. There is no god with Me. I kill and I make alive. I wound and I heal. There is no one who can deliver out of My hand.⁴⁰ For I lift up My hand to heaven and say, as surely as I live forever,⁴¹ if I whet My glittering sword and My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My adversaries and will punish those who hate Me.⁴² I will make My arrows drunk with blood. My sword shall devour flesh with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the head of the leaders of the enemy.⁴³ Rejoice, you nations, with His people, for He will avenge the blood of His servants. He will take vengeance on His adversaries and will make expiation for His land, for His people.⁴⁴ Moses came and spoke all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he and Joshua the son of Nun.⁴⁵ When Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel⁴⁶ he said to them, Set your heart to all the words which I testify to you this day, which you must command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.⁴⁷ For it is no vain thing for you, because it is your life

32:36 Israel assembled before Moses really do represent us, for this is quoted in Heb. 10:20 as relevant to all of us coming before judgment. But our verse goes on to say that at this very time of judgment, He will have compassion upon His people. Which is a comforting thought to take with us to the judgment seat of Christ.

32:47 Because Moses knew all this, he was pleading with Israel to “choose life”. I wonder if he wasn’t screaming this to them, almost breaking down in the climax of logic and passion which resulted in that appeal. Moses spoke Deuteronomy without

and through this you shall prolong your days in the land, where you go over the Jordan to possess it.

Moses to Die

⁴⁸ Yahweh spoke to Moses that same day saying, ⁴⁹ Go up into this mountain of Abarim, to Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab that is opposite Jericho, and see the land of Canaan which I give to the children of Israel for a possession. ⁵⁰ Die on the mountain and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, ⁵¹ because you trespassed against Me in the midst of the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah of Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because you didn't sanctify Me in the midst of the children of Israel. ⁵² For you shall see the land before you, but you shall not go there into the land which I give the children of Israel.

CHAPTER 33 May 16

The Blessing of Moses

This is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed

the children of Israel before his death. ² He said, Yahweh came from Sinai and rose from Seir to them. He shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with ten thousands of holy ones. At His right hand was a fiery law for them. ³ Yes, He loved the people. All His saints are in Your hand. They sat down at Your feet; each receives Your words. ⁴ Moses commanded us a law, an inheritance for the assembly of Jacob. ⁵ He was king in Jeshurun when the heads of the people were gathered, all the tribes of Israel together. ⁶ Let Reuben live, and not die, nor let his men be few. ⁷ This is for Judah. He said Hear, Yahweh, the voice of Judah. Bring him in to his people; with his hands he contended for himself. You shall be a help against his adversaries. ⁸ Of Levi he said, Your Thummim and your Urim are with your holy one whom You proved at Massah, with whom You strove at the waters of Meribah; ⁹ who said of his father and of his mother, 'I have not seen him'. Neither did he acknowledge his brothers, nor did he know his own children; for they

notes. It was no reading of a carefully prepared paper. All these things were in his heart; their proneness to failure, the coming of judgement for sin, his knowledge of their future apostasy. Enter into the *passion* of it all. The man who was willing to give his eternal life for them, about to die for the sake of their provocation – singing a final song to them, giving a final speech, which showed that he knew perfectly well that they would turn away from what he was trying to do for them, and therefore the majority of them would not be saved. As he came to the end of his speech, he seems to have sensed they didn't grasp the reality of it all: "It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life"; and thus his speech rises to a crescendo of intensity of pleading with them, typifying the pattern of the Lord Jesus in His time of dying.

33:9 These words are alluded to by Jesus in explaining why He felt closer to those who listened to His word than to His natural family (Mk. 3:21,31-35; Mt. 12:46-50). He read these same words that we do. To feel this closely to those who are, like us,

have observed Your word and keep Your covenant. ¹⁰ They shall teach Jacob Your ordinances, and Israel Your law. They shall put incense before You and whole burnt offering on Your altar. ¹¹ Yahweh, bless his substance. Accept the work of his hands. Strike through the hips of those who rise up against him, of those who hate him, so that they will not rise again. ¹² Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of Yahweh shall dwell in safety by Him. He covers him all the day long. He dwells between His shoulders. ¹³ Of Joseph he said, His land is blessed by Yahweh for the precious things of the heavens, for the dew, for the deep that couches beneath, ¹⁴ for the precious things of the fruits of the sun, for the precious things of the growth of the moons, ¹⁵ for the chief things of the ancient mountains, for the precious things of the everlasting hills, ¹⁶ for the precious things of the earth and its fullness, the good will of Him who was manifested in the bush. Let this come on the head of Joseph, on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers. ¹⁷ The firstborn of his herd, majesty is his. His horns are the horns of the wild ox; with them he shall push all the peoples to the ends of the land. They are the ten thousands of Ephraim; they are the

thousands of Manasseh. ¹⁸ Of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out, and Issachar, in your tents. ¹⁹ They shall call the peoples to the mountain. There they will offer sacrifices of righteousness, for they shall draw out the abundance of the seas, the hidden treasures of the sand. ²⁰ Of Gad he said, He who enlarges Gad is blessed. He dwells as a lioness and tears the arm, yes the crown of the head. ²¹ He provided the first part for himself, for there was the lawgiver's portion reserved. He came with the heads of the people. He executed the righteousness of Yahweh, His ordinances with Israel. ²² Of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's cub that leaps out of Bashan. ²³ Of Naphtali he said, Naphtali, satisfied with favour, full of the blessing of Yahweh, possess the west and the south. ²⁴ Of Asher he said, May Asher be blessed with children. Let him be acceptable to his brothers; let him dip his foot in oil. ²⁵ Your bars shall be iron and brass. As your days, so your strength will be. ²⁶ There is none like God, Jeshurun, who rides on the heavens for your help, in His excellence on the skies. ²⁷ The eternal God is your dwelling place. Underneath are the everlasting arms. He thrusts out the enemy from before you and said 'Destroy!' ²⁸ Israel shall

God's spiritual children, can seem an impossible challenge at times; especially in family-based societies where life is one endless social club.

33:20 *He who enlarges Gad* – If Israel had been obedient, their borders could have been enlarged (12:2). It seems God would have done this especially for Gad, even for the sake of one faithful man. Yet there's no evidence it ever happened; another potential set up which was left unfulfilled because of the chronic lack of vision and satisfied-with-what-I-have attitude of God's people.

dwell in safety alone, the fountain of Jacob in a land of grain and new wine. Yes, His heavens drop down dew. ²⁹ You are happy, Israel. Who is like you, a people saved by Yahweh, the shield of your help, the sword of your excellence! Your enemies shall submit themselves to you; you shall tread on their high places.

CHAPTER 34 May 16

The Death of Moses

Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, opposite from Jericho. Yahweh showed him all the land of Gilead to Dan, ² and all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah to the hinder sea, ³ and the South and the Plain of the valley of Jericho the city of

palm trees to Zoar. ⁴ Yahweh said to him, This is the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, saying ‘I will give it to your seed’. I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there. ⁵ So Moses the servant of Yahweh died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Yahweh. ⁶ He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth Peor, but no man knows of his tomb to this day. ⁷ Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his youth abated. ⁸ The children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended. ⁹ Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands

33:29 *You shall tread on their high places* – Moses’ very last words are a reference to the idolatrous “high places”, which the prophets lament were a spiritual snare to Israel. Moses’ final wish and knowledge was that ultimately, Israel would quit with idolatry and be Yahweh’s alone. Seeing that he had predicted their spiritual failures, Moses perhaps had his eye on the day when finally God’s people shall conquer all their temptations, even if only a minority of those with whom God works actually get there in the end, all the same, a minority will, and they will be God’s true Israel.

34:6 *He buried him in the valley* – Is. 63:14 says that the Spirit [the Angel] caused Moses to rest as a man leads his animal to water in a valley. The way the Angel buried Moses is very touching. “According to the word of Yahweh” (:5) can bear the translation “By the kiss of Yahweh”, as if the Angel with whom Moses was used to speaking face to face, as a man speaks with his friend, kissed him and as it were reversed the kiss of life, took his breath / spirit away, and laid him down to rest there on the mountain, then carried the body down to the valley and buried him there, to rest until the resurrection. The softness, respect and gentleness of God with His beloved in their time of dying comes over very strongly here.

34:7 Moses was one of those old people who still had a ‘young’ attitude to life; not for him the cynicism which comes with old age; hence Deuteronomy is at times optimistic about people with what could be seen as an almost naive youthful optimism. One wonders whether he was therefore right to accept Jethro’s advice that he needed to arrange helpers lest he wear out (Ex. 18:18), seeing that God had kept him so physically strong, and continued to do so.

on him, and the children of Israel listened to him and did as Yahweh commanded Moses. ¹⁰ There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom Yahweh knew face to face, ¹¹ in all the signs and the won-

ders which Yahweh sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land ¹² and in all the mighty hand and in all the great terror, which Moses worked in the sight of all Israel.

JOSHUA

CHAPTER 1 May 17

God Commissions Joshua

After the death of Moses the servant of Yahweh, Yahweh spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, ² Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you, and all this people, to the land which I give to them, even to the children of Israel. ³ I have given you every place that the sole of your foot will tread on, as I told Moses. ⁴ From the wilderness, and this Lebanon, even to the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land

of the Hittites, and to the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border. ⁵ No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not fail you nor forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous; for you shall cause this people to inherit the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous to observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you. Don't turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you

1:5 *I will not fail you nor forsake you* – We may boldly say that we will *not* be fearful, as Joshua was, because God has addressed to *us* the very words which He did to Joshua: “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5,6). In this especially, Joshua is our example. When Heb. 13:13 speaks of *us* going forth outside the camp, perhaps there is a reference to Joshua who dwelt with Moses outside the camp (Ex. 33:11) – thus making Joshua symbolic of us all.

1:6 Joshua is repeatedly made parallel with Israel; his victories were theirs; what he achieved is counted to them. In the same way, the people of the Lord Jesus are counted as Him. Joshua was to be strong and possess the land, just as they had been told to do, using the same Hebrew words (Dt. 11:8). Indeed, Israel and Joshua are given parallel charges, to be strong and of good courage to take the land (Dt. 31:6,7). Both Israel and Joshua are given the same charge to keep the words of the covenant, so that they might “prosper” (:7 cp. Dt. 29:9).

1:7 *Courageous* – The language of military courage is applied here to the real battle – within the human mind, to obey God's laws. An element of bravery is required to do what God wants, to go against the grain of our natures and against the flow of our environment.

That you may prosper – God's servant Joshua [the same Hebrew name as the Greek name 'Jesus'] was intended to “prosper”; but in the end it was the Lord Jesus through His death who was the servant who would ‘prosper’ [Is. 52:13, same Hebrew word]. And so, in His foreknowledge, God spoke of “another day” when His begotten Son would fulfil what Joshua could potentially have achieved, and so much more (Heb. 4:8). The lesson for us is that so much has been potentially prepared for us to achieve. Our salvation may not necessarily depend upon achieving all those things, but all the same, so much potentially is possible which we refuse to reach up to, because we are petty minimalists, like Israel, satisfied with their little farm in the valley, rather than seeking to possess the fullness of the Kingdom prepared for them. In Ps. 1:1-3, David

may prosper wherever you go. ⁸ This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein. Thus you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success. ⁹ Haven't I commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Don't be afraid, neither be dismayed: for Yahweh your God is with you wherever you go.

Preparations for Entering Canaan

¹⁰ Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, ¹¹ Pass through the midst of the camp, and command the people, saying, 'Pre-

pare food; for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which Yahweh your God gives you to possess'. ¹² Joshua spoke to the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh saying, ¹³ Remember the word which Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded you saying, 'Yahweh your God will give you rest, and will give you this land. ¹⁴ Your wives, your little ones and your livestock shall live in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan; but all your mighty men of valour shall pass over before your brothers, armed, and shall help them ¹⁵ until Yahweh has given your brothers rest, as He

makes several allusions to Joshua. He speaks of how the man who meditates in God's word day and night will prosper in his ways; and he uses the very same Hebrew words as found in Josh. 1:8 in recounting God's charge to Joshua. But David's point is that the man who does these things will not "walk in the counsel of the ungodly" – he won't give in to peer pressure. The fact that Joshua was wrongly influenced by his peers in later life would indicate that he didn't fully keep the charge given to him.

1:13 After the pattern of the Reubenites, we have been given the promised "rest" of the Kingdom here and now (1:13 cp. Heb. 4:3); but we will, like them, only take possession of that inheritance after we have ensured that our brethren have received their possession (:15). So we have a paradox: the Reubenites were given their "rest", but they would only get their "rest" once their brethren had. Those Reubenites really were symbols of us, for this passage is surely behind the reasoning of Heb. 4, where *we* are told that *we* have entered into rest, but yet we must labour if we want to enter into it.

1:13-15 Joshua didn't give the people rest (Heb. 4:8); but he said he had (Josh. 22:4). He failed to fulfil the potential spoken of here – that *he* would lead the people to "rest". The Messianic Kingdom could, perhaps, have come through Joshua-Jesus; but both Joshua and Israel failed. Dt. 1:38 states clearly that Joshua would cause Israel to inherit or possess the land. Yet by the end of Joshua's life, Israel were not inheriting the land in totality. He didn't live up to his potential. God's prophecy here was conditional, although no condition is actually stated at the time. God's opening commission to Joshua was that the people were to possess the whole land promised to Abraham, right up to the Euphrates (1:4). But in the end Joshua drew the borders of the land far smaller than these; he didn't even seek to subdue the territory up to the Euphrates, even though God had promised him potential success and even commanded him to do so. Joshua was to divide up the whole land promised to Abraham amongst the tribes of Israel (1:6). He seems to have lacked that vision, and fallen into the mire of minimal-

has given you, and they have also possessed the land which Yahweh your God gives them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and settle it, which Moses the servant of Yahweh gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise'.¹⁶ They answered Joshua saying, All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.¹⁷ Just as we listened to Moses in all things, so will we listen to you. Only

may Yahweh your God be with you as He was with Moses.¹⁸ Whoever rebels against your commandment, and doesn't listen to your words in all that you command him, he shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.

CHAPTER 2 May 18

The Spies Come to Rahab

Joshua the son of Nun secretly sent two men out of Shittim as spies,

ism, just content with a utilitarian, small scale conquest, rather than seeing the bigger picture of the potential Kingdom which God wanted to give His people. We can so easily be the same.

1:18 The repeated encouragement to be strong and of a good courage and not be fearful (:6,7,8,18; Dt. 31:23) could imply that Joshua was timid and in great need of encouragement.

2:1 *Secretly* – The sending out of the 12 spies about 40 years earlier was essentially a lack of faith – in the fact that God's Angel had gone ahead of them anyway to spy out the land, and Yahweh Himself had told Israel how good the land was. Perhaps the secrecy involved a sense that this was in fact not really a very spiritual decision and Joshua was somehow furtive about it.

Came into the house of a prostitute – Israel had never known urban life nor perhaps even seen walled cities like Jericho. The spies entered the city at evening time (:2), and the gate was shut (:5). Strangers always attract attention in such places – let alone when the city was in the direct line of attack of the Hebrews. The language / accent of the two spies would've given them away. Having entered the city at dusk, the gates were shut, and they'd have perceived that they were being watched and had been noticed as suspicious strangers. And so they used some desperate initiative, and dived into a whorehouse near the gate. This was the sort of place strangers would go to, as it would be today. We imagine them entering the house, and meeting the madame of the house. "What do you want?" was as dumb a question as the doctor asking the patient "How are you feeling today?". Rahab was a smart woman, accustomed to strangers, and knew what was going on. Within the first couple of sentences, she'd have figured who they were. And it seems they spoke for a short time, maybe an hour or so, realized they were busted, understood they were in a death trap within that walled city, and threw themselves on her mercy. And there, providence kicked in. James 2:25 calls those men "messengers", with a message Rahab believed. They hardly had an hour to tell her the message, before men were knocking on the door enquiring what Rahab knew about the spies. In that brief time, she believed a very sketchy and incomplete Gospel of the Kingdom. And her works reflected that faith, in telling the men [whom local culture would've barred from entering the house of a single woman] that the spies had come and gone. They and their message were 'welcomed in peace' by Rahab

saying, Go, view the land, including Jericho. They went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab, and slept there. ² The king of Jericho was told, Behold, men of the children of Israel came in here tonight to spy out the land! ³ The king of Jericho sent to Rahab saying, Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered into your house; for they have come to spy out all the land. ⁴ The woman took the two men and concealed them. Then she said, Yes, the men came to me, but I don't know where they came from. ⁵ It happened about the time of the shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I don't know. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them. ⁶ But she had brought them up to the roof, and hid them under the stalks of flax, which

she had laid in order on the roof. ⁷ The men pursued them the way to the Jordan to the fords. As soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate. ⁸ Before they had lain down, she came up to them on the roof; ⁹ and she said to the men, I know that Yahweh has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how Yahweh dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt; and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond Jordan, to Sihon and to Og, whom you utterly destroyed. ¹¹ As soon as we had heard it, our hearts melted, neither did there remain any more spirit in any man because of you; for Yahweh your God, He is God in heaven above,

(Heb. 11:31), she 'received' their message and justified herself by works by protecting them (James 2:25).

2:9, 10 When she says that she was aware that God had "given you the land" (2:9), she uses the same two Hebrew words used repeatedly in Deuteronomy regarding God's promise to give Israel the land of the Canaanites. "The fear of you is fallen upon us" is likewise an allusion to Ex. 15:16; 23:27 [the same Hebrew word is used by Rahab]. Rahab speaks of how her people are "melting" in fear – quoting Ex. 15:15 about how the inhabitants of Canaan would "melt" because of Israel. Knowing all this, she has the ambition to request the impossible – that *she* would be the exception, that with *her* a covenant would be made. When she says that "we *have* heard" about the Exodus (:10), she may be referring to the prophecy of Ex. 15:14: "The people *shall* hear and be afraid". In this case, her emphasis would have been upon the word "have" – 'yes, we *have* heard indeed, as Moses sung, and yes, we *are* afraid'. Spiritual ambition of the type Rahab had lifts us far above the mire of mediocrity which there is in all human life under the sun.

2:10 Where did she, a whore in Jericho, get that knowledge from? How had she come to know about Yahweh? Presumably from her clients, who would've been travellers who had heard these things and passed them on to her. All this is wonderful encouragement for all sinners – that God has a way of working through sin to His glory, and He doesn't give up so easily with human weakness.

and on earth beneath. ¹² Now therefore, please swear to me by Yahweh, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a true token. ¹³ Please save alive my father, my mother, my brothers and my sisters and all that they have, and will deliver our lives from death. ¹⁴ The men said to her, Our life for yours, if you don't talk about this business of ours; and it shall be, when Yahweh gives us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you. ¹⁵ Then she let them down by

a cord through the window; for her house was on the side of the wall, and she lived on the wall. ¹⁶ She said to them, Go to the mountain, lest the pursuers find you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward, you may go on your way. ¹⁷ The men said to her, We will be guiltless of this your oath which you have made us to swear. ¹⁸ Behold, when we come into the land, you shall bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which you used to let us down. You shall gather to yourself into the

2:12 *Deal kindly* – Heb. 11:31 comments that it was by faith that Rahab did not perish; Rahab's faith was faith in God's grace. For Rahab was an Amorite and according to the law of Moses there was to be no pity or covenant with them – only death (Dt. 7:2). Rahab had the spiritual ambition to ask that they make a covenant with her – she requests *hesed*, the common term for covenant relationship (“deal kindly”, cp. 1 Sam. 20:8). And the spies made a covenant with her. Grace, like love, finds a way. Remember that she was also aware of what Israel had done to their enemies on their way to Jericho – and she appears to allude to Moses' commands to destroy utterly and *not* make a covenant with the peoples of the land (Dt. 2:32-37; 7:1-5; 20:16-18).

2:18 Rahab was told to bind the scarlet cord in her window “when we come into the land”. But Rahab bound it there immediately when they left – as if she recognized that her land was already in Israel's hands (:21). Considering the whole town was wondering how the spies had escaped, and she was under suspicion, to leave the escape rope dangling there, indeed to take it up and then place it there again immediately (so 2:21 implies), was really stupid. She didn't need to do that at that stage. But the joy of the Gospel should make us fools for Christ's sake. But does it, in our postmodern age? When was the last time the joy of the good news we know, lead you to do something humanly foolish? It could be gathered from Heb. 11:31 that Rahab preached to others the message she had received from the spies – for Rahab did not perish with those “that believed not” – *apeitheo* suggesting disbelief, a wilful refusal to believe. What message did Jericho not believe? There was no particular message for them from the words of Moses or Joshua. The message was presumably an appeal from Rahab, to repent and accept the God of Israel as she had done – to cast themselves upon His mercy. And in any case, as a prostitute estranged from her family, either due to her profession or because estrangement from them had led her to it, she must have gone to her estranged family and preached to them, bringing them within her despised house. If people with a far less complete understanding of the Gospel could risk their lives for it... what does our understanding and faith

house your father, your mother, your brothers and all your father's household. ¹⁹ It shall be that whoever goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood will be on his head, and we will be guiltless. Whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand is on him. ²⁰ But if you talk about this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless of your oath which you have made us to swear. ²¹ She said, According to your words, so be it. She sent them away, and they departed. She tied the scarlet line in the window. ²² They left and came to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers had returned. The pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but didn't find them. ²³ Then the two men returned, descended from the mountain, passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun. They told him all that had happened to them. ²⁴ They said to Joshua, Truly Yahweh has delivered into our hands all the land. Furthermore, all the inhabitants of the land melt away before us!

CHAPTER 3 May 19

Israel Miraculously Cross the Jordan

Joshua rose up early in the morning; and they moved from Shittim, and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel. They lodged there before they passed over. ² It happened after three days that the officers went through the midst of the camp; ³ and they commanded the people saying, When you see the ark of the covenant of Yahweh your God and the priests the Levites bearing it, then you shall move from your place, and follow it. ⁴ Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Don't come near to it, that you may know the path to follow; for you have not passed this way before. ⁵ Joshua said to the people, Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow Yahweh will do wonders among you. ⁶ Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and walk in front of the people. They took up the ark of the covenant, and walked ahead of the people. ⁷ Yahweh said to Joshua,

convict *us* to do for the sake of witnessing to it? Our knowledge of the Gospel of the Kingdom is far more detailed than that of Rahab, who picked up snatches of it from her clients, and had at most an hour's pressured conversation with the spies before she had to show whether or not she believed it. If it motivated her to do all she did – what about us?

3:1 There is a much repeated characteristic of God's servants: that they 'rose up early in the morning' and did God's work. In each of the following passages, this phrase is clearly not an idiom; rather does it have an evidently literal meaning: Abraham (Gen. 19:27; 21:14; 22:3); Jacob (Gen. 28:18); Job (1:5); Moses (Ex. 8:20; 9:13; 24:4; 34:4); Joshua (Josh. 3:1; 6:12; 7:16; 8:10); Gideon (Jud. 6:38; 7:1); Samuel (1 Sam. 15:12); David (1 Sam. 17:20; 29:11); Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chron. 29:20). This is quite an impressive list, numerically. I 'm not suggesting that zeal for God is reflected by rising early rather than staying up late; but it wouldn't be too much to suggest that if we are men of mission, we won't waste our hours in bed. Get up when you wake up.

Today I will begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. ⁸ You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant saying, ‘When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan’. ⁹ Joshua said to the children of Israel, Come here, and hear the words of Yahweh your God. ¹⁰ Joshua said, Hereby you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Hivite, and the Perizzite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Jebusite from before you. ¹¹ Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passes over before you into the Jordan. ¹² Now therefore take twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, for every tribe a man. ¹³ It shall come to pass, when the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of Yahweh, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off. The waters that come down from above shall stand in a heap. ¹⁴ It happened, when the people moved from their tents to pass over the Jordan, that the priests who bore the ark of the covenant walked in front of the people. ¹⁵ When those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark had

dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the time of harvest) ¹⁶ that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great way off, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those that went down toward the sea of the Arabah, even the Salt Sea, were wholly cut off. Then the people passed over right against Jericho. ¹⁷ The priests who bore the ark of the covenant of Yahweh stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan. Then, all the people of Israel passed over the Jordan on dry ground.

CHAPTER 4 May 19

Twelve Stones Placed for a Memorial

When all the nation had completely passed over the Jordan, Yahweh spoke to Joshua saying, ² Take twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, ³ and command them saying, ‘Take from out of the middle of the Jordan, out of the place where the priests’ feet stood firm, twelve stones, and carry them over with you, and lay them down in the resting place where you will rest tonight’. ⁴ Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man. ⁵ Joshua said to them, Pass over before the ark of Yahweh your God into the middle of

4:1-3 This is a summary of what happened; the rest of the chapter explains how that situation came about. This is a common feature of Biblical writing; we note that the Greek, linear, strictly chronological approach of European languages isn’t at all the same as Hebrew thought or writing, which presents themes and explanations at the cost of apparently ‘jumping around’ in chronology.

the Jordan, and each of you pick up a stone and put it on your shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel. ⁶ This will be a sign among you, that when your children ask in time to come saying, ‘What do you mean by these stones?’ ⁷ then you shall tell them, ‘Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of Yahweh. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off’. These stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever. ⁸ The children of Israel did as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan as Yahweh spoke to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel; and they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. ⁹ Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood. They are there to this day. ¹⁰ For the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that Yahweh commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua; and the people hurried and passed over. ¹¹ It happened, when all the people

had completely passed over, that the ark of Yahweh passed over with the priests, while the people watched. ¹² The children of Reuben, the children of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken to them. ¹³ About forty thousand men prepared and armed for war passed over before Yahweh to battle, to the plains of Jericho. ¹⁴ On that day, Yahweh magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life. ¹⁵ Yahweh spoke to Joshua saying, ¹⁶ Command the priests who bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of the Jordan. ¹⁷ Joshua therefore commanded the priests saying, Come up out of the Jordan! ¹⁸ When the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of Yahweh had come up out of the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests’ feet were lifted up to the dry ground, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place, and went over all its banks as before. ¹⁹ The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, on the east border of Jericho. ²⁰ Joshua set up those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan in Gilgal. ²¹ He spoke to the children of Israel

4:14 *Yahweh magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel* – As they entered Canaan, witnessing the waters of humanity held back (hence the reference to the waters stopping at a place called Adam, 3:16), they must have looked at Joshua with huge gratitude and reverence. When our wilderness journey ends and we enter the promised land of God’s Kingdom, all our eyes and hearts will likewise be focused upon Jesus, and we will spend eternity magnifying Him. But we should begin that Christ-centred existence now.

saying, When your children ask their fathers in time to come saying, ‘What do these stones mean?’²² then you shall let your children know, saying, ‘Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.’²³ For Yahweh your God dried up the waters of the Jordan from before you, until you had passed over, as Yahweh your God did to the Red Sea which He dried up from before us, until we had passed over;²⁴ that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of Yahweh, that it is mighty; that you may fear Yahweh your God forever’.

CHAPTER 5 May 20

The Israelite Males Are Circumcised

It happened that when all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan westward, and all the

kings of the Canaanites, who were by the sea, heard how that Yahweh had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we had passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more because of the children of Israel.² At that time Yahweh said to Joshua, Make flint knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.³ Joshua made himself flint knives and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.⁴ This is the reason Joshua circumcised: all the people who were males who came out of Egypt, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness in the way after they came out of Egypt.⁵ For all the people who came out were circumcised; but all the people who were born in the wilderness by the way as

4:23 Subsequent generations were to understand that this is what God had done *for you*; the Biblical record thus becomes alive for us who are God’s people; it becomes a living word, with us as it were standing there on the banks of Jordan or the Red Sea, participating in the wonder of salvation which occurred then. If we grasp this, then any apparent lack of dramatic action by God in our lives today becomes easier to bear; for He has done so many great things *for us* in what He did for His people historically.

5:2 Everything about the battle plan was somehow humanly foolish – to yet again attempt to teach Israel, old and new, that victory comes from following God’s way, and His way is humanly foolish. The warriors were circumcised before the battle (:2). We know from the Biblical record of Shechem how this would’ve physically weakened the men – for this was only a week or so before the battle. The manna wasn’t phased out – it stopped abruptly just before the battle of Jericho (:12). The people would likely have been short of food, and would’ve been dealing with the problems associated with a new diet – after 40 years! Walking around the city seven times, starting at dawn, would’ve made the people tired. There was no advantage of shock or surprise by doing this. Planning the final assault for late afternoon was hardly smart either – humanly speaking! But all this was – and is – to teach God’s people that victory *His* way involves shedding our human strength, just as Gideon was likewise taught so dramatically.

5:5, 6 The extent of spiritual despair, despondency and apostasy amongst the condemned generation in the wilderness cannot be overstated. By neglecting the circumcision of their they showed their rejection of the Abrahamic covenant with them.

they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised. ⁶ For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, even the men of war who came out of Egypt, were consumed; because they didn't listen to the voice of Yahweh. Yahweh swore to them that He wouldn't let them see the land which Yahweh swore to their fathers that He would give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁷ Their children whom He raised up in their place were circumcised by Joshua; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them on the way. ⁸ It happened, when they were done circumcising all the nation, that they stayed in their places in the camp until they were healed. ⁹ Yahweh said to Joshua, Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Therefore the name of that place was called Gilgal to this day. ¹⁰ The chil-

dren of Israel encamped in Gilgal. They kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ They ate unleavened cakes and parched grain of the produce of the land on the next day after the Passover, in that day. ¹² The manna ceased on the next day, after they had eaten of the produce of the land. The children of Israel didn't have manna any more; but they ate the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

Joshua Meets an Angel

¹³ It happened that when Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man stood opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand. Joshua went to him and said to him, Are you for us, or for our adversaries? ¹⁴ He said, No; but I have come now as commander of Yahweh's army. Joshua fell on his

5:10 The Lord told them in Jn. 6 that the true manna was His flesh, which He was to give for the life of the world. Some have supposed from Josh. 5:10-12 cp. Ex. 16:35 that the manna fell for the first time on the eve of the Passover, thus adding even more poignancy to the Lord's equation of the manna with His death.

5:13 As Israel were called to follow the Angel after their Red Sea baptism, so we too follow where the Angel leads. The conquest of Jericho is a classic example of following the Angel. The Angel who was the commander of *Yahweh's* army appearing to Joshua, the commander of God's human army on earth, and standing "opposite him". Joshua was being shown that he had an opposite number in Heaven, a representative there before the throne of God – just as each of us does.

5:14 Note how the Angel answers Joshua's question – 'Are you for me, or against me?'. God has no interest in taking sides in human arguments, demonizing the one side and glorifying the other. The response was simply that the Angel stood for God and was His representative. Religious people so easily fall into this trap of demonizing their enemies, on the basis that "God is with me, and therefore, not with you my opponent, in fact, He hates you because I hate you". The true God and His Angelic servants are far above this kind of primitive dichotomy.

5:13, 14 This can be read as presenting Joshua in a negative light, wanting to boil everything down to black and white, wanting to see God as either personally for him

face to the earth and worshipped and said to him, What does my lord say to his servant? ¹⁵ The prince of Yahweh's army said to Joshua, Take your shoes off of your feet; for the place on which you stand is holy. Joshua did so.

CHAPTER 6 May 20

The Battle Plan for Capturing Jericho

Now Jericho was closely shut up because of the children of

Israel. No one went out, and no one came in. ² Yahweh said to Joshua, Behold, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the mighty men of valour. ³ All your men of war shall march around the city, going around the city once. You shall do this six days. ⁴ Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. ⁵ It shall

or against him; when the essence is to seek to discern and do God's will. Joshua was very good at obedience to clear commandments (4:10,17; 8:27; 10:40). But when he had to articulate his faith in God in unexpected situations, e.g. when the ambassadors from Gibeon arrived, or when the first attack on Ai failed, he seems to have performed poorly. Legalistic obedience is no use in those cases when principles need to be applied. He very strictly adhered to God's commandments with legalistic obedience, e.g., about how to approach and deal with Jericho, or how to cross the flooded Jordan and build an altar; and time and again, we read in Joshua of how he strictly relayed and obeyed the Divine commandments given by Moses (8:31,33,35; 11:12,15,20; 14:2,5; 17:4; 21:2,8). Yet as with any literalistic or legally minded person, it was hard for Joshua to apply the principles behind the laws to situations which weren't specifically addressed by Divine revelation, where legalistic obedience wasn't what was required.

5:14 See on 14:8. In prospect the Angels drove out every tribe that was in the land; the people of Israel had to just go in and possess the work which the Angels had done. So when they failed to drive out certain tribes, this was an example of human failing to be "workers together with God". Thus in prospect, the Angels led them to the promised "rest" – Dt. 25:19; Josh. 1:13; Is. 63:1; although in practice they did not enter that rest because of their faithlessness (Heb. 3:11-4:11), despite the Angel promising He would give them that rest (Ex. 33:4). Man is not alone, we have huge numbers of Angels working to create amazing potentials for us; but we have the choice as to whether we march with them to achieve them.

5:14, 15 The Angel that met Joshua described Himself as "the captain of Yahweh's army", or "host" – the army of Angels that would go before Joshua and Israel to fight their battles. Therefore "Yahweh of armies" or "hosts" is a title often referring to the Angels.

5:15 The command to remove his sandal from holy ground is evidently reminiscent of the command to Moses in a similar situation. Shouldn't Joshua have perceived this, seeing his life was so clearly framed after that of Moses?

6:2 Following the Angel is the theme that lies behind God's statement that because He had already given Jericho to Israel, therefore they should arise and take it. So many victories have been prepared for us in prospect – against addictions, engrained weak-

be that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout. The wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall go up every man straight before him. ⁶ Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of Yahweh. ⁷ They said to the people, Go, march around the city, and let the armed men pass on before Yahweh's ark.

Jericho Is Taken

⁸ It was so, that when Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh advanced and blew the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed them. ⁹ The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the ark went after them. The trumpets sounded as they went. ¹⁰ Joshua commanded the people saying, You shall not shout, nor let your voice be heard, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth,

nesses of character, habits, impossible situations. Israel had to follow the ark, where the Angelic presence of God was (:2 cp. :8). The people were to go up into Jericho 'straight before them' (:5,20), just as the Cherubim-Angels have "straight feet" (Ez. 1:7,9,12). They were to follow in the Angel's steps.

6:5 Shout – The command to "shout" was a reflection of the belief Israel were to have in the fact that God *had already* given them the city – for the Hebrew for "shout" usually refers to a shout of victory. The word is translated "triumph" in Ps. 60:8; 108:9. The same idea of shouting in victory over a city which has been given to God's people recurs in Jer. 50:15 – "Shout against her round about [cp. compassing the walls of Jericho]... her foundations *are* [present tense] fallen, her walls [cp. Jericho's] *are* thrown down" (AV). And this speaks of our latter day victory against Babylon – thus making this whole account of earnest relevance to us who live in the last days, and who will see Babylon fall by faith. Notice how literal Babylon fell by the water of the river being dried up, and the walls being opened – just the same sequence of events that occurred at Jericho.

6:10 "Until the day I tell you, 'Shout!'" implies that the people didn't know the battle plan – each day they would've walked around the city in silence, and nothing happened. The command to "Shout!" didn't come – for six days. The whole exercise was surely to develop their faith. Again, this was the most crazy of battle plans, in human terms. Heb. 11:30 associates the circling of the walls with faith: "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been circled seven days". 2 Cor. 10:3-4 is an allusion to the way that Jericho was taken with such a humanly weak battle plan. The point of the allusion is for us to see ourselves as those nervous Israelites desperately clinging on to their faith in God's victory rather than human strength. And we each have our Jerichos – habits, life-dominating patterns of thinking, that seem so impossible to shift. The deliverance at the Red Sea had been intended to teach Israel these very lessons. The account of the fall of Jericho is recorded in similar language, in order to teach the same lesson. Rahab's house had to be identified by a scarlet cord – like the blood of the Passover lamb sprinkled on the two doorposts and lintel of the Israelites' homes

until the day I tell you ‘Shout!’ Then you shall shout. ¹¹ So he caused the ark of Yahweh to go around the city, going about it once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp. ¹² Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of Yahweh. ¹³ The seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of Yahweh went on continually and blew the trumpets: and the armed men went before them. The rear guard came after the ark of Yahweh. The trumpets sounded as they went. ¹⁴ The second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. They did this six days. ¹⁵ It happened on the seventh day that they rose early at the dawning of the day, and marched around the city in the same way

seven times. Only on this day they marched around the city seven times. ¹⁶ It happened at the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people, Shout, for Yahweh has given you the city! ¹⁷ The city shall be devoted, even it and all that is in it, to Yahweh. Only Rahab the prostitute shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. ¹⁸ But as for you, only keep yourselves from the devoted thing, lest when you have devoted it, you take of the devoted thing. That would make the camp of Israel accursed, and trouble it. ¹⁹ But all the silver and gold, and the vessels of brass and iron, are holy to Yahweh. They shall come into Yahweh’s treasury. ²⁰ So the people shouted,

in Egypt. The silence demanded of the people was surely to recall Ex. 14:14, there the people standing before the Red Sea were assured: “The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent”. Compare the command to keep silent whilst *Yahweh* fought, with the common practice of yelling war cries as an ancient army approached their enemy. All human convention, wisdom and strength, was placed in purposeful opposition to what seemed quite counter-instinctive – to be utterly silent whilst *God* did the fighting.

6:11 One wonders whether the comment that “So he caused the ark of Yahweh to go around the city” could imply that the entire fighting force of Israel didn’t bother doing as commanded on the first circuit of the city – possibly they just sent the ark around it. Likewise the people were to shout when the trumpets sounded (:10). But in reality, like a Sunday School play gone wrong, the people shouted, the trumpets sounded, and then the people again shouted (:20). There’s a distinct theme in the record that actually, God’s people didn’t do according to His ideal plan, and yet still He gave them the victory. According to Heb. 11:30, “by faith the walls of Jericho fell down”. Whose faith? What faith? Was Joshua-Jesus’ faith counted to the people? Or was their very weak, hope-for-the-best faith all the same accepted as faith by God’s grace?

6:18 The riches of Jericho are described with a Hebrew word which means both a curse, and something devoted (to God). This teaches a powerful lesson: such riches of this world as come into our possession will curse us, unless they are devoted to the Father. Mammon is an “abomination” (Lk. 16:13,15) – a word associated in the Old Testament with idol worship. We are to not only be free of such idolatry, but despise materialism.

and the priests blew the trumpets. It happened that when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him; and they took the city. ²¹ They utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, both young and old, and ox, sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword. ²² Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, Go into the prostitute's house, and bring out from there the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her. ²³ The young men who were spies went in, and brought out Rahab with her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. They also brought out all her relatives, and they set them outside the camp of Israel. ²⁴ They burnt the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only they put the silver, the gold and the vessels of brass and of iron into the treasury of Yahweh's house. ²⁵ But Rahab the prostitute, her father's household, and all that she had, Joshua saved alive. She lived in the midst of Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers, whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. ²⁶ Joshua commanded them with an oath at that time, saying, Cursed before Yahweh is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho. With the

loss of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son shall he set up its gates. ²⁷ So Yahweh was with Joshua; and his fame was in all the land.

CHAPTER 7 May 21

The Sin of Achan

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the devoted things; for Achan, the son of Carmi the son of Zabdi the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. Therefore Yahweh's anger burned against the children of Israel. ² Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth Aven on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them saying, Go up and spy out the land. The men went up and spied out Ai. ³ They returned to Joshua and said to him, Don't let all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and strike Ai. Don't make all the people to toil there, for there are only a few of them. ⁴ So about three thousand men of the people went up there, and they fled before the men of Ai. ⁵ The men of Ai struck about thirty-six of them, and they chased them from before the gate even to Shebarim, and struck them at the descent. The hearts of the people melted and became like water. ⁶ Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before

6:24 1 Cor. 3:12-15 likens all the faithful to material which can pass through the fire of judgment – and this surely is a reference to the way that Jericho was burnt with fire, and only the metals along with Rahab and her family came through that fire to salvation. Thus according to the allusion, Rahab and her family represent all the faithful.

7:3-5 Shouldn't Joshua have led them into battle in person (1:5)? He did the second time they attacked Ai (8:15).

the ark of Yahweh until the evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. ⁷ Joshua said, Alas, Lord Yahweh, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to cause us to perish? I wish that we had been content and lived beyond the Jordan! ⁸ Oh Lord, what shall I say, after that Israel has turned their backs before their enemies! ⁹ For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it and will surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. What will You do for Your great name? ¹⁰ Yahweh said to Joshua, Get up! Why are you fallen on your face like that? ¹¹ Israel has sinned. Yes, they have even transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. Yes, they have even taken of the devoted things, and have also stolen and also deceived. They have even put it among their own stuff. ¹² Therefore the children of Israel can't stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction. I will not be

with you any more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. ¹³ Get up! Sanctify the people and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because Yahweh the God of Israel says, There is a devoted thing in the midst of you, Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted thing from among you. ¹⁴ 'In the morning therefore you shall be brought near by your tribes. It shall be that the tribe which Yahweh selects shall come near by families. The family which Yahweh selects shall come near by households. The household which Yahweh selects shall come near man by man. ¹⁵ It shall be, that he who is taken with the devoted thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of Yahweh, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel'. ¹⁶ So Joshua rose up early in the morning and brought Israel near by their tribes. The tribe of Judah was selected. ¹⁷ He brought near the family of Judah; and he selected the family of the Zerahites.

7:7, 8 Joshua here lost faith in the promise of 1:5-7,9.

7:10, 11, 13 Joshua is being reminded not to just see himself as part of a community, but to remember his personal relationship with God, and not to have such a low self image.

7:11 All we have, are, were or shall ever be, is purely His gift. Therefore to take for ourselves what is God's is to play God. Materialism and selfishness are in this sense playing God. This was Achan's sin – to take what was devoted to God for himself. And this was why he is described as having 'stolen'. But from whom? From God (cp. 6:18). The fact God owns everything means that there can be no distinction between what is ours and what is God's. To think like that is to steal from Him. And hence the power and force of Mal. 3:8: "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me". Have we robbed God in this way, especially in our attitudes and perceptions?

7:13 "Get up!" is repeated twice (:10), as if Joshua was so easily discouraged that he was still lying on the ground, disobedient to God's encouragement.

He brought near the family of the Zerahites man by man, and Zabdi was selected. ¹⁸ He brought near his household man by man, and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was selected. ¹⁹ Joshua said to Achan, My son, please give glory to Yahweh the God of Israel, and make confession to Him. Tell me now what you have done! Don't hide it from me! ²⁰ Achan answered Joshua and said, I have truly sinned against Yahweh the God of Israel, and this is what I have done. ²¹ When I saw among the spoil a beautiful Babylonian robe, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, then I coveted them and took them. Behold, they are hidden in the ground in the middle of my tent, with the silver under it. ²² So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent. Behold, it was hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. ²³ They took them from the middle of the tent, and brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel. They laid them down before Yahweh. ²⁴ Joshua and all Israel with

him took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his cattle, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor. ²⁵ Joshua said, Why have you troubled us? Yahweh will trouble you this day. All Israel stoned him with stones, and they burned them with fire and stoned them with stones. ²⁶ They raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Yahweh turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place was called The valley of Achor to this day.

CHAPTER 8 May 22

The Conquest of Ai

Yahweh said to Joshua, Don't be afraid, neither be dismayed. Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai. Behold, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, with his people, his city, and his land. ² You shall do to Ai and her king as you did to Jericho and her king, except its spoil and its livestock, you shall take for a plunder

7:19 Joshua correctly perceived that repentance is a giving of glory to God's Name.

7:21 A condemned man having hidden God's money in the ground is clearly the basis of Christ's parable about the man who was given one talent, who hid it in the ground and did nothing with it (Mt. 25:25). But in the parable, the man didn't steal it; he was given it by Jesus, but didn't do anything with it. The connection is to perhaps teach us that passively doing nothing with God's wealth is the same as actively stealing it from Him; the sin of omission is just as bad as that of commission.

8:1 Joshua's dismay was a loss of faith in 1:3,9.

8:2 God told Israel to totally destroy the spoil from the cities they attacked. But when they failed to do this with Jericho, God told them that with Ai, the next city on the agenda, they were allowed to keep the spoil; even though Dt. 20:14-16 said that this was how they should treat their distant enemies, but *not* cities like Ai which were part of their inheritance. This was an undoubted concession to human weakness. The

for yourselves. Set an ambush for the city behind it. ³ So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up to Ai. Joshua chose thirty thousand men, the mighty men of valour, and sent them out by night. ⁴ He commanded them, saying, Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city. Don't go very far from the city, but all of you be ready. ⁵ I, and all the people who are with me, will approach to the city. It shall happen, when they come out against us, as at the first, we will flee before them. ⁶ They will come out after us, until we have drawn them away from the city; for they will say, 'They flee before us, like the first time'. So we will flee before them, ⁷ and you shall rise up from the ambush, and take possession of the city; for Yahweh your God will deliver it into your hand. ⁸ It shall be, when you have seized on the city, that you shall set the city on fire. You shall do this according to the word of Yahweh. Behold, I have commanded you. ⁹ Joshua sent them out; and they went to prepare the ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua stayed among the people that night. ¹⁰ Joshua rose up early in the morning, mustered the people, and

went up, he and the elders of Israel, at the head of the people to Ai. ¹¹ All the people, even the men of war who were with him, went up and drew near to the city, and encamped on the north side of Ai. Now there was a valley between him and Ai. ¹² He had set about five thousand men in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city. ¹³ So they set the people, even all the army who was on the north of the city, and the ambush on the west of the city; and Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley. ¹⁴ It happened, when the king of Ai saw it, that they hurried and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at the time appointed, before the Arabah; but he didn't know that there was an ambush against him behind the city. ¹⁵ Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. ¹⁶ All the people who were in the city were called together to pursue after them. They pursued Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. ¹⁷ There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who didn't go out after Israel. They left the city open and pursued Israel. ¹⁸ Yahweh said to Joshua,

same concession to human weakness applied to other cities apart from Ai; it became a general policy that Israelites took all the spoil of the Canaanite cities for themselves; and yet following straight on from this we are told that Joshua "left nothing undone of all that Yahweh commanded Moses" (11:14,15). God accepted those concessions to human weakness, this living on a lower level, as total obedience. The grace of all this is marvellous.

8:5 *We will flee before them* – Fleeing before their enemies was perhaps a recognition of the truth of Dt. 28:25. This was included in the battle plan in order to show recognition that they had sinned and deserved to flee. God gave them, and us, victory on the basis that they recognized that they deserved to be defeated.

Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand. Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city.¹⁹ The ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, entered into the city and took it. They hurried and set the city on fire.²⁰ When the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way. The people who fled to the wilderness turned back on the pursuers.²¹ When Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again, and killed the men of Ai.²² The others came out of the city against them, so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, some on that side. They struck them so that they let none of them remain or escape.²³ They captured the king of Ai alive, and brought him to Joshua.²⁴ It happened that when Israel had made an end of killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness in which they pursued them, and they had all fallen by the edge of the sword until they were

consumed, that all Israel returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword.²⁵ All that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai.²⁶ For Joshua didn't draw back his hand with which he stretched out the javelin, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.²⁷ Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took for prey to themselves, according to the word of Yahweh which He commanded Joshua.²⁸ So Joshua burnt Ai and made it a heap forever, even a desolation, to this day.²⁹ He hanged the king of Ai on a tree until the evening, and at the sundown Joshua commanded, and they took his body down from the tree and threw it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raised a great heap of stones on it that remains to this day.

The Blessing and Curse Pronounced

³⁰ Then Joshua built an altar to Yahweh, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal,³¹ as Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones, on which no man had lifted

8:18 The glint of the sun on the javelin would've been the signal for the ambushers to come and attack the city.

8:26 Given the similarities with the battle against Amalek, were Joshua's arms held up in fervent prayer? Prayer is commonly associated with upheld arms. Earlier, Moses had held his hands up whilst Joshua led the army into battle, succeeding because Moses had his hands held up in prayer (Ex. 17:10). Now, Joshua is the one holding his hands up in prayer, whilst Israel are in battle. Lesson: We go through experiences which later repeat; and we are in the position of those who had before prayed for us, and are expected to replicate their examples.

up any iron. They offered burnt offerings on it to Yahweh, and sacrificed peace offerings. ³² He wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. ³³ All Israel, their elders and officers and their judges, stood on both sides of the ark before the priests the Levites who carried the ark of Yahweh's covenant, the foreigner as well as the native. Half of them stood in front of Mount Gerizim, and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of Yahweh had commanded at the first, for the blessing of the people of Israel. ³⁴ Afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. ³⁵ There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua didn't read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the foreigners who were among them.

CHAPTER 9 May 23

The Deception by the Gibeonites

When all the kings who were beyond the Jordan, in the hill country, and in the lowland, and on all the shore of the great sea in front

of Lebanon, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard of it, ² they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight with Joshua and with Israel. ³ But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, ⁴ they in their turn resorted to a ruse, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins, old and torn and bound up, ⁵ and old and patched shoes on their feet, and wore old garments. All the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. ⁶ They went to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, We have come from a far country. Now therefore make a covenant with us. ⁷ The men of Israel said to the Hivites, What if you live among us. How could we make a covenant with you? ⁸ They said to Joshua, We are your servants. Joshua said to them, Who are you? Where do you come from? ⁹ They said to him, Your servants have come from a very far country because of the name of Yahweh your God; for we have heard of His fame, all that He did in Egypt, ¹⁰ and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were

9:7 One gets the sense that the Gibeonites' deception was somehow guessed by the elders of Israel, but against their better judgment they disregarded the tell-tale signs. We all have a tendency to go against our better judgment.

9:10 Because a word or phrase means something in one context doesn't mean it *always* means this in *any* context. Thus "yeast" can be a symbol of both the Gospel and also sin. Another simple example is in Dt. 3:20; the land "beyond Jordan" refers to land on the West of the river; but in Josh. 9:10 the same phrase refers to land on the East. That same phrase "beyond Jordan" means something different in different contexts. We can't always assume, therefore, that the same phrase *must* refer to the same thing wherever it occurs.

beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was at Ashtaroth. ¹¹ Our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us saying, ‘Take provision in your hand for the journey and go to meet them, and tell them, We are your servants. Now make a covenant with us’. ¹² This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we went out to go to you; but now, behold, it is dry, and has become mouldy. ¹³ These wineskins which we filled were new; and behold, now they are torn. These our garments and our shoes have become old because of the very long journey. ¹⁴ The men examined their provisions, and didn’t ask counsel from the mouth of Yahweh.

The Covenant Made with the Gibeonites

¹⁵ Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live. The princes of the congregation swore an oath to them. ¹⁶ It happened at the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they lived among them. ¹⁷ The children of Israel travelled and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath Jearim. ¹⁸ The children of Israel didn’t strike them, because the princes of the congregation had

sworn to them by Yahweh, the God of Israel. All the congregation murmured against the princes. ¹⁹ But all the princes said to all the congregation, We have sworn to them by Yahweh the God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them. ²⁰ This we will do to them, and let them live; lest wrath be on us, because of the oath which we swore to them. ²¹ The princes said to them, Let them live, so they became wood cutters and drawers of water for all the congregation, as the princes had spoken to them. ²² Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them saying, Why did you deceive us by saying, ‘We are very far from you’, when you live among us? ²³ Now therefore you are cursed, and some of you will never fail to be bondservants, both wood cutters and drawers of water for the house of my God. ²⁴ They answered Joshua and said, Because your servants were certainly told how Yahweh your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were very afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. ²⁵ Now, behold, we are in your hand. Do to us as it seems good and right to you to do. ²⁶ He did so to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they didn’t kill them. ²⁷ That day Joshua made them wood cutters and drawers

9:14-18 Joshua here was too influenced by his ‘committee’, acting against his better judgment, it seems, because of the pressure of others upon him.

9:23 *The house of my God* – Paralleled with “the congregation” (:21). God’s house is His people rather than any physical building.

of water for the congregation and for the altar of Yahweh, to this day, in the place which He should choose.

CHAPTER 10 May 24

Adoni-Zedek Organizes Opposition to the Israelites

Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; and that as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them. ² The people of Jerusalem were very afraid, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty. ³ Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, to Piram king of Jarmuth, to Japhia king of Lachish and to Debir king of Eglon saying, ⁴ Come up to me and help me, and let us strike Gibeon; for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel. ⁵ Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of

Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish and the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together and went up, they and all their armies, and encamped against Gibeon and made war against it. ⁶ The men of Gibeon sent to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal saying, Don't abandon your servants! Come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us; for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the hill country have gathered together against us. ⁷ So Joshua went up from Gilgal, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour. ⁸ Yahweh said to Joshua, Don't fear them, for I have delivered them into your hands. Not a man of them will stand before you. ⁹ Joshua therefore came on them suddenly. He went up from Gilgal all night. ¹⁰ Yahweh confused them before Israel, and He slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth Horon, and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. ¹¹ It happened that as they fled from before Israel, while they were at the

10:8 Was this a lack of faith in 1:5?

10:10 It was due to Joshua's faithfulness to the Gibeonites that this great battle and victory occurred. We see how God worked through the Gibeonites' deception and Israel's un wisdom – to bring about a situation whereby His people could take possession of the Kingdom. He does things like this all the time; rather than turning away from human failure in disgust, He works through it; just as we should when confronted by it in ourselves and in others.

10:11 Joshua's conquest of the Canaanite tribes looks forward to the work of his greater namesake, Jesus, at His return. Adoni-Zedek, king of Jerusalem and the counterpart of Melchizedek, is representative of the latter day anti-Christ figure who will rule there in the last days. He leads a confederacy of Arab nations against Joshua-Jesus, and is destroyed with hailstones (:11) – an event which is the basis for the latter day prophecy of Rev. 16:21. Joshua's men placing their feet upon the necks of their enemies (:24) is the prototype of all enemies being subdued under the Lord in the last

descent of Beth Horon, that Yahweh cast down great stones from the sky on them to Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the children of Israel killed with the sword.

The Sun Stands Still

¹² Then Joshua spoke to Yahweh in the day when Yahweh delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel; and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand still on Gibeon! You, moon, stop in the valley of Aijalon! ¹³ The sun stood still and the moon stayed, until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies. Isn't this written in the book of Jashar? The sun stayed in the midst of the sky and didn't hurry to go down about a whole day. ¹⁴ There was no day like that before it or after it, that Yahweh listened to the voice of a man; for Yahweh fought for Israel.

¹⁵ Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp to Gilgal. ¹⁶ These five kings fled and hid themselves in the cave at Makkedah. ¹⁷ Joshua was told saying, The five kings are found, hidden in the cave at Makkedah. ¹⁸ Joshua said, Roll large stones to the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them; ¹⁹ but don't stay. Pursue your enemies, and attack their rearguard. Don't allow them to enter into their cities; for Yahweh your God has delivered them into your hand. ²⁰ It happened, when Joshua and the children of Israel had finished killing them with a very great slaughter until they were consumed, and the remnant which remained of them had entered into the fortified cities, ²¹ that all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace. None moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel. ²² Then Joshua said, Open the mouth

day; and the way "the God of Israel fought for Israel" at this time (:42) is the basis of many latter day statements to the same effect.

10:12 This is amazing faith in prayer; Joshua commanded things to happen, so sure was he of the prayer being heard.

10:13 There are a number of references in Scripture to books like the Book of Jashar which we no longer have available to us. Whether they were inspired or not, we don't know; but the point is, they are no longer available to us because God knows that we do not need them. By contrast, the books in the Bible *have* been preserved for us; God would not have inspired and preserved books like Leviticus or the Chronicles genealogies unless they were important for us in some way.

10:14 The sun standing still could mean that a different dimension of time was entered into – see on :42. But in the midst of a very literal record, it could equally well be understood literally. This would've meant that the entire solar system was affected; for no one part of it can stop dead in its tracks without affecting the whole planetary system. And perhaps the effects of that would have been felt even further... possible the entire cosmos stopped. All because of the fervent prayer of a man standing on planet earth. Such is the power of prayer. And further, Joshua didn't just ask for this in case God might hear it. He prayed the prayer of command, so intense was his faith that God would do this mighty act so that His work could go ahead.

of the cave, and bring those five kings out of the cave to me. ²³ They did so, and brought those five kings out of the cave to him: the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. ²⁴ It happened that when they brought those kings out to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who went with him, Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings. They came near, and put their feet on their necks. ²⁵ Joshua said to them, Don't be afraid, nor be dismayed. Be strong and courageous, for Yahweh will do this to all your enemies against whom you fight. ²⁶ Afterward Joshua put them to death, and hanged them on five trees. They hung on the trees until the evening. ²⁷ It happened at the time of the going down of the sun that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees and threw them into the cave in which they had hidden themselves, and laid great stones on the mouth of the cave, which remain to this very day.

Joshua's Lightning Campaign

²⁸ Joshua took Makkedah on that day and struck it with the edge of the sword, with its king. He utterly destroyed them and all the souls who were in it. He left none remaining. He did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho. ²⁹ Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, to Libnah,

and fought against Libnah. ³⁰ Yahweh delivered it also, with its king, into the hand of Israel. He struck it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls who were in it. He left none remaining in it. He did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho. ³¹ Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, to Lachish, and encamped against it, and fought against it. ³² Yahweh delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel. He took it on the second day, and struck it with the edge of the sword, with all the souls who were in it, according to all that he had done to Libnah. ³³ Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua struck him and his people, until he had left him none remaining. ³⁴ Joshua passed from Lachish, and all Israel with him, to Eglon; and they encamped against it and fought against it. ³⁵ They took it on that day, and struck it with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed all the souls who were in it that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish. ³⁶ Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, to Hebron; and they fought against it. ³⁷ They took it, and struck it with the edge of the sword, with its king and all its cities, and all the souls who were in it. He left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon; but he utterly destroyed it, and all the souls who were in it. ³⁸ Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir, and fought against it. ³⁹ He

10:25 See on 14:8.

10:28 *On that day* – A huge amount happened that day and over the next two days; see on 10:42.

took it, with its king and all its towns. They struck them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls who were in it. He left none remaining. As he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and to its king; as he had done also to Libnah and to its king.⁴⁰ So Joshua struck all the land, the hill country, the South, the lowland, the slopes, and all their kings. He left none remaining, but he utterly destroyed all that breathed, as Yahweh the God of Israel commanded.⁴¹ Joshua struck them from Kadesh Barnea even to Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even to Gibeon.⁴² Joshua took all these kings and their land at one time, because Yahweh, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.⁴³ Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

CHAPTER 11 May 25

A Coalition of Local Kings Oppose Israel

It happened that when Jabin king of Hazor heard of it, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph² and to the kings who were on the north, in the hill country, in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on the west,³ to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite and the Jebusite in the hill country, and the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpah.⁴ They went out, they and all their armies with them, many people, even as the sand that is on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots.⁵ All these kings met to-

10:42 The events around Christ's return were prefigured by those at the time of Joshua's conquest of the land. Some of the records of his campaigns require a huge amount to have been achieved by his soldiers within around 36 hours. The comment that so much was achieved "at one time" may hint at a compression of time to enable it. "The sun stood still" may well be intended to teach that the meaning of time was collapsed by God, rather than that the sun literally stood still (:12,13). And the sun standing still over Gibeon is mentioned in Is. 28:21 as typical of the time when Yahweh will do "His strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act" in the last days. The same may be true when the shadow went back for Hezekiah. The movement of the planets need not have been altered; the meaning of time was simply suspended. This collapsing of time would also explain why it is impossible to construct a chronology of events in real time for the coming of Christ; the various prophecies of the last days just don't seem to fit together in chronological sequence. If indeed time is collapsed, this would enable all these prophecies to come true, but not in time as we know it. Babylon is to be punished with famine in one day; yet famine is a process (Rev. 18:8). In one day her judgments come, and yet also in one hour (18:10). Surely the lesson is that time is compressed. Rev. 8:12, also speaking of the last days, says that "the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise". Could this mean that one day and one night last only two thirds of their usual length, whilst the judgments of the fourth Angel are poured out upon the land? This collapsing of time will enable us each to be judged individually without having to wait our turn in line.

11:4 *As the sand that is on the seashore* – The same phrase used about Israel (Gen. 32:12). The kingdoms of this world masquerade as the kingdom of God. The world is

gether; and they came and encamped together at the waters of Merom, to fight with Israel. ⁶ Yahweh said to Joshua, Don't be afraid because of them; for tomorrow at this time, I will deliver them up all slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire. ⁷ So Joshua and all the people of war with him suddenly came against them by the waters of Merom, and fell on them. ⁸ Yahweh delivered them into the hand of Israel, and they struck them and chased them to great Sidon, to Misrephoth Maim and to the valley of Mizpeh eastward. They struck them until they left them none remaining. ⁹ Joshua did to them as Yahweh told him. He hamstrung their horses and burnt their chariots with fire. ¹⁰ Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor, and struck its king with the sword: for Hazor used to be the head of all those kingdoms. ¹¹ They struck all the souls who were in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them. There was no one left who breathed. He burnt Hazor with fire. ¹² Joshua captured all the cities of those kings, with their kings, and he struck them with

the edge of the sword and utterly destroyed them; as Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded. ¹³ But as for the cities that stood on their mounds, Israel burned none of them, except Hazor only; Joshua burned that one. ¹⁴ The children of Israel took all the spoil of these cities, with the livestock, as spoils for themselves; but every man they struck with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them. They didn't leave any who breathed.

Summary of Joshua's Victories

¹⁵ As Yahweh had commanded Moses His servant, so Moses had commanded Joshua. Joshua did so. He left nothing undone of all that Yahweh commanded Moses. ¹⁶ So Joshua captured all that land, the hill country, all the South, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, the Arabah, the hill country of Israel, and the lowland of the same; ¹⁷ from Mount Halak that goes up to Seir, even to Baal Gad in the valley of Lebanon under Mount Hermon. He took all their kings, struck them and put them to death. ¹⁸ Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. ¹⁹ There

set up as a fake people of God, and this will lead to the final conflict between the real Christ and the imitation or anti-Christ at His return.

11:6, 14 Can this be considered a lack of faith in 1:9?

11:9 This made no human sense, to destroy the latest military technology which had fallen into their hands. But this is the way of faith.

11:11 The word "soul" here doesn't refer to anything inherently immortal within us. It refers to the human person. All the people (*nephesh*) that were within the city of Hazor were killed by the sword (cp. 10:30-39). The "soul" is therefore not immortal.

He burnt Hazor with fire – A destruction of Hazor by fire at this time has been confirmed by archaeological exploration there.

11:15 – see on 8:2.

was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. They took all in battle. ²⁰ For Yahweh hardened their hearts, to come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, that they might have no favour, but that He might destroy them, as Yahweh had commanded Moses. ²¹ Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel: Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. ²² There were none of the Anakim left in the land of the children of Israel. Only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did some remain. ²³ So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that Yahweh spoke to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. The land had rest from war.

CHAPTER 12 May 26

The Conquered Kings on the East of the Jordan

Now these are the kings of the land whom the children of Israel struck, and possessed their land beyond the Jordan toward the sun-

rise, from the valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon, and all the Arabah eastward: ² Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon and ruled from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and the middle of the valley, and half Gilead, even to the river Jabbok, the border of the children of Ammon; ³ and the Arabah to the sea of Chinneroth, eastward, and to the sea of the Arabah, even the Salt Sea, eastward, the way to Beth Jeshimoth; and on the south, under the slopes of Pisgah; ⁴ and the border of Og king of Bashan, of the remnant of the Rephaim, who lived at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, ⁵ and ruled in Mount Hermon, and in Salecah, and in all Bashan, to the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. ⁶ Moses the servant of Yahweh and the children of Israel struck them. Moses the servant of Yahweh gave it for a possession to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

The Conquered Kings on the West of the Jordan

⁷ These are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the children of Israel struck beyond the Jordan west-

11:22 Samson went to Gaza conscious that his people had failed to drive out the tribes. Judah had captured it in Joshua’s strength (1:18), but had let the Philistines return. We too must do our part to retain the victory for us which has been won by Joshua-Jesus.

11:23 Much land was still not possessed (13:1; 16:10; 18:3; 23:4); does 11:23 therefore imply that the land had been possessed only in the perceptions of Israel? How responsible was Joshua for this? Or was it that Joshua destroyed the leadership structure of the Canaanites, but Israel failed to go and possess what he had secured for them, just as we fail to appropriate to ourselves all the victory of Christ?

12:1, 7 *The kings of the land* – The Hebrew word *eretz* refers to both the land promised to Abraham, and to the whole planet. When we read of “the kings of the earth /

ward, from Baal Gad in the valley of Lebanon even to Mount Halak that goes up to Seir. Joshua gave it to the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions; ⁸ in the mountains, and in the lowland, and in the Arabah, and in the slopes, and in the wilderness, and in the South; the Hittite, the Amorite, and the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite: ⁹ the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; ¹⁰ the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; ¹¹ the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; ¹² the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; ¹³ the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; ¹⁴ the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; ¹⁵ the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; ¹⁶ the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; ¹⁷ the king of Tap-

puah, one; the king of Hopher, one; ¹⁸ the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; ¹⁹ the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; ²⁰ the king of Shimron Meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; ²¹ the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; ²² the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one; ²³ the king of Dor in the height of Dor, one; the king of Goyim in Gilgal, one; ²⁴ the king of Tirzah, one: all the kings thirty-one.

CHAPTER 13 May 27

The Areas of Land Still to Be Possessed

Now Joshua was old and well advanced in years. Yahweh said to him, You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to be possessed. ² This is the land that still remains: all the

land" in Revelation, these likewise refer to the rulers within the territory promised to Abraham, from the Nile to the Euphrates.

12:7 *Joshua gave it to the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions* – The comment of Ps. 136:17,22 is that the 31 kings were slain as an act of God's grace, in order to give the land to Israel for a heritage or possession. Israel didn't deserve these victories, they were by God's grace.

12:8 *The mountains... the slopes... the wilderness* – The conquests of Joshua-Jesus were extensive. Yet when Israel took the land, they settled just in the fertile areas and let the Canaanites live in those infertile areas, rather than completely destroy them (Jud. 1:34). We too can as it were take possession of those parts of the Kingdom life which are convenient to us, rather than in the spirit of Jesus-Joshua take full possession

12:9 The list of kings which follows appears to be in the order in which they were defeated. Not all these battles and victories are recorded, in the same way as not all the struggles and victories of Jesus are known or perceived by us.

13:1 *There remains yet very much land to be possessed* – Joshua, like Jesus, had won all the battles; but God's people failed to go and possess what could so easily have been theirs. Defining what exactly hadn't been possessed was a good idea psychologically; it also helps us if we set ourselves specific spiritual objectives, no matter how limited, so that we can tackle them.

regions of the Philistines, and all the Geshurites; ³ from the Shihor, which is before Egypt, even to the border of Ekron northward, which is counted as Canaanite; the five lords of the Philistines; the Gazites, and the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avvim, ⁴ on the south; all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians, to Aphek, to the border of the Amorites; ⁵ and the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad under Mount Hermon to the entrance of Hamath; ⁶ all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim, even all the Sidonians; them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only allocate it to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you. ⁷ Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh. ⁸ With him the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance which Moses had given them beyond the Jordan eastward, even as Moses the servant of Yahweh gave them: ⁹ from Aroer, that is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and the city that is in the middle of the valley, and all the plain of Medeba to Dibon; ¹⁰ and all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites who reigned in Heshbon, to the border of the children of Am-

mon; ¹¹ and Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maacathites, and all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan to Salecah; ¹² all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei (the same was left of the remnant of the Rephaim); for Moses attacked these, and drove them out. ¹³ Nevertheless the children of Israel didn't drive out the Geshurites nor the Maacathites: but Geshur and Maacath dwell in the midst of Israel to this day. ¹⁴ Only He gave no inheritance to the tribe of Levi. The sacrifices of Yahweh the God of Israel made by fire are his inheritance, as He spoke to him. ¹⁵ Moses gave to the tribe of the children of Reuben according to their families. ¹⁶ Their border was from Aroer that is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and the city that is in the middle of the valley, and all the plain by Medeba; ¹⁷ Heshbon, and all its cities that are in the plain; Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, ¹⁸ Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, ¹⁹ Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar in the mount of the valley, ²⁰ Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, Beth Jeshimoth, ²¹ all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses struck with the chiefs of Midian, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the princes of Sihon, who lived in the land. ²² The children of Israel also

13:14 The Levites had no material inheritance because “the sacrifices of Yahweh... are his inheritance... Yahweh... was their inheritance” (:14,33). Notice how “Yahweh” is put for what is sacrificed to Him. His very existence is an imperative to sacrifice to Him, despising all material advantage in doing so.

13:22 *Among the rest of their slain* – The impression is given that Balaam suffered

killed Balaam the son of Beor the soothsayer with the sword, among the rest of their slain. ²³ The border of the children of Reuben was the bank of the Jordan. This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben according to their families, the cities and its villages. ²⁴ Moses gave to the tribe of Gad, to the children of Gad, according to their families. ²⁵ Their border was Jazer and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, to Aroer that is before Rabbah; ²⁶ and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpeh, and Betonim; and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir; ²⁷ and in the valley, Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, the Jordan's bank, to the uttermost part of the sea of Chinnereth beyond the Jordan eastward. ²⁸ This is the inheritance of the children of Gad according to their families, the cities and villages. ²⁹ Moses gave an inheritance to the half-tribe of Manasseh. It was for the half-tribe of the children of Manasseh according to their families. ³⁰ Their border 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. ³¹ Half Gilead,

Ashtaroth, and Edrei, the cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were for the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, even for the half of the children of Machir according to their families. ³² These are the inheritances which Moses distributed in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan at Jericho, eastward. ³³ But to the tribe of Levi Moses gave no inheritance. Yahweh, the God of Israel, was their inheritance, as He had told them.

CHAPTER 14 May 28

Caleb Given an Inheritance

These are the inheritances which the children of Israel took in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed to them, ² by the lot of their inheritance, as Yahweh commanded by Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half-tribe. ³ For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe beyond the Jordan; but to the Levites he gave no inheritance among them. ⁴ For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: and they gave no portion to the Levites in the land, except towns to dwell in,

their punishment and was counted amongst them. Yet it would seem that he was an Israelite, at one time a prophet of Yahweh, and in touch with the true God. Yet he died with the Midianites. If we side with this world in this life, then we will share their condemnation at Christ's return and not inherit the Kingdom; we will be "condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:32).

13:30 *Sixty cities* – Christ's parable of Lk. 19:12-18 likens our rewards in God's future Kingdom to being given varying numbers of cities to rule over. This confirms that Israel's entry to Canaan was seen by Him as typical of our entry into God's Kingdom on earth when Christ returns.

with their suburbs for their livestock and for their property. ⁵ The children of Israel did as Yahweh commanded Moses, and they divided the land. ⁶ Then the children of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal. Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, You know the thing that Yahweh spoke to Moses the man of God concerning me and concerning you in Kadesh Barnea. ⁷ I was forty years old when Moses the servant of Yahweh sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land. I brought him word again as it was in my heart. ⁸ Nevertheless, my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed Yahweh my God. ⁹ Moses swore on that day saying, ‘Surely the land where you walked shall be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because

you have wholly followed Yahweh my God’. ¹⁰ Now, behold, Yahweh has kept me alive as He spoke these forty-five years, from the time that Yahweh spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. Now, behold, I am eighty-five years old today. ¹¹ As yet I am as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now for war, to go out and to come in. ¹² Now therefore give me this hill country, of which Yahweh spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and great and fortified cities. It will surely be that Yahweh will be with me and I shall drive them out, as Yahweh spoke. ¹³ Joshua blessed him; and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. ¹⁴ Therefore

14:8 Joshua and Caleb were earlier characterized by the comment that they “wholly followed the Lord” when they went to spy out Canaan, and urged Israel to go up and inherit it (:8,9,14; Num. 14:24; 32:11,12; Dt. 1:36). This refers to the way that the Angel had gone ahead of them, and they faithfully followed where the Angel had gone, and believed that Israel could follow that Angel wherever he led. When Israel finally did go into the land, they were told that Joshua would ‘go before’ them, and they were to follow him and thereby inherit the land (Dt. 31:3). From this we see that circumstances repeat in our lives. As Joshua had been told to be strong and of good courage in order to take the land, so he had to tell others (10:25). Joshua had faithfully followed, and now he became the leader who was himself to be faithfully followed. We must walk in step with the Spirit / Angel in our lives; and yet no matter how much we’ve walked in step with Him, we can always allow pressure of circumstances to let us fall out of step with Him.

14:12-14 On one level, we can quite rightly ask for material blessing, and the Father is pleased that we should. But there is a higher level we can live on, where requesting physical blessings doesn’t figure so largely. We can be like Caleb, who conquered Hebron (his part in the Kingdom) for himself and then gave it to others. In any case, Hebron became a priestly city for the Levites to live in. He gave his place in the Kingdom to others, reflecting the grace he had received – that was the level of love this great man reached. Moses reached a similar height of loving devotion to God’s people in Ex. 32:32-34.

Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day; because he wholly followed Yahweh the God of Israel. ¹⁵ Now the name of Hebron before was Kiriath Arba, after the greatest man among the Anakim. The land had rest from war.

CHAPTER 15 May 29

The Inheritance of Judah

The lot for the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families was to the border of Edom, even to the wilderness of Zin southward, at the uttermost part of the south. ² Their south border was from the uttermost part of the Salt Sea, from the bay that looks southward; ³ and it went out southward of the ascent of Akkrabbim, and passed along to Zin, and went up by the south of Kadesh Barnea, and passed along by Hezron, went up to Addar, and turned about to Karka; ⁴ and it passed along to Azmon, went out at the brook of Egypt; and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your

south border. ⁵ The east border was the Salt Sea, even to the end of the Jordan. The border of the north quarter was from the bay of the sea at the end of the Jordan. ⁶ The border went up to Beth Hoglah, and passed along by the north of Beth Arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. ⁷ The border went up to Debir from the valley of Achor, and so northward, looking toward Gilgal, that is over against the ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the river. The border passed along to the waters of En Shemesh, and ended at En Rogel. ⁸ The border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom to the side of the Jebusite southward (the same is Jerusalem); and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lies before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the farthest part of the valley of the Rephaim northward. ⁹ The border extended from the top of the mountain to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of Mount Ephron;

14:14 This is in the context of the Angel going before the people. Caleb zealously followed the Angel who went before him, and therefore he obtained his inheritance which in prospect the Angel had prepared for him. Our guardian Angels are preparing victories in prospect for us too. ‘Caleb’ means ‘dog’ and so the language of faithful following is a play on his name.

15:8 In the New Testament there are two Greek words translated ‘hell’ in many Bibles. The Greek *hades* is the equivalent of the Hebrew *sheol* which refers to the grave. ‘Gehenna’ is the name of the rubbish tip which was just outside Jerusalem, where the refuse from the city was burnt. As a proper noun – i.e. the name of an actual place – it should have been left untranslated as ‘Gehenna’ rather than be translated as ‘hell’. ‘Gehenna’ is the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew ‘Ge-ben-Hinnon’. This was located near Jerusalem (15:8; 18:16), and at the time of Christ it was the city rubbish dump. Dead bodies of criminals were thrown onto the fires which were always burning there, so that Gehenna became symbolic of total destruction and rejection. What was thrown onto those fires did not remain there forever – the bodies decomposed into dust.

and the border extended to Baalah (the same is Kiriath Jearim); ¹⁰ and the border turned about from Baalah westward to Mount Seir, and passed along to the side of Mount Jearim on the north (the same is Chesalon), and went down to Beth Shemesh, and passed along by Timnah; ¹¹ and the border went out to the side of Ekron northward; and the border extended to Shikkeron, and passed along to Mount Baalah, and went out at Jabneel; and the goings out of the border were at the sea. ¹² The west border was to the shore of the great sea. This is the border of the children of Judah according to their families.

The Spiritual Ambition of Caleb and His Family

¹³ To Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a portion among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of Yahweh to Joshua, even Kiriath Arba, named after the father of Anak (the same is Hebron). ¹⁴ Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak: Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak. ¹⁵ He went up against the inhabitants of Debir: now the name of Debir before was Kiriath Sepher. ¹⁶ Caleb said, He who strikes Kiriath Sepher and takes it, to

him will I give Achsah my daughter as wife. ¹⁷ Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. ¹⁸ It happened that she came to ask her father for a field. She got off her donkey, and Caleb said, What do you want? ¹⁹ She said, Give me a blessing. Because you have set me in the land of the South, give me also springs of water. He gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

The Cities and Villages of Judah

²⁰ This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families. ²¹ The farthest cities of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the border of Edom in the South were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, ²² Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, ²³ Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, ²⁴ Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, ²⁵ Hazor Hadattah, Kerioth Hezron (the same is Hazor), ²⁶ Amam, Shema, Moladah, ²⁷ Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, ²⁸ Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah, ²⁹ Baalah, Iim, Ezem, ³⁰ Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah, ³¹ Ziklag, Madmanah, Sansannah, ³² Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon. All the cities are twenty-nine, with their villages. ³³ In the lowland, Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah,

15:13 Joshua had taken Hebron (10:36) but Israel had not followed up his victory, and the Philistines had returned; and so Caleb then took it. Joshua / Jesus has won great victories for us against every barrier which might stop us entering the Kingdom – but we have to do our part in making good that victory.

15:18 Such examples of spiritual ambition are inspirational; just as soldiers inspire each other by their acts of bravery. Achsah followed her father Caleb's spiritual ambition in specifically asking for an inheritance in the Kingdom (14:12); and this in turn inspired another woman to ask for an inheritance soon afterwards (17:4). And so it ought to be in any healthy congregation of believers.

³⁴ Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, ³⁵ Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, ³⁶ Shaaraim, Adithaim and Gederah (or Gederothaim); fourteen cities with their villages. ³⁷ Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, ³⁸ Dilean, Mizpeh, Joktheel, ³⁹ Lachish, Boz-kath, Eglon, ⁴⁰ Cabbon, Lahmam, Chitlish, ⁴¹ Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages. ⁴² Libnah, Ether, Ashan, ⁴³ Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, ⁴⁴ Keilah, Achzib, and Mare-shah; nine cities with their villages. ⁴⁵ Ekron, with its towns and its villages; ⁴⁶ from Ekron even to the sea, all that were by the side of Ashdod, with their villages. ⁴⁷ Ashdod, its towns and its villages; Gaza, its towns and its villages; to the brook of Egypt, and the great sea with its coastline. ⁴⁸ In the hill country, Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, ⁴⁹ Dannah, Kiriath Sannah (which is Debir), ⁵⁰ Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, ⁵¹ Goshen, Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages. ⁵² Arab, Dumah, Eshan, ⁵³ Janim, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah, ⁵⁴ Humtah, Kiriath Arba (the same is Hebron) and Zior; nine cities with their villages. ⁵⁵ Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Jutah, ⁵⁶ Jezreel, Jok-

deam, Zanoah, ⁵⁷ Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah; ten cities with their villages. ⁵⁸ Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor, ⁵⁹ Maarath, Beth Anoth, and Eltekon; six cities with their villages. ⁶⁰ Kiriath Baal (the same is Kiriath Jearim), and Rabbah; two cities with their villages. ⁶¹ In the wilderness, Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah, ⁶² Nibshan, the City of Salt, and En Gedi; six cities with their villages. ⁶³ As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah couldn't drive them out; but the Jebusites live with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

CHAPTER 16 May 30

The Territory of Ephraim and Manasseh

The lot came out for the children of Joseph from the Jordan at Jericho, at the waters of Jericho on the east, even the wilderness, going up from Jericho through the hill country to Bethel. ² It went out from Bethel to Luz, and passed along to the border of the Archites to Ataroth; ³ and it went down westward to the border of the Japhletites, to the border of Beth Horon the lower as

15:33-36 Zorah, Samson's home town, was originally Judah's inheritance, but they spurned it, and passed it to Dan (19:41), who also weren't interested; for they migrated to the north and took over the land belonging to the less warlike Sidonians (Jud. 18:2,7-10). Those who don't want an inheritance in the Kingdom won't have it; those who truly love Christ's appearing and the things of the Kingdom will be given it (2 Tim. 4:8). Yet from such a weak, spiritually uninterested background, a man of faith like Samson came.

15:60 *Kiriath Baal (the same is Kiriath Jearim)* – Often in the lists of place names we are told that the name was changed; in this case, from “Baal” to “Jearim”. All restimulations of and associations with paganism, idolatry and the old life are to be erased.

15:63 They, like us, could have driven them out, because Joshua-Jesus had won the victory; but they failed to follow it up.

far as Gezer; and ended at the sea. ⁴ The children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance. ⁵ This was the border of the children of Ephraim according to their families. The border of their inheritance eastward was from Ataroth Addar to Beth Horon the upper. ⁶ The border went out westward at Michmethath on the north. The border turned about eastward to Taanath Shiloh, and passed along it on the east of Janoah. ⁷ It went down from Janoah to Ataroth, to Naarah, reached to Jericho, and went out at the Jordan. ⁸ From Tappuah the border went along westward to the brook of Kanah and ended at the sea. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim according to their families; ⁹ together with the cities which were set apart for the children of Ephraim in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages. ¹⁰ They didn't drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell in

the midst of Ephraim to this day, and became servants to do forced labour.

CHAPTER 17 May 31

Some Issues with the Inheritance of Manasseh

This was the lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph. As for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan. ² So this was for the rest of the children of Manasseh according to their families: for the children of Abiezer, for the children of Helek, for the children of Asriel, for the children of Shechem, for the children of Hephher, and for the children of Shemida: these were the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph according to their families. ³ But Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters: and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. ⁴ They came near

16:9 God redefined the boundaries of the land in accordance with what Israel had the strength to subdue; He made account for their weakness as He does for us. Thus Ephraim were given some cities within the inheritance of Manasseh, presumably because Manasseh wouldn't drive out the tribes living there. And the Lord Jesus seems to have alluded to this by saying that *we* will be given cities, the number of which depends upon our zeal to possess them. God had clearly promised that He would expel the tribes and "You *shall* possess their land" (23:5). But this promise was conditional upon them making the effort, even though that condition is not specifically mentioned. Ultimately, God will "enlarge all the borders of the land" (Is. 26:15 RV) because Israel will finally rise up to the spiritual ambition He desires of them.

17:1 *Because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan* – These areas were where resistance was strongest. God will give us a unique place in the Kingdom appropriate to our personality.

17:4 We note the spiritual ambition of these women, bravely pushing forward their desire for personal inheritance in the Kingdom in a male world which generally ignored them.

before Eleazar the priest and before Joshua the son of Nun and before the princes, saying, Yahweh commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers. Therefore according to the commandment of Yahweh he gave them an inheritance among the brothers of their father. ⁵ Ten parts fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which is beyond the Jordan; ⁶ because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons. The land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the sons of Manasseh. ⁷ The border of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethath, which is before Shechem. The border went along to the right hand, to the inhabitants of En Tappuah. ⁸ The land of Tappuah belonged to Manasseh; but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim. ⁹ The border went down to the brook of Kanah, southward of the brook. These cities belonged to Ephraim among the cities of Manasseh. The border of Manasseh was on the north side of the brook, and ended at the sea. ¹⁰ Southward it was Ephraim's, and northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea was his border. They reached to Asher on the north, and to Issachar on the east. ¹¹ Within the territories of Issachar and Asher,

Manasseh possessed Beth Shan and Ibleam, along with their surrounding towns, as well as Dor (the one on the coast), Endor, Taanach, Megiddo, and their surrounding towns. ¹² Yet the children of Manasseh couldn't drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites continued to dwell in that land.

Failure to Possess the Land

¹³ It happened that when the children of Israel had grown strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labour, and didn't utterly drive them out. ¹⁴ The children of Joseph spoke to Joshua saying, Why have you given me just one lot and one part for an inheritance, since I am a great people, because Yahweh has blessed me so far? ¹⁵ Joshua said to them, If you are a great people, go up to the forest, and clear land for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the Rephaim; since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you. ¹⁶ The children of Joseph said, The hill country is not enough for us. All the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both those who are in Beth Shean and its towns, and those who are in the valley of Jezreel. ¹⁷ Joshua

17:13 One reason why Israel failed to drive out the tribes, and thereby lost the Kingdom, was simply because they wanted to take tribute from them. Ez. 7:19 defines "silver and gold" as Israel's stumbling block – moreso than idols. Wealth and the easy life have been the most common form of spiritual destruction in the history of God's people.

17:14 *Why have you given me just one lot* – The people were lazy to inherit the Kingdom, and lacking in real faith. So they blamed their lack of full inheritance on Joshua. The lazy and faithless will always seek a human scapegoat to excuse themselves for things which are solely their fault.

spoke to the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh saying, You are a great people, and have great power. You shall not have one lot only; ¹⁸ but the hill country shall be yours. Although it is a forest, you shall cut it down, and it shall be yours from one end to the other; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they are strong.

CHAPTER 18 Jun. 1

The Remaining Land Is Assigned

The whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled themselves together at Shiloh and set up the Tent of Meeting there. The land was subdued before them. ² Seven tribes remained among the children of Israel, which had not yet been assigned their inheritance. ³ Joshua said to the children of Israel, How long will you delay possession of the land, which Yahweh the God of your fathers has given you?

⁴ Appoint for yourselves three men from each tribe. I will send them, and they shall go through the land, and describe it according to their inheritance; and they shall come to me. ⁵ They shall divide it into seven portions. Judah shall live in his borders on the south, and the house of Joseph shall live in their borders on the north. ⁶ You shall survey the land into seven parts, and bring the description here to me; and I will cast lots for you here before Yahweh our God. ⁷ For the Levites have no portion among you; for the priesthood of Yahweh is their inheritance. Gad, Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan eastward, which Moses the servant of Yahweh gave them. ⁸ The men arose and went. Joshua commanded those who went to survey the land saying, Go walk through the land, survey it, and come again to me. I will cast lots for you here before Yahweh in Shiloh. ⁹ The

17:18 *You shall drive out the Canaanites* – This is an example of what appears to be prophecy being actually a command, not a prediction. For those tribes proved too strong for lazy, minimising Israel. And so in that sense the ‘prophecy’ wasn’t fulfilled. Israel failed to be inspired by it. They waited for its fulfilment rather than going out to fulfil it. And we can do likewise.

18:3 One simple reason why Israel failed to inherit the Kingdom in the time of Joshua / Judges was that they were simply “slack”, lazy, to drive out the tribes (the same Hebrew word is used in Ex. 5:8 regarding how the Egyptians perceived them to be lazy; and also in Prov. 18:9). They were happy to receive tribute from them, and to enjoy what blessings they received. They were satisficers, not men of principle or mission; not real bond slaves. And for this, God rejected them and they never really inherited the Kingdom prepared for them.

18:8 When Joshua told the spies “Go walk through the land...”, they ought to have perceived that he was asking them to walk in the faith of Abraham – to believe that this land truly had been promised to them, as his seed. God sometimes sets us up in situations in which we are intended to perceive the similarity with some incident in Biblical history, and to thereby be encouraged to act appropriately and in faith. For

men passed through the land, and recorded it by cities into seven portions in a book. They came to Joshua to the camp at Shiloh. ¹⁰ Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before Yahweh. There Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions.

The Territory of Benjamin

¹¹ The lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families. The border of their lot went out between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. ¹² Their border on the north quarter was from the Jordan. The border went up to the side of Jericho on the north, and went up through the hill country westward and ended at the wilderness of Beth Aven. ¹³ The border passed along from there to Luz, to the side of Luz (the same is Bethel) southward. The border went down to Ataroth Addar, by the mountain that lies on the south of Beth Horon the lower. ¹⁴ The border extended, and turned around on the west quarter southward, from the mountain that lies before Beth Horon southward; and ended at Kiriath Baal (the same is Kiriath Jearim), a city of the children of Judah. This was the west quarter. ¹⁵ The southern side began at the outskirts of Kiriath Jearim. The border went out westward, and went out to the spring of

the waters of Nephtoah. ¹⁶ The border went down to the farthest part of the mountain that lies before the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is in the valley of the Rephaim northward. It went down to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of the Jebusite southward, and went down to En Rogel. ¹⁷ It extended northward, went out at En Shemesh, and went out to Geliloth, which is over against the ascent of Adummim. It went down to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. ¹⁸ It passed along to the side over against the Arabah northward and went down to the Arabah. ¹⁹ The border passed along to the side of Beth Hoglah northward; and the border ended at the north bay of the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan. This was the south border. ²⁰ The Jordan was its border on the east quarter. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, boundary by boundary all around, according to their families. ²¹ Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, ²² Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, ²³ Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, ²⁴ Chephar Ammoni, Ophni, and Geba; twelve cities with their villages. ²⁵ Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, ²⁶ Mizpeh, Chephirah, Mozah, ²⁷ Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, ²⁸ Zelah, Eleph, the Jebusite (the same is Jerusalem), Gibeath, and

this to 'work' it requires a sensitive familiarity with Scripture; hence the advisability of daily Bible reading.

18:16 *The valley of Hinnom* – See on 15:8.

18:28 All these names would likely have been listened to by the tribes with the same attitude as we have when we hear or read them – they are places unknown to us, and so we

Kiriath; fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

CHAPTER 19 Jun. 2

The Territory of Simeon

The second lot came out for Simeon, even for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. Their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Judah. ² They had for their inheritance Beersheba (or Sheba), Moladah, ³ Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, ⁴ Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, ⁵ Zik-

lag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah, ⁶ Beth Lebaoth, and Sharuhem; thirteen cities with their villages; ⁷ Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan; four cities with their villages; ⁸ and all the villages that were around these cities to Baalath Beer, Ramah of the South. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. ⁹ Out of the part of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon; for the portion of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had inheritance in the midst of their inheritance.

tend to indifferently let them pass us by. But the tribes, in this case Benjamin, should've been paying careful attention and perceiving the extent of their inheritance, and what exactly was required of them. Instead they were satisfied with their farms and didn't want to see the bigger picture of what was possible for them. They could've not only possessed their own land allocation to its fullness, but also inherited the territory right up to the Euphrates. God conceded to their smallness of vision by trying to get them to concentrate on the land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea; but they didn't want to even exploit that area as God enabled them to. We too can read the descriptions of God's Kingdom and not be really motivated by grasping the reality of the fact that this is really our land, our inheritance, our eternal destiny that's being described.

19:1 The inheritance of Simeon and Judah was merged because of their inability to expel the Canaanites. The boundaries of the promised land and indeed the individual possessions of the tribes were changed by God in accordance with the weakness of Israel to actually drive out the tribes and take the inheritance. Thus He "changed the portion of My people" (Mic. 2:4). Right up to our own day we see the same Divine sensitivity to the weakness of His people and His eagerness to work with them at whatever low level they relate to Him on.

19:9 We see a lot of grace in how the Biblical records are written, in how God perceives history. "The portion of the children of Judah was too much for them" almost implies God made an error in allocating them too much; when actually the problem was that they lacked the faith to drive out the tribes living there. Likewise the extension of Dan's border by them in :47 overlooks the fact that actually the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, and Dan wasn't strong or faithful enough to live in the valley areas (Jud. 1:34). When Dan fought against Leshem, this one act of obedience is so magnified in :47 to sound as if in their zeal to inherit their territory they actually found they had too little land and therefore attacked Leshem. But actually it was already part of their allotted inheritance. Yet God graciously comments that "all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel" (Jud. 18:1).

The Territory of Zebulun

¹⁰ The third lot came up for the children of Zebulun according to their families. The border of their inheritance was to Sarid. ¹¹ Their border went up westward, even to Maralah, and reached to Dab-besheth. It reached to the brook that is before Jokneam. ¹² It turned from Sarid eastward toward the sunrise to the border of Chisloth Tabor. It went out to Daberath, and went up to Japhia. ¹³ From there it passed along eastward to Gath Hepher, to Ethkazin; and going on to Rimmon it bent toward Neah. ¹⁴ The border turned around on the north to Hannathon; and it ended at the valley of Iphtah El. ¹⁵ It included Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah, and Beth-lehem: twelve cities with their villages. ¹⁶ This is the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.

The Territory of Issachar

¹⁷ The fourth lot came out for Issachar, even for the children of Issachar according to their families. ¹⁸ Their border was to Jezreel, Chesulloth, Shunem, ¹⁹ Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, ²⁰ Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez, ²¹ Remeth, Engannim, En Haddah, and Beth Pazzez. ²² The border reached to Tabor, Shahazumah, and Beth Shemesh. Their border ended at the Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages. ²³ This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities with their villages.

The Territory of Asher

²⁴ The fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families. ²⁵ Their border was Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph, ²⁶ Allammelech, Amad, Mishal. It reached to Carmel westward, and to Shihorlibnath. ²⁷ It turned toward the sunrise to Beth Dagon, and reached to Zebulun, and to the valley of Iphtah El northward to Beth Emek and Neiel. It went out to Cabul on the left hand, ²⁸ and Ebron, Rehob, Hammon, and Kanah, even to great Sidon. ²⁹ The border turned to Ramah, to the fortified city of Tyre; and the border turned to Hosah. It ended at the sea by the region of Achzib; ³⁰ Ummah also, and Aphek, and Rehob: twenty-two cities with their villages. ³¹ This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.

The Territory of Naphtali

³² The sixth lot came out for the children of Naphtali, even for the children of Naphtali according to their families. ³³ Their border was from Heleph, from the oak in Zaananim, Adaminekeb, and Jabneel, to Lakum. It ended at the Jordan. ³⁴ The border turned westward to Aznoth Tabor, and went out from there to Hukkok. It reached to Zebulun on the south, and reached to Asher on the west, and to Judah at the Jordan toward the sunrise. ³⁵ The fortified cities were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth, ³⁶ Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, ³⁷ Kedesh, Edrei, En

Hazor, ³⁸ Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath, and Beth Shemesh; nineteen cities with their villages. ³⁹ This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities with their villages.

The Territory of Dan

⁴⁰ The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. ⁴¹ The border of their inheritance was Zorah, Eshtaol, Irshemesh, ⁴² Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah, ⁴³ Elon, Timnah, Ekron, ⁴⁴ Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, ⁴⁵ Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, ⁴⁶ Me-Jarkon and Rakkon, with the border over against Joppa. ⁴⁷ The border of the children of Dan went out beyond them; for the children of Dan went up and fought against Leshem and took it, and struck it with the edge of the sword and possessed it and lived therein, and called it Leshem Dan after the name of Dan their father. ⁴⁸ This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages. ⁴⁹ So they made an end of distributing the land for inheritance by its borders.

The Inheritance of Joshua

The children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun in their midst. ⁵⁰ According to the commandment of Yahweh, they gave him the city which he asked, even Timnathserah in the hill country of Ephraim; and he built the city, and lived there. ⁵¹ These are the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance by lot in Shiloh before Yahweh, at the door of the Tent of Meeting. So they made an end of dividing the land.

CHAPTER 20 Jun. 3

The Cities of Refuge

Yahweh spoke to Joshua saying, ² Speak to the children of Israel saying, 'Assign the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you by Moses, ³ that the manslayer who kills any person accidentally or unintentionally may flee there. They shall be to you for a refuge from the avenger of blood. ⁴ He shall flee to one of those cities, and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and declare his cause in the ears of the elders of

19:50 This is an example of spiritual ambition. Note the huge breadth in attitude amongst the children of God at this time; some were so indifferent to their inheritance that they gave it to other tribes or never even went there to try to possess it; others took their inheritance and had the initiative to ask for more land. This breadth in commitment levels within the people of God can be very discouraging, but thus it has always been. Joshua and Caleb must have found the negative, faithless attitude of the others hard to live with, but they didn't let it take away from their own zeal for God.

20:4 Heb. 6:18 invites us to see ourselves as this person who had committed sin worthy of death and yet, as it were, without his conscious, wilful desire to do so; and our city of refuge is the Lord Jesus.

that city. They shall take him into the city with them and give him a place, that he may live among them.

⁵ If the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver up the manslayer into his hand; because he struck his neighbour unintentionally, and didn't hate him beforehand.

⁶ He shall dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days.

Then the manslayer shall return, and come to his own city, and to his own house, to the city he fled from'.

⁷ They set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath Arba (the same is Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. ⁸ Beyond the Jordan at Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness in

the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. ⁹ These were the appointed cities for all the children of Israel, and for the alien who lives among them, that whoever kills any person unintentionally might flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stands before the congregation.

CHAPTER 21 Jun. 3

Cities Given to the Levites

Then the heads of fathers' houses of the Levites came near to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun and to the heads of fathers' houses of the tribes of the children of Israel. ² They spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan saying, Yahweh commanded Moses to

20:6 Final deliverance for the manslayer was given at the death of the High Priest, when his case was judged. This pointed forward to the final freedom achieved for us by Christ's death, which was in a sense our judgment (Jn. 12:31; 16:11). Christ's death on the cross is repeatedly presented as our judgment; hence in remembering His death in the breaking of bread we have a foretaste of our future judgment, and are in a sense judged there.

20:7, 8 The cities of refuge were in inaccessible areas – up mountains or in the desert. There had to be a conscious effort to go there, just as we don't drift into Christ but must take the conscious decision to be baptized into Him, which is the counterpart to entering into the city of refuge (:4).

21:2 The implication could be that the people had been slack to give the Levites their cities. We get the impression that once they entered the land, it was every man for himself; very few saw the wider, larger picture of possessing the entire land and establishing a nationwide worship system whereby the Levites would teach the people about God. The people of God today can likewise be very self-centred rather than thinking what would be best for the community as a whole. The Levites' request for an inheritance to be given them can be seen in continuity with Joshua, Caleb and Caleb's daughter asking for a specific inheritance and being given it; whoever really wants to be in the Kingdom will be there, all who truly love Christ's appearing (with all that true love implies) will be given salvation (2 Tim. 4:8). Maybe Jesus was alluding to these passages in Joshua when He taught that whoever asks will receive (Mt. 7:7).

give us cities to dwell in, with their suburbs for our livestock. ³ The children of Israel gave to the Levites out of their inheritance, according to the commandment of Yahweh, these cities with their suburbs. ⁴ The lot came out for the families of the Kohathites. The children of Aaron the priest, who were of the Levites, had thirteen cities by lot out of the tribe of Judah, out of the tribe of the Simeonites, and out of the tribe of Benjamin. ⁵ The rest of the children of Kohath had ten cities by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh. ⁶ The children of Gershon had thirteen cities by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, out of the tribe of Asher, out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan. ⁷ The children of Merari according to their families had twelve cities out of the tribe of Reuben, out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun. ⁸ The children of Israel gave these cities with their suburbs by lot to the Levites, as Yahweh commanded by Moses. ⁹ They gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are mentioned by name. ¹⁰ They were for the children of Aaron, of the families of the Kohathites, who were of the children of Levi; for theirs was the first lot. ¹¹ They gave them Kiriath Arba, named after the father of Anak (the same is Hebron), in the hill country

of Judah, with its suburbs around it. ¹² But they gave the fields of the city and its villages to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession. ¹³ To the children of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron with its suburbs, the city of refuge for the manslayer, Libnah with its suburbs, ¹⁴ Jattir with its suburbs, Eshtemoa with its suburbs, ¹⁵ Holon with its suburbs, Debir with its suburbs, ¹⁶ Ain with its suburbs, Juttah with its suburbs, and Beth Shemesh with its suburbs; nine cities out of those two tribes. ¹⁷ Out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its suburbs, Geba with its suburbs, ¹⁸ Anathoth with its suburbs, and Almon with its suburbs; four cities. ¹⁹ All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their suburbs. ²⁰ The families of the children of Kohath, the Levites, even the rest of the children of Kohath, had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim. ²¹ They gave them Shechem with its suburbs in the hill country of Ephraim, the city of refuge for the manslayer, and Gezer with its suburbs, ²² Kibzaim with its suburbs, and Beth Horon with its suburbs; four cities. ²³ Out of the tribe of Dan, Elteke with its suburbs, Gibbethon with its suburbs, ²⁴ Aijalon with its suburbs, Gath Rimmon with its suburbs; four cities. ²⁵ Out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Taanach with its suburbs, and Gath Rimmon with its suburbs; two cities. ²⁶ All the cities of the families of the rest of the children of Kohath

This isn't a blank cheque promise, but rather saying that whoever really wants salvation and an inheritance in the Kingdom will receive it.

were ten with their suburbs. ²⁷ They gave to the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the half-tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan with its suburbs, the city of refuge for the manslayer, and Beeshterah with its suburbs; two cities. ²⁸ Out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishion with its suburbs, Daberath with its suburbs, ²⁹ Jarmuth with its suburbs, En Gannim with its suburbs; four cities. ³⁰ Out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with its suburbs, Abdon with its suburbs, ³¹ Helkath with its suburbs, and Rehob with its suburbs; four cities. ³² Out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with its suburbs, the city of refuge for the manslayer, Hammothdor with its suburbs, and Kartan with its suburbs; three cities. ³³ All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their suburbs. ³⁴ To the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its suburbs, Kartah

with its suburbs, ³⁵ Dimnah with its suburbs and Nahalal with its suburbs; four cities. ³⁶ Out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with its suburbs, Jahaz with its suburbs, ³⁷ Kedemoth with its suburbs and Mephaath with its suburbs; four cities. ³⁸ Out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its suburbs, the city of refuge for the manslayer, and Mahanaim with its suburbs, ³⁹ Heshbon with its suburbs, Jazer with its suburbs; four cities in all. ⁴⁰ All these were the cities of the children of Merari according to their families, even the rest of the families of the Levites. Their lot was twelve cities. ⁴¹ All the cities of the Levites in the midst of the possession of the children of Israel were forty-eight cities with their suburbs. ⁴² Each of these cities included their suburbs around them. It was this way with all these cities. ⁴³ So Yahweh gave to Israel all the land which He swore to give to their fathers. They possessed it, and lived in it. ⁴⁴ Yahweh gave them rest all around, according to all

21:41 The Levites were one of the smallest tribes and yet were given 48 cities, far more cities than some of the larger tribes. This was perhaps because it was God's intention to dramatically increase the number of the Levites if they were faithful (Ps. 115:12-14) in order to spiritually strengthen Israel yet more. But again, a great potential was set up by God, in some detail, but wasn't realized because of human weakness.

21:43, 44 The Lord gave them the land, i.e. potentially, but they failed to possess it. Yahweh gave them rest, and yet Heb. 4:8 says that Joshua did *not* give them rest, and therefore there remains this "rest" to be received by God's people at Christ's return. Is this therefore an implied criticism of Joshua, or of Israel?

21:44 *Not a man of all their enemies stood before them* – But their enemies did stand before them, they didn't possess all the land. Yet God puts it over so positively, as if it's a story with a happy ending – when actually it's a tragedy. Even when rebuking them, God sees Israel as in some ways perfect (Num. 23:21; Is. 42:18-20). We stand related to the same grace, and should reflect it in being positive and gracious in our view of our brethren.

that He swore to their fathers. Not a man of all their enemies stood before them. Yahweh delivered all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵ Nothing failed of any good thing which Yahweh had spoken to the house of Israel; all came to pass.

CHAPTER 22 Jun. 4

The Two and a Half Tribes Return to Their Possessions

Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh ² and said to them, You have kept all that Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded you, and have listened to my voice in all that I commanded you. ³ You have not left your brothers these many days to this day, but have performed the duty commanded by Yahweh your God. ⁴ Now Yahweh your God has given rest to your brothers, as He spoke to them. Therefore now return and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses the

servant of Yahweh gave you beyond the Jordan. ⁵ Only take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded you, to love Yahweh your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁶ So Joshua blessed them and sent them away; and they went to their tents. ⁷ Now to the one half-tribe of Manasseh Moses had given inheritance in Bashan; but to the other half gave Joshua among their brothers beyond the Jordan westward. Moreover when Joshua sent them away to their tents he blessed them ⁸ and spoke to them saying, Return with much wealth to your tents, with very much livestock, with silver, gold, brass, iron and with very much clothing. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brothers. ⁹ The children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned,

21:45 *All came to pass* – The promises by the Angel at the exodus came true in prospect; but tragically Israel did not make them good, so that in reality only a fraction of the blessings were realized. All of God’s people today have in a sense been given the Kingdom; but not all will possess it because not all want to.

22:2-4 This seems an over positive view of Israel, an exaggeration of their true spiritual position – cp. 23:4; 24:14,23. Or is this rooted in Joshua’s love for them, not seeing iniquity in Jacob? Moses had told the Reubenites and Gadites that they could return to their possessions when God had given rest to the other tribes and they had also possessed their lands (Dt. 3:20). But Joshua tells them to go to their possessions simply because their brethren were now at “rest”; although Heb. 4:8 says that they did not inherit the “rest” at Joshua’s time. He significantly omits the proviso that their brethren must also possess the land – because much of the land wasn’t possessed. Was this Joshua getting slack, thinking that the main thing was that people were living in peace, even though they weren’t possessing the Kingdom? Or is it a loving concession to human weakness? Indeed, the conditions of Dt. 3:20 were in their turn an easier form, a concession to, the terms of the initial agreement in Num. 32:20-32.

22:4 – see on 1:13-15.

and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh which is in the land of Canaan to go to the land of Gilead, to the land of their possession which they owned, according to the commandment of Yahweh by Moses.¹⁰ When they came to the region about the Jordan, that is in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by the Jordan, a great altar to look at.

The Ten Tribes Accuse Others of Apostasy

¹¹ The children of Israel heard a report that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh had built an altar in the forefront of the land of Canaan, in the region about the Jordan, on the side that pertains to the children of Israel.¹² When the children of Israel confirmed this, the whole congrega-

tion of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up against them to war.¹³ The children of Israel sent to the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead. They sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest,¹⁴ and with him ten princes, one prince of a fathers' house for each of the tribes of Israel; and they were each one of them head of their fathers' houses among the thousands of Israel.¹⁵ They came to the children of Reuben and to the children of Gad and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them saying,¹⁶ Thus says the whole congregation of Yahweh, 'What trespass is this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following Yahweh, in that you have built yourselves an altar, to rebel this day against Yahweh?'¹⁷ Is the iniquity

22:12 There is no record that they first of all attempted to ascertain the truth or otherwise of the accusation. The two and a half tribes had been fighting for them, helping them get their possessions, and had now returned home. The ten tribes should have been grateful to them; but instead they accuse them of apostasy on hearsay evidence alone, and seem eager to kill them. It so often happens that those we help the most, later turn against us. This is rooted in pride; we don't like to accept help, we like to think we have what we have because of our own efforts rather than the kindness of others; and so we like to find fault with our helpers. All the tribes should've been helping each other secure their inheritance, but it seems most of them just grabbed some land for themselves and didn't see the bigger picture of helping and enabling their brethren to also possess their inheritances. When we see others doing what we have failed to do and ought to be doing, we tend to want to pull them down to our level, eagerly listen to gossip against them, imagine the worst about them, condemn them and even destroy them. The Biblical record of this kind of thing happening is a comfort to us.

22:16 *Thus says the whole congregation of Yahweh* – It was unlikely that these hypocritical heresy hunters [see on :18] had actually got consent from every single person in Israel to say this; so often, divisive heresy hunters falsely claim to be speaking on behalf of all God's people.

of Peor of little consequence for us, from which we have not cleansed ourselves to this day, although there came a plague on the congregation of Yahweh, ¹⁸ that you must turn away this day from following Yahweh? It will be, since you rebel today against Yahweh, that tomorrow He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. ¹⁹ However, if the land of your possession is unclean, then pass over to the land of the possession of Yahweh, in which Yahweh's tabernacle dwells, and take possession among us; but don't rebel against Yahweh, nor rebel against us, in building an altar other than the altar of Yahweh our God. ²⁰ Didn't Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the devoted thing, causing wrath to fall on all the congregation of Israel? That man didn't perish alone in his iniquity'. ²¹ Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh answered and spoke to the heads of the thou-

sands of Israel, ²² The Mighty One, God, Yahweh, the Mighty One, God, Yahweh, He knows; and Israel shall know if it was in rebellion, or in trespass against Yahweh (don't save us this day). ²³ He knows whether we have built us an altar to turn away from following Yahweh; or to offer burnt offering or meal offering, or sacrifices of peace offerings. Let Yahweh Himself decide ²⁴ if we have not out of concern done this, and for a reason, saying, 'In time to come your children might speak to our children saying, What have you to do with Yahweh, the God of Israel? ²⁵ For Yahweh has made the Jordan a border between us and you, you children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no portion in Yahweh'. So your children might make our children cease from fearing Yahweh. ²⁶ Therefore we said, 'Let's now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice; ²⁷ but it will be a witness between us

22:18 *Since you rebel today against Yahweh* – This was hypocritical, for the prophets repeatedly declare that Israel as a whole were persistently rebellious against Yahweh from the day that He had entered covenant with them at Sinai (Dt. 31:27; Ps. 78:8; Is. 63:10; 65:2; Ez. 2:3; 20:8). They were still themselves worshipping idols (24:14). Such hypocrisy is understandable in psychological terms; on a subconscious level, sinners know they have sinned and rebelled against God, and so they transfer this on to others and eagerly give them punishment for it. By facing up fully to our sins, repenting and accepting as just whatever judgment God gives us, we are saved from this tendency. We will not be hypocrites.

22:19 It seems they perceived the land to the East of Jordan as “unclean” (see :25 too) – even though right up to the Euphrates had been promised to them. They were told that if they considered it unclean, then they could inherit on the West of Jordan. According to Israel's perception of the land, so it was defined for them. And so with us – as we define God's working, so, in some ways, will it be unto us (Lk. 19:22,23). Note how they ended up playing God: “rebel against Yahweh... rebel against us”, and went madly ahead quoting lots of ‘Biblical’ history which was irrelevant to the case in hand to try to justify their own anger.

and you, and between our generations after us, that we may perform the service of Yahweh before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices and with our peace offerings;’ that your children may not tell our children in time to come, ‘You have no portion in Yahweh’.²⁸ Therefore we said, ‘It shall be, when they tell us or our generations this in time to come, that we shall say, Behold the pattern of the altar of Yahweh, which our fathers made, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice; but it is a witness between us and you’.²⁹ Far be it from us that we should rebel against Yahweh, thus turning away this day from following Yahweh to build an altar for burnt offering, for meal offering, or for sacrifice, in competition with the altar of Yahweh our God that is before His tabernacle!³⁰ When Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation, even the heads of the thousands of Israel that were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them well.³¹ Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, Today we know that Yahweh is in the midst of us, because you have not committed this trespass against Yahweh. Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of Yahweh.³² Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from

the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, to the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again.³³ The thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and spoke no more of going up to destroy in warfare the land in which the children of Reuben and the children of Gad lived.³⁴ The children of Reuben and the children of Gad named the altar ‘A Witness Between Us that Yahweh is God’.

CHAPTER 23 Jun. 5

Joshua’s Parting Speech to Israel

It happened after many days, when Yahweh had given rest to Israel from their enemies all around and Joshua was old and well advanced in years,² that Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, their heads, their judges and for their officers and said to them, I am old and well advanced in years.³ You have seen all that Yahweh your God has done to all these nations because of you; for it is Yahweh your God who has fought for you.⁴ Behold, I have allotted to you these nations that remain to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even to the great sea toward the going down of the sun.⁵ Yahweh your God will thrust them out from before you, and drive them from out of your sight. You shall possess their land, as Yahweh your God spoke to you.⁶ There-

23:6 As God had charged him to be courageous and obedient to the book of the Law (1:7,8), so Joshua on his deathbed charged his people. In spiritual maturity, our con-

fore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that you not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left; ⁷ that you not mingle with these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow down yourselves to them; ⁸ but hold fast to Yahweh your God, as you have done to this day. ⁹ For Yahweh has driven great and strong nations out from before you. But as for you, no man has stood before you to this day. ¹⁰ One man of you shall chase a thousand; for it is Yahweh your God who fights for you, as He spoke to you. ¹¹ Take good heed therefore to yourselves, that you love Yahweh your God. ¹² But if you do at all mix with and hold fast to the remnant of these nations, even these who remain among you, and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you; ¹³ know for a certainty that Yahweh your God will no longer drive these na-

tions from out of your sight; but they shall be a snare and a trap to you, a scourge in your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which Yahweh your God has given you. ¹⁴ Behold, today I am going the way of all the earth. You know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which Yahweh your God spoke concerning you. All have happened to you, not one thing has failed of it. ¹⁵ It shall happen that as all the good things have come on you of which Yahweh your God spoke to you, so Yahweh will bring on you all the evil things until He has destroyed you from off this good land which Yahweh your God has given you, ¹⁶ if you disobey the covenant of Yahweh your God which He commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down yourselves to them. Then the anger of Yahweh will be kindled against you, and you will perish quickly from off the good land which He has given to you.

cern will be for the things of God's people rather than ourselves. We will encourage others from our own experience and example. See on 14:8.

23:7 This command not to make mention of other gods is alluded to in Eph. 5:3; the various ways of the flesh equate with the idols of Joshua's time.

23:9, 14 Was Joshua being too positive, seeing things as achieved that hadn't been (cp. Jud. 1:1)? He seems to have tried to perceive the promises, which were conditional upon obedience, as having been fulfilled fully when they hadn't been. Solomon made the same mistake. See on 24:14.

23:12, 13 To marry back into Egypt or Canaan, the non-Kingdom people, is to despise the covenant, to reverse the redemptive work which God has done for us, to not *love* God (:11). In the context of marriage out of the Faith, we read that God will destroy 'him that *hates* Him', and repay him to his face (Dt. 7:2-11). On the other hand, not marrying Gentiles was part of *loving* God. Wilful marriage out of the faith is a very wrong and sad thing, although God will seek to work through it as He does with all human failure.

CHAPTER 24 Jun. 5***A Summary of Israel's History***

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, their judges and their officers; and they presented themselves before God. ² Joshua said to all the people, Thus says Yahweh the God of Israel, ‘Your fathers lived of old time beyond the River, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor: and they served other gods. ³ I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. ⁴ I gave to Isaac Jacob and Esau. I gave to Esau Mount Seir, to possess it. Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. ⁵ I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt according to that which I did in its midst: and afterward I brought you out. ⁶ I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and you came to the sea. The Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and with horsemen to the

Red Sea. ⁷ When they cried out to Yahweh, He put darkness between you and the Egyptians and brought the sea on them, and covered them; and your eyes saw what I did in Egypt; and you lived in the wilderness many days. ⁸ I brought you into the land of the Amorites that lived beyond the Jordan; and they fought with you; and I gave them into your hand. You possessed their land; and I destroyed them from before you. ⁹ Then Balak the son of Zippor king of Moab arose and fought against Israel. He sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you; ¹⁰ but I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he blessed you still. So I delivered you out of his hand. ¹¹ You went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. The men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Girgashite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite; and I delivered them into your hand. ¹² I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; not with

24:2 Righteous Abraham was “gathered to his people” (or ancestors), on death (Gen. 25:8); and they were idolaters. Believers and unbelievers all go to the same place at death; it’s not true that the good go to Heaven and the bad to ‘hell’. The separation between sheep and goats happens at the day of judgment at Christ’s return.

24:10 Balaam, in his heart, didn’t want to bless Israel; he wanted to curse them so he could get his hands on the riches Balak promised him if he did so (Num. 22,23). Balaam knew if God had told him to bless Israel, there was no way of changing things. But God here says that He refused to hear Balaam’s prayer to curse Israel. It seems that Yahweh read Balaam’s latent, unexpressed desires as prayer to Him. When we are too weak or sick to pray, God still reads our situations as prayer, even if unexpressed in so many words.

24:12 Jacob’s last words claim that he had taken Shechem from the Amorites “with my sword and with my bow” (Gen. 48:22). These very words are alluded to here and in Ps. 44:1-6, where the Spirit says that the land was given to Israel *not* on account of their bow and sword. Even at the end of his life, Jacob’s old self-reliance was still not

your sword, nor with your bow. ¹³ I gave you a land whereon you had not laboured, and cities which you didn't build, and you live in them. You eat of vineyards and olive groves which you didn't plant.

Israel Urged to Choose between Yahweh and Idols

¹⁴ Now therefore fear Yahweh, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth. Put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve Yahweh. ¹⁵ If it seems evil to you to serve Yahweh, choose this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. As for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh. ¹⁶ The people answered, Far be it from us that we should forsake Yahweh to serve other gods; ¹⁷ for it is Yahweh our God who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did those great signs in our

sight, and preserved us in all the way in which we went, and among all the peoples through the midst of whom we passed. ¹⁸ Yahweh drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve Yahweh; for He is our God. ¹⁹ Joshua said to the people, You can't serve Yahweh; for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your disobedience nor your sins. ²⁰ If you forsake Yahweh and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you evil and consume you, after He has done you good. ²¹ The people said to Joshua, No, but we will serve Yahweh. ²² Joshua said to the people, You are witnesses against yourselves that you yourselves have chosen Yahweh, to serve Him. They said, We are witnesses. ²³ Now therefore put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to Yahweh, the God of Israel. ²⁴ The people said to Joshua, We will serve Yahweh our God, and we will listen to His voice. ²⁵ So Joshua

totally gone; his sense that through his own effort he could bring about the fulfilment of God's promises for Him. In this area, the weakness of Jacob remained. This gives us patience with our fellow believers who never seem to 'get it' in some spiritual areas; and comforts us in our own failures to achieve perfection in other aspects of spirituality.

24:14 Compare Joshua's earlier over-positive statements (see on 22:2; 23:9). Now in his spiritual maturity it seems he came to a final sense of realism about sin, obedience and Israel's failure.

24:15 *As for me... we will serve* – Joshua realized that Israel, whom he had seen as so obedient (see on 22:2; 23:9), actually weren't serving God at all.

24:16 *Far be it from us* – The kind of hypocrisy of 22:18 [see note there].

24:19, 23 Joshua at the end of his life came to a final realism as to the real nature of sin, and the ultimate demands which God makes upon human life in practice.

24:24 *We will listen to His voice* – The people don't respond to the command to throw away their idols by saying 'Yes OK, we shall do so'; instead they say that they will

made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. ²⁶ Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of Yahweh. ²⁷ Joshua said to all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it has heard all the words of Yahweh which He spoke to us. It shall be therefore a witness against you, lest you deny your God. ²⁸ So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance.

The Death of Joshua

²⁹ It happened that, after these things, Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Yahweh, died, being one hundred and ten years old. ³⁰ They

buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain of Gaash. ³¹ Israel served Yahweh all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work of Yahweh that He had worked for Israel. ³² They buried the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, in Shechem, in the parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money. They became the inheritance of the children of Joseph. ³³ Eleazar the son of Aaron died. They buried him in the hill of Phinehas his son, which was given him in the hill country of Ephraim.

hear God's word. Interest in the Bible, reading it and even enthusing about it, can be done whilst at the same time still serving idols.

24:30 *Buried him in the border of his inheritance* – As if they expected him to be resurrected and then enter into it at Messiah's coming.

JUDGES

CHAPTER 1 Jun. 6

Judah Takes Their Inheritance

After the death of Joshua the children of Israel asked Yahweh, Who should go up for us first against the Canaanites, to fight against them? ² Yahweh said, Judah shall go up. Behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. ³ Judah said to Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my designated portion so that we can fight against the Canaanites, and I likewise will go with you into yours. So Simeon went with him. ⁴ Judah went up and Yahweh delivered the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hand. They killed ten thousand men in Bezek. ⁵ They found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek and fought against him, and they killed the Canaanites and the Perizzites. ⁶ But Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him, caught him and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. ⁷ Adoni-Bezek said, Seventy kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, scavenged under

my table. As I have done, so God has requited me. They brought him to Jerusalem and he died there. ⁸ The men of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it, putting it to the sword, and set the city on fire. ⁹ Afterwards the men of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who lived in the hill country, in the South and in the lowland. ¹⁰ Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (the name of Hebron before was Kiriath Arba), and they struck Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmi. ¹¹ From there he went against the inhabitants of Debir. The name of Debir before was Kiriath Sepher. ¹² Caleb said, He who strikes Kiriath Sepher and takes it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter as wife. ¹³ Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. ¹⁴ When she came, she got him to ask her father for a field, and she alighted from off her donkey and Caleb said to her, What would you

1:1 After the leadership of Moses, there came that of Joshua. When he died, Israel expected that another such leader would be raised up. They expected a single man to be named. But instead, they were told that the whole tribe of Judah must go up. The reality would have sunk home – no more charismatic leaders, now the ordinary people must take responsibility. The same is true in our generation.

1:3 This was effectively a lack of faith that God would give Judah victory; but God still worked through this lower level of faith, and gave them victory (:4). God so thirsts for relationship with us that He is prepared to accept lower levels of faith than the ideal; this shouldn't elicit from us any sense of personal lack of commitment, but rather inspire us to greater patience with others whose faith isn't on the highest level it could be.

1:14 We see here a wonderful spiritual ambition; not merely accepting the portion given by God and wondering how ever even this was to be possessed. Rather does Achsah have the ambition to ask for even more territory to possess.

like? ¹⁵ She said to him, Give me a blessing, for that you have set me in the land of the South; give me also springs of water. Then Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs. ¹⁶ The descendants of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the men of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which is in the south of Arad, and they went and lived with those people. ¹⁷ Judah went with Simeon his brother and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed the town. The name of the town was Hormah. ¹⁸ Also Judah took Gaza with its border and Ashkelon with its border and Ekron with its border. ¹⁹ Yahweh was with Judah and drove out the inhabitants of the hill country, for he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron. ²⁰ They gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had promised, and he drove out from there the three sons of Anak. ²¹ The children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem, but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

Failure to Completely Destroy the Canaanites

²² The house of Joseph went up against Bethel, and Yahweh was with

them. ²³ The house of Joseph sent to spy out Bethel. The name of the city before was Luz. ²⁴ The spies saw a man come out of the city and they said to him, Please show us the entrance into the city and we will deal kindly with you. ²⁵ He showed them the entrance into the city and they put the city to the sword, but they let the man go and all his family. ²⁶ The man went into the land of the Hittites and built a city and called it Luz, which is its name to this day. ²⁷ Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam or Megiddo and their surrounding settlements; the Canaanites continued to dwell in that land. ²⁸ When Israel had grown strong they put the Canaanites to forced labour and did not utterly drive them out. ²⁹ Ephraim didn't drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, but the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them. ³⁰ Zebulun didn't drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or Nahalol, but the Canaanites lived among them and became subject to forced labour. ³¹ Asher didn't drive out the inhabitants of Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob, ³² but the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, for they did not drive them out. ³³ Naphtali didn't drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or Beth Anath, but he lived

1:21 The fact we fail to realize our potentials doesn't mean God quits working with us. Reflect how Judah was given the potential to possess the whole land, and yet they selfishly only focused upon their own inheritance (:2,3). And yet God still worked with them, giving them victory in what battles they did fight (:4). Yet even then, Judah didn't follow through with the help God was so eager to give them. They took Jerusalem, but later we read that the Jebusites were soon back living there (:8,21).

among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land who became subject to forced labour. ³⁴ The Amorites forced the children of Dan into the hill country, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley, ³⁵ but the Amorites continued to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon and in Shaalbim. Yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became subject to forced labour. ³⁶ The border of the Amorites was from the ascent of Akrabbim, from the rock and upward.

CHAPTER 2 Jun. 7

An Angel Warns the People

The angel of Yahweh came up from Gilgal to Bochim. He said, I brought you up out of Egypt and have brought you to the land which I swore to your fathers, and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you, ² and you must make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; break down their altars’. But you have not listened to My voice; why have you done this? ³ Therefore I tell you that I will not drive them

out from before you, but they shall be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you. ⁴ When the angel of Yahweh spoke these words to all the children of Israel, the people lifted up their voice and wept. ⁵ They called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to Yahweh.

The Death of Joshua

⁶ Now when Joshua had sent the people away, the children of Israel went every man to his inheritance to possess the land. ⁷ The people served Yahweh all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Yahweh that He had worked for Israel. ⁸ Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Yahweh, died, being one hundred and ten years old. ⁹ They buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnah Heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain of Gaash. ¹⁰ Also all that generation were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who didn’t know

1:34 God’s grace to His people is reflected in how He records their weaknesses, and always focuses upon their obedience no matter how small. Thus the allotted inheritance of the children of Dan is described as too small for them (Josh. 19:47), although actually “the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the hill country, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley”. When Dan fought against Leshem, this one act of obedience is so magnified in Josh. 19:47 to sound as if in their zeal to inherit their territory they actually found they had too little land and therefore attacked Leshem. But actually it was already part of their allotted inheritance.

2:1-3 The Angel here speaks as if he is God Himself speaking. Both men and Angels can carry God’s Name (Ex. 23:21) and thus can functionally be as God, whilst not being God Himself in person. This explains how God’s Son, Jesus, isn’t God Himself but carries God’s Name (Jn. 5:43) and acts as God whilst not being God Himself.

2:9 *They buried him in the border of his inheritance* – So that when Joshua is resurrected at Christ’s return, he can go directly into his inheritance.

Yahweh, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.

Israel Turns to Idols

¹¹ The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and served the Baals. ¹² They forsook Yahweh the God of their fathers who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods of the peoples who were around them and bowed themselves down to them; and they provoked Yahweh to anger. ¹³ They forsook Yahweh and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. ¹⁴ The anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel and He delivered them into the hands of raiders who plundered them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. ¹⁵ Wherever they went the hand of Yahweh was against them for evil, as Yahweh had spoken and as Yahweh had sworn to them; and they were very distressed. ¹⁶ Yahweh raised up judges who saved them from those who plundered them. ¹⁷ Yet they didn't listen to their judges; for they played the prostitute after other gods and bowed themselves down

to them. They turned aside quickly out of the way in which their fathers walked, who had obeyed the commandments of Yahweh. They didn't do so. ¹⁸ When Yahweh raised up judges for them, Yahweh was with the judge and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge, for it grieved Yahweh because of their distress because of the oppression. ¹⁹ But when the judge was dead they turned back and behaved more corruptly than their fathers in following other gods to serve them and to bow down to them. They didn't cease from their evil practices or from their stubborn ways. ²⁰ The anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel and He said, Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers and has not listened to Me, ²¹ I also will no longer drive out from before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died. ²² So by them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of Yahweh to walk therein as their fathers did, or not. ²³ So Yahweh left those nations without driving them out quickly and didn't deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

2:18 *It grieved Yahweh because of their distress* – God like the truly loving parent took no pleasure in punishing His children. The idea of eternal conscious torture of the wicked isn't taught in the Bible; God has no pleasure at all in punishing sinners (Ez. 18:23; 33:11).

2:22 This is rather similar to God telling Balaam to go with the messengers of Balak, but to be obedient to His word. God as it were pushes people down the downward spiral if this is the way they choose to go. Obedience would be so much harder with the Canaanite tribes still existing amongst Israel; but God let this be so. We pray “lead us not into temptation” (Mt. 6:13) because it is possible for God to lead us into such situations, even though the process of temptation is internal to ourselves (James 1:13-15).

2:23 God drove out the tribes from Canaan slowly, not immediately – or at least, He potentially enabled this to happen. But Israel were to destroy those tribes “quickly”

CHAPTER 3 Jun. 7***The Nations Left in the Land***

Now these are the nations which Yahweh left to test Israel, those who had not known all the wars of Canaan, ² so that the later generations of the children of Israel might learn battle experience, those who before knew nothing of it: ³ the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites, the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. ⁴ They were left to test Israel, to know whether they

would listen to the commandments of Yahweh which He commanded their fathers by Moses. ⁵ The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, ⁶ and they took their daughters to be their wives and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods. ⁷ The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and forgot Yahweh their God, and served the Baals and the Asherahs. ⁸ Therefore the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel and He sold them into the hand

(Dt. 9:3); yet they chose not to. Because they didn't want to be obedient to that, or at least to only be 'slowly' obedient, God went along with them and confirmed them in the level of response to Him which they chose.

3:1 *The nations which Yahweh left to test Israel* – The process of temptation is internal to the human mind (James 1:13-15; Mk. 7:15-23). But God can test us as He did Abraham (Gen. 22:1). It could be argued that God knows all about us anyway, and so the testing process is really to reveal us to ourselves. Another angle is that this language is relevant to the Angels, who were the practical manifestation of God at this time (see on 2:1-3), but their knowledge isn't total (Mt. 24:36); it could be that some of our tests are to reveal us to our guardian Angels. The cases of Divine 'testing' of people are usually in the context of Angelic involvement with people.

3:2 *Might learn battle experience* – Elsewhere the presence of those remaining nations is clearly linked to Israel's faithlessness, and their survival in the land was actually part of God's punishment of Israel. God therefore works through His judgments of sin in order to try to positively teach His ways to people.

3:6 In nearly every reference to marriage to Gentiles, there is the comment that this would surely lead to adopting the religious views of the Gentile partner; views which inevitably take a man away from his covenant with Yahweh. The connection between marriage out of the covenant and adopting idolatry is emphasized: Ex. 34:12-16; Dt. 7:2-9; 1 Kings 11:2,3; Mal. 2:11; 2 Cor. 6:14. Dt. 7:4 dogmatically predicts that a Gentile man will definitely turn away the heart of his Hebrew son-in-law. So certain is it that marriage to Gentiles leads to accepting their idols that Ezra 9:1,2 reasons that Israel hadn't separated from idols *because* they had married Gentiles. Time and again, those who marry out of the covenant claim that they feel strong enough to cope with it, that marriage is only a human thing, and that their spiritual relationship with God is between them and God, and unaffected by their worldly partner. Yet this is exactly the opposite of what God's word says. It's not true that you can marry into the world and be unaffected in your own spirituality.

3:8 The book of Judges describes a consistent sequence of Israel turning away from

of Cushan Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. The Israelites served Cushan Rishathaim for eight years.

Othniel Saves Israel

⁹ When the Israelites cried to Yahweh, Yahweh raised up a saviour for them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. ¹⁰ The Spirit of Yahweh came on him and he judged Israel. He went out to war and Yahweh delivered Cushan Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Cushan Rishathaim. ¹¹ The land had rest forty years. Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

Ehud Saves Israel

¹² The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh. Yahweh strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of Yahweh. ¹³ He gathered to him the Ammonites and Amalek and he went and struck Israel; and they took possession of the city of palm trees. ¹⁴ The Israelites served Eglon king of Moab

for eighteen years. ¹⁵ But when the Israelites cried to Yahweh, Yahweh raised up a saviour for them, Ehud the son of Gera the Benjamite, a left-handed man. The children of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab. ¹⁶ Ehud made himself a sword which had two edges, a cubit in length; and he wore it under his clothing on his right thigh. ¹⁷ He offered the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man. ¹⁸ When he had finished offering the tribute he sent away the people who carried the tribute, ¹⁹ but he himself turned back from the idols that were by Gilgal and said, I have a secret errand to you, king. The king said, Keep silence! All his attendants left him. ²⁰ Ehud came to him as he was sitting alone in the cool upper room. Ehud said, I have a message from God to you. He arose out of his seat. ²¹ Ehud put forth his left hand and took the sword from his right thigh and thrust it into his body. ²² The handle also went in after the blade and the fat closed on the

God, being punished by neighbouring Arab enemies, and then being sent a 'saviour' – a 'Jesus'. This points forward to how Israel will be brought to her knees by the future Arab oppression, resulting in the coming of the true Saviour (cp. Mt. 1:21). It is significant that almost all the judges were initially rejected by Israel, and had various features which meant that they did not have charismatic appeal to the people. Those facets make them all types of Christ. The pattern of 'serving' their Arab conquerors and then 'crying unto the Lord' (:8,9,14,15) recalls their servitude to the Egyptians, resulting in Israel 'crying to the Lord' (Ex. 2:23), and being answered by the Passover deliverance – which also represented Christ's coming. Their deliverances by the judges also typify this. "Saviours (judges) shall come up upon mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau (so that) the Kingdom shall be the Lord's" (Obadiah 21). "Saviours / judges" may be an intensive plural referring to the one true saviour / judge, Jesus.

3:21 There are seven weak things which are mentioned in Judges as being the tools of God's salvation: a left handed man; an ox goad (3:31); a woman (4:4); a nail (4:21); a piece of a millstone (9:53); a pitcher and trumpet (7:20), a jaw bone of an ass (15:16).

blade, for he didn't draw the sword out of his body, and it came out behind. ²³ Then Ehud went out into the porch and shut the doors of the upper room on him and locked them. ²⁴ Now when he had gone out, the servants came and saw that the doors of the upper room were locked, and they said, Surely he is covering his feet in the upper room. ²⁵ They waited until they were ashamed; but still he didn't open the doors of the upper room, therefore they took the key and opened them and behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth. ²⁶ Ehud escaped while they waited and passed beyond the idols and escaped to Seirah. ²⁷ When he had arrived, he blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went down with him from the hill country, and he went before them. ²⁸ He said to them Follow me, for Yahweh has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. They followed him and took the fords of the Jordan opposite the Moabites and didn't allow any man to pass over. ²⁹ They struck down about ten thousand Moabite men at that time, every strong man and every man of valour, and none escaped. ³⁰ So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. The land had rest for eighty years. ³¹ After him came Shamgar

the son of Anath, who killed six hundred Philistine men with an ox goad, and he also saved Israel.

CHAPTER 4 Jun. 8

Deborah Saves Israel

The children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, when Ehud was dead. ² Yahweh sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan who reigned in Hazor, the captain of whose army was Sisera who lived in Harosheth of the Gentiles. ³ The Israelites cried to Yahweh, for he had nine hundred iron chariots, and for twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel. ⁴ Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, judged Israel at that time. ⁵ She lived under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. ⁶ She sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh Naphtali and said to him, Hasn't Yahweh, the God of Israel, commanded 'Go to Mount Tabor and take with you ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and Zebulun? ⁷ I will draw to you, to the river Kishon, Sisera the captain of Jabin's army with his chariots and his multitude, and I will deliver him into your hand'. ⁸ Barak said to her, If you

God delights to work through the weak; indeed, only if we perceive our own weakness can God work through us.

4:7 *I will deliver him into your hand* – It was God's desire to effect deliverance for Israel at the hands of a man, Barak; but he failed to live up to that potential, indeed the male leadership collapsed in Israel (5:7), and so God worked through a woman.

4:8, 9 The incomplete faith of men like Baruch was counted as full faith by later inspiration (Heb. 11:32). God likewise counts our weak spirituality as total if we are in Christ, whose righteousness is counted to all those baptized into Him.

will go with me then I will go, but if you will not go with me I will not go. ⁹ She said, I will surely go with you; nevertheless the journey that you take will not be for your honour, for Yahweh will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰ Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together to Kedesh and he went with ten thousand men following him; and Deborah went with him. ¹¹ Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the Kenites, from the children of Hobab the brother-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent by the oak in Zaananim which is by Kedesh. ¹² They told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. ¹³ Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles to the river Kishon. ¹⁴ Deborah said to Barak, Go, for this is the day in which Yahweh has delivered Sisera into your hand. Hasn't Yahweh gone out before you? So Barak went down from Mount Tabor and ten thousand men after him. ¹⁵ Yahweh routed Sisera and all

his chariots and all his army with the sword before Barak, and Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot. ¹⁶ But Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth of the Gentiles, and all the army of Sisera fell by the sword; there was not a man left.

The Death of Sisera

¹⁷ However Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite, for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. ¹⁸ Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; don't be afraid. He came in to her into the tent and she covered him with a rug. ¹⁹ He said to her, Please give me a little water to drink for I am thirsty. She opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. ²⁰ He said to her, Stand at the door of the tent and when any man comes and asks you 'Is there any man here?' say 'No'. ²¹ Then Jael Heber's wife took a tent peg and a hammer in her hand and went quietly to him and hammered the peg into his temples, and it pierced through

4:14 Deborah here quotes the words of Dt. 9:3 concerning the Angel going before Israel to drive out the nations to Barak, to inspire him with courage in fighting them. She recognized that the work the Angels did when they went out many years ago to do all the groundwork necessary for Israel to destroy all the tribes of Canaan was done for all time. It was not too late to make use of that work by making a human endeavour in faith. So with us, the smaller objectives in our lives as well as our main goal of reaching the Kingdom have all been made possible through the work of Christ and the Angels in the past. Deborah's recognition of this is shown in her song, when she says that the Angels fought against Sisera (5:20).

4:21 We have to piece together all Scripture to get an accurate picture of events. 5:27 suggests he arose and then fell down, as if she didn't kill him with just one blow as he lay asleep but had some struggle with him.

into the ground, for he was in a deep sleep; so he died. ²² As Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him and said to him, Come and I will show you the man whom you seek. He came to her and there lay Sisera, dead; and the tent peg was in his temples. ²³ So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the Israelites. ²⁴ The hand of the Israelites prevailed more and more against Jabin the king of Canaan until they had destroyed him.

CHAPTER 5 Jun. 8

The Song of Deborah

Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang this song: ² Because the leaders took the lead in Israel, because the people offered themselves willingly, blessed be Yahweh! ³ Hear, you kings! Give ear, you princes! I, even I, will sing to Yahweh. I will sing praise to Yahweh the God of Israel. ⁴ Yahweh, when

You went forth out of Seir, when You marched out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, the heavens poured. Yes, the clouds poured down water. ⁵ The mountains melted at the presence of Yahweh, even Sinai at the presence of Yahweh the God of Israel. ⁶ In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were deserted, the travelers walked through byways. ⁷ The rulers ceased to rule in Israel. They ceased until I, Deborah, arose; until I arose, a mother in Israel. ⁸ They chose new gods, therefore war came to the gates. Was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel? ⁹ My heart is with the governors of Israel, who offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless Yahweh! ¹⁰ Speak, you who ride on white donkeys, you who sit on rich carpets and you who walk by the way. ¹¹ Far from the noise of archers, in the watering places,

5:2 The examples of leaders amongst God's people can influence the flock positively or negatively – when the leaders “offered themselves willingly”, so did the people (:9).

5:4 As so often in the Psalms, God's people see the deliverances He works in this life as repeating in essence the great deliverance at the Red Sea and His entering covenant with His people, which things represent our baptism and deliverance from this world (1 Cor. 10:1,2).

5:5: *The mountains melted* – To a distant onlooker, the water flowing down the mountains gave the impression that they themselves were melting; not, of course, that they actually were. The Bible sometimes speaks of things as they appear to human eyes; hence the use of the language of ‘demon possession’ in the New Testament. Demons don't exist, but the miracles of healing mental illness are described from the viewpoint of a human observer. This principle must be remembered when reading the account of creation.

5:6 This was the first time in which the curses of Lev. 26 and Deut. 28 began to be realized upon Israel. “Your highways shall be desolate” (Lev. 26:22) is alluded to here.

5:11 *His rule in Israel* – Israel at this time were the Kingdom of God on earth, a Kingdom which was overthrown when they repeatedly refused His Kingship over them (Ez. 21:25-27) and which will be re-established at Christ's return (Acts 1:6).

there they will recite the righteous acts of Yahweh, the righteous acts of His rule in Israel. Then the people of Yahweh went down to the gates. ¹² ‘Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, sing a song! Arise, Barak, and lead away your captives, you son of Abinoam’. ¹³ Then a remnant of the nobles and the people came down. Yahweh came down to me against the mighty. ¹⁴ Those whose root is in Amalek came out of Ephraim after you, Benjamin, among your peoples. Governors came down out of Machir. Those who handle the writer’s quill came out of Zebulun. ¹⁵ The princes of Issachar were with Deborah. As was Issachar, so was Barak. They rushed into the valley at his feet. By the watercourses of Reuben there were great divisions of heart. ¹⁶ Why did you sit among the sheepfolds, to hear the whistling for the flocks?

At the watercourses of Reuben there was much searching of heart. ¹⁷ Gilead remained beyond the Jordan. Why did Dan remain in ships? Asher remained still at the haven of the sea, and lived by his creeks. ¹⁸ Zebulun was a people that jeopardized their lives to the death; Naphtali also, on the high places of the field. ¹⁹ The kings came and fought, then the kings of Canaan fought at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo. They took no plunder of silver. ²⁰ From Heaven the stars fought. From their courses they fought against Sisera. ²¹ The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. My soul, march on with strength. ²² Then the horse hoofs stamped because of the prancing, the prancing of their strong ones. ²³ ‘Curse Meroz’, said the angel of Yahweh. ‘Curse bitterly its inhabitants, because they didn’t

5:13 The coming down of Yahweh is paralleled with the coming down of His willing people. One theme of this victory is that God’s people on earth acted in tandem with the Angelic movements in Heaven above.

5:14 Barak’s victorious warriors were civil servants and writers, not military men; in the same way as God used goldsmiths and traders to do the work of builders and engineers to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls at the time of Ezra. God often uses those not suited to a particular job to do it, because the victory must always be of Him and not of human ability.

5:19, 20 The reference is to the Angels fighting on Israel’s behalf. If we walk in step with the Angels, success is assured. Here, Israel’s fighting is paralleled with the Heavens and stars [=Angels, Rev. 1:20] fighting for them. The Lord of Hosts of Angels was working in tandem with the hosts of Israel. And it’s the same for the new Israel. Heb. 12:22 speaks of how we, the hosts of the church, are paralleled with hosts of Angels.

5:20 The Hebrew for ‘courses’ is almost identical with that for ‘ladder’ in the account of Jacob’s vision of a ladder of Angels; it strictly means a ‘staircase’. See on 4:14; 5:19,20.

5:23 *To help Yahweh* – The fact that God so loves us is itself a limitation to Him. Because in any relationship, one person usually loves more than the other. And the one who loves the most – which is unquestionably God – has the least power. This is why He, the more powerful in physical terms, speaks with such language of limitation. In a

come to help Yahweh, to help Yahweh against the mighty'.²⁴ Jael shall be blessed above women, the wife of Heber the Kenite; blessed shall she be above women in the tent.²⁵ He asked for water and she gave him milk. She brought him butter in a lordly dish.²⁶ She put her hand to the tent peg and her right hand to the workmen's hammer. With the hammer she struck Sisera. She struck through his head. Yes, she pierced and struck through his temples.²⁷ At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay. At her feet he bowed, he fell. Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.²⁸ Through the window she looked out and cried; Sisera's mother looked through the lattice. 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why do the wheels of his chariots delay?'²⁹ Her wise ladies answered her, yes she answered herself:³⁰ 'Have they not found, have they not divided the spoil? A girl, two girls for every man; to Sisera a spoil of dyed garments, a spoil of dyed garments embroidered, of dyed garments embroidered on both sides, on the necks of the spoil?'³¹ So let all Your enemies perish, Yahweh, but let those who love Him be as the

sun when it rises forth in its strength. Then the land had rest forty years.

CHAPTER 6 Jun. 9

Israel Oppressed by Midian

The children of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and Yahweh delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years.² The hand of Midian prevailed against Israel, and because of Midian the Israelites made themselves dens in the mountains, the caves and the strongholds.³ So when Israel had sown their seed, the Midianites, the Amalekites and the people of the east came up against them⁴ and they encamped against them, and destroyed the crops as far as Gaza, and left no sustenance in Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey.⁵ For they came with their livestock and their tents; they came up as locusts for multitude; both they and their camels were without number, and they came into the land to destroy it.⁶ Israel was brought very low because of Midian and the children of Israel cried to Yahweh.⁷ When the Israelites cried to Yahweh because of Midian⁸ Yahweh sent a prophet to them, and

sense God requires not help from man; and yet in another sense He has delegated His work to us, and limits His achievements according to what we are willing to do.

5:24 *Blessed above women* – Lk. 1:28,42 alludes here, as if Mary was already as Jael who had killed Sisera, an incident typical of Christ's destruction of sin with the hammer of God's word. Mary is tied up with her son's victory – for He was part of her.

6:2 The Israelites who fled to the dens and caves at this time are described as heroes of faith because of what they did (Heb. 11:38). And yet their domination by the Philistines was a result of their idolatry. They were idolatrous, and yet some had faith; and it was this faith which was perceived by God. God is so eager to perceive spirituality and faith amongst His people, despite their weakness in other areas; we should have the same positive attitude to each other.

he said to them, Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, ‘I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of slavery, ⁹ and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, drove them out from before you, and gave you their land. ¹⁰ I said to you, I am Yahweh your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But you have not listened to My voice’.

Gideon

¹¹ The angel of Yahweh came and sat under the oak which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite, and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. ¹² The angel of Yahweh appeared to him and said, Yahweh is with you, you mighty man of valour! ¹³ Gideon said to him Oh, my lord, if Yahweh is with us why then has all this hap-

6:12 *You mighty man of valour* – Gideon’s constant need for Divine reassurance indicates he wasn’t so brave; but God addressed him according to his spiritual potential. He does the same with us, hence the challenges He sometimes gives us which appear far beyond what we feel capable of.

6:12, 13 We need to realize that God deals with us as individuals. No matter how functional and holy, or dysfunctional and evil, is our church, we are still treated by the Father as His individual children. So many have struggled with this, tending to see themselves rather as inevitably part of a community, faceless cogs in a machine. And this is actually quite attractive to humanity – hence the popularity of Roman Catholicism. God told Gideon: “Yahweh is with you” [you singular], and yet Gideon responds: “Oh, my Lord, if Yahweh is with *us*...” (:13). Gideon had to be taught that God saw him as a separate, unique individual, and didn’t deal with him automatically merely as part of a community as a whole. But it was a slow process. When Gideon saw in a dream a man saying that God had delivered Midian into *his* [singular] hand, Gideon then tells Israel that God had delivered Midian into *their* hands (7:14,15). He still found it so hard to believe that God treated *him* as so important to Him. It could be that Gideon intentionally misunderstood the offer of personal strengthening by arguing back that if Yahweh is really with *us*, then why are they suffering so much (6:13). He flinched at the personal call of his Angel to action – just as we can, seeking instead to take refuge behind the community. Yet God Himself turns to Gideon and bids him “go in the strength of this One” – the Hebrew grammar referring to the Angel. And this is the same call to us – to go in the strength of the Angel which goes before us, and seek to replicate Him, Heaven’s plan for us, on this earth. And God backed up this call to Gideon to follow the Angel by saying he should go out in faith, because “I will be with you” (:16) – a direct quotation from the Angelic manifestation to Moses in Ex. 3:12. It’s an interesting exercise to follow the parallels between the Angelic commander of Yahweh’s armies, and Joshua as the human commander of them on earth. And one doesn’t have to be a military leader in iron-age Israel to feel that same call to follow the Angel.

6:13 Gideon knew that God forsaking Israel was a punishment for their sin (as in 2 Kings 21:14; Is. 2:6; Jer. 23:33). God would forsake Israel only if they forsook Him (Dt. 31:16,17; 2 Chron. 15:2). This opens up our understanding of Christ’s cry from the cross “Why have You forsaken me?” (Mt. 27:46). It seems He was so identified

pened to us? Where are all His wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying ‘Didn’t Yahweh bring us up from Egypt?’ But now Yahweh has forsaken us and delivered us into the hand of Midian. ¹⁴ Yahweh looked at him and said, Go in the strength of this One and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Haven’t I sent you? ¹⁵ He said to him, O Lord, how can I save Israel? My family is the poorest in Manasseh and I am the least in my father’s house. ¹⁶ Yahweh said to him Surely I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man. ¹⁷ He said to Him, If now I have found grace in Your eyes, then show me a sign that it is really You Who talk with me. ¹⁸ Please don’t go away until I come to you and bring out my present and lay it before you. He said, I will wait until you come back. ¹⁹ Gideon went in and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes of an ephah of meal. He put the meat in a basket and he put the broth in a pot and brought it out to him under the oak and presented it. ²⁰ The angel of God said to him, Take the meat and the unleavened cakes and lay them on this rock and pour out the broth. He did so. ²¹ Then the angel of Yahweh stretched out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes, and fire went up out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes, and the angel of Yahweh departed out of his sight. ²² Gideon

saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, and Gideon said, Alas, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! ²³ Yahweh said to him, Peace! Don’t be afraid. You will not die. ²⁴ Then Gideon built an altar there to Yahweh and called it Yahweh is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Gideon Destroys the Altar of Baal

²⁵ The same night Yahweh said to him, Take your father’s bull, the second bull seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that your father has and cut down the Asherah that is by it, ²⁶ build an altar to Yahweh your God on the top of this stronghold in the proper way, and take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you cut down. ²⁷ Then Gideon took ten of his servants and did as Yahweh had spoken to him, and because he feared his father’s household and the men of the city, he could not do it by day, so he did it by night. ²⁸ When the men of the city arose early in the morning, the altar of Baal was broken down and the Asherah was cut down that was by it and the second bull had been offered on the altar that was built. ²⁹ They said one to another, Who has done this? When they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash has done this. ³⁰ Then the men of the city said to Joash, Bring out your son that he may die, because he has broken

with us that He genuinely felt He was bearing the punishment for sin as a sinner; thus although He never sinned, He genuinely felt as a sinner, so that not even our sin means that Christ can’t empathize with us.

down the altar of Baal and because he has cut down the Asherah that was by it. ³¹ Joash said to all who stood against him, Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him? He who will contend for him, let him be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has broken down his altar. ³² Therefore on that day he named him Jerub-Baal, saying, Let Baal contend against him because he has broken down his altar.

The Midianites and Amalekites Invade

³³ Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the east assembled themselves together and they crossed over and encamped in the valley of Jezreel. ³⁴ But the Spirit of Yahweh came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered together after him. ³⁵ He sent messengers throughout all Manasseh and they also were gathered together after him, and he sent messengers to Asher, to Zebulun and to Naphtali and they came up to meet them. ³⁶ Gideon said to God, If You will save Israel by my hand, as You have spoken, ³⁷ I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only and it is dry

on all the ground, then I will know that You will save Israel by my hand as You have said. ³⁸ That is what happened, for he got up early the next day and squeezed the fleece together and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. ³⁹ Gideon said to God, Don't let Your anger be kindled against me and I will speak but this once. Please let me make a trial just this once more with the fleece. Let it now be dry only on the fleece and on all the ground let there be dew. ⁴⁰ God did so that night, for it was dry on the fleece only and there was dew on all the ground.

CHAPTER 7 Jun. 10

Gideon Defeats the Midianites

Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people who were with him rose up early and encamped beside the spring of Harod, and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. ² Yahweh said to Gideon, The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast against Me saying, 'My own hand has saved me'. ³ Now therefore announce to the people, 'Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead'.

6:31 Joash told the Baal worshippers to let Baal plead for himself, rather than them pleading for him. He was saying that they were assuming that they had to 'play God' for Baal; they had to manifest the god they thought existed. Joash says that if Baal really exists, he himself will act for himself, openly. And this of course is where the One True God excels; He does act for Himself, and doesn't rely *solely* upon manifesting Himself through men in order to achieve anything. He doesn't need us to as it were apologize for Him through 'apologetics'; He Himself is witness unto Himself regardless of us.

Twenty-two thousand of the people returned and ten thousand remained. ⁴Yahweh said to Gideon, The people are still too many. Bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there. Those of whom I tell you, ‘This one shall go with you’ shall go, and those of whom I tell you, ‘This one shall not go with you’ shall remain. ⁵So he brought down the people to the water and Yahweh said to Gideon, Each one who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, set him by himself; likewise each one who bows down on his knees to drink. ⁶The number of those who lapped, putting their hands to their mouth, was three hundred men, but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink. ⁷Yahweh said to Gideon, By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, each to his own place. ⁸So the three hundred men took food and their trumpets, and he sent all the rest of them to

their tents; and the camp of Midian was beneath him in the valley. ⁹The same night Yahweh said to him, Arise, go down into the camp; for I have delivered it into your hand. ¹⁰But if you are afraid to go down, go with Purah your servant down to the camp ¹¹and you will hear what they say. After that your hands will be strengthened to go down into the camp. Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outskirts of the armed men who were in the camp. ¹²The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like locusts for multitude, and their camels were without number, as the sand which is on the seashore for multitude. ¹³When Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his fellow. He said, I had a dream: a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came to the tent and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat. ¹⁴His fellow answered, This is none

7:4 God said that He would try / judge the people with Gideon at the waters – but they effectively judged themselves by deciding with their own freewill whether to kneel down [as before an idol?], or lap. Idols were worshipped by kneeling before them, and perhaps those who lapped rather than knelt were the minority with sensitive consciences to Yahweh, not wanting to even ‘go there’ by even vaguely appearing to have anything in common with idolatry.

7:10 Gideon’s constant need for reassurance is found throughout the record. Yet God knew that potentially, Gideon was a brave, faithful servant of His (6:12); and yet He made concessions to Gideon’s weakness and need for human company, whilst at the same time strongly teaching him that God saves by the few and the weak (:7). He works in the same way with us, teaching and stretching us whilst sensitive to our weaknesses and fears.

7:12 Saul tried to copy Gideon in his own fighting with his enemies (1 Sam. 11:11 = Jud. 7:16; 1 Sam. 13:5 = Jud. 7:12; 1 Sam. 14:24,28,31 = Jud. 8:4,5). We too should be inspired by Gideon’s victory in our battles. See on 13:15.

7:14, 15 – see on 6:12,13.

other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel. God has delivered Midian into his hand with all the army. ¹⁵ When Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshipped, and he returned into the camp of Israel. He said, Arise, for Yahweh has delivered the army of Midian into your hand! ¹⁶ He divided the three hundred men into three companies and he gave each of them a trumpet and an empty pitcher, with a torch inside the pitcher. ¹⁷ He said to them, Watch me, and do as I do when I come to the outermost part of the camp. ¹⁸ When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow your trumpets too, on every side of the camp, and shout ‘For Yahweh and for Gideon!’ ¹⁹ So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch. They blew the trumpets and broke in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands. ²⁰ The three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers and held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands with which to blow, and they shouted, The sword of Yahweh and of Gideon! ²¹ They each stood in

this place around the camp and all the army ran, and they shouted and put them to flight. ²² They blew the three hundred trumpets, and Yahweh set every man’s sword against his fellow and against all the army, and the army fled as far as Beth Shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah by Tabbath. ²³ The men of Israel were gathered together out of Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh, and they pursued Midian. ²⁴ Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim saying, Come down against Midian and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them as far as Beth Barah. So all the men of Ephraim were gathered together and took the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah. ²⁵ They took the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb and they killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian, and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon beyond the Jordan.

CHAPTER 8 Jun. 10

Zeba and Zalmunna

The men of Ephraim said to him, Why have you treated us this way, that you didn’t call us when you went to fight with Midian? They re-

7:19 *They had but newly set the watch* – This was humanly speaking the worst time to attack, when the guards were fresh and alert. Likewise going in to battle cumbered with pitchers and trumpets rather than weaponry was a sign of trusting in God for victory rather than human strength. God’s battle plans often specifically require us to attain victory in a way which is foolish and weak in human terms.

7:22 God so often destroyed mighty armies by setting them against each other. Division is not only a human work, but is used by God to destroy communities which displease Him.

buked him sharply. ² He said to them, What have I now done in comparison with you? Isn't the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? ³ God has delivered into your hand the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb! What was I able to do in comparison with you? Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that. ⁴ Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed over with the three hundred men, exhausted yet pursuing. ⁵ He said to the men of Succoth, Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian. ⁶ The princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your possession, that we should give bread to your army? ⁷ Gideon said Because of that, when Yahweh has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers. ⁸ He went up from there to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way, and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. ⁹ He said to the men of Penuel, When I come again in peace I will break down this tower. ¹⁰ Now Zebah and Zalmunna

were in Karkor and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand men, all who were left of all the army of the people of the east; one hundred and twenty thousand fighting men having been killed. ¹¹ Gideon went up by the way of those who lived in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the army, which was unsuspecting. ¹² Zebah and Zalmunna fled and he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed all the army. ¹³ Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle from the ascent of Heres. ¹⁴ He caught a young man of Succoth and asked of him, and he described for him the princes of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men. ¹⁵ He came to the men of Succoth and said, See Zebah and Zalmunna, concerning whom you taunted me saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your possession, that we should give bread to your men who are weary?' ¹⁶ He took the elders of the city and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth a lesson. ¹⁷ He broke down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city. ¹⁸ Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, What kind of men were

8:3 *Then their anger was abated* – The Proverbs are full of allusion to Israel's earlier history; Prov. 15:1 "a soft answer turns away wrath" clearly alludes here. Gideon could've responded that they could've come to help him in his hour of need but chose not to, and now wanted to share the glory of the victory. But he speaks humbly to them. We don't always have to state truth as it is; rather there are times when we must follow the things which make for peace with people, however wrong they may be (Rom. 14:19). See on 12:2.

8:6 This was the exact spirit of Israel's suspicious cousins when they were on their way from Egypt to Canaan (Num. 20:17,18). They should have learnt the lesson from Divine history.

they whom you killed at Tabor? They answered, They were like you. Each one resembled the children of a king. ¹⁹He said, They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As Yahweh lives, if you had saved them alive, I would not kill you. ²⁰He said to Jether his firstborn, Get up and kill them! But the youth didn't draw his sword for he was afraid, because he was still a youth. ²¹Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Get up and do it yourself, for as the man is, so is his strength. Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna and took the crescents that were on their camels' necks.

Gideon Makes an Ephod

²²Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, Rule over us, both you and your son and your son's son also, for you have saved us out of the hand of Midian. ²³Gideon said to them,

I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. Yahweh shall rule over you. ²⁴Gideon said to them, I would make a request of you, that every man would give me the earrings of his spoil. They had golden earrings because they were Ishmaelites. ²⁵They answered, We will willingly give them. They spread a garment and each man threw the earrings of his spoil into it. ²⁶The weight of the golden earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold, besides the crescents, the pendants and the purple clothing that was on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were about their camels' necks. ²⁷Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah, and all Israel prostituted themselves by worshipping it there; and it became a snare to Gideon and to his house.

8:23 Here we again see how Israel were God's Kingdom on earth; this Kingdom was overturned when the last king of Judah was removed (Ez. 21:25-27) and will be re-established on earth at Christ's return (Acts 1:6).

8:24-27 When Gideon received the golden earrings of the Ishmaelites, his mind should have flown back to how golden earrings were turned into the golden calf (Ex. 32:2). He was potentially given the strength to resist the temptation to turn them into an idol. But he must have blanked out that Biblical precedent in his heart; he ignored his spiritual potential, just as we are tempted to do so often.

8:27 Twice in 1 Timothy, Paul speaks about a snare; the snare of the devil (1 Tim. 3:7), and the snare of wanting wealth (6:9). The desire for wealth in whatever form is the very epitome of the devil, our internal sinful tendencies which we must struggle against. The idea of a snare is that it results in a sudden and *unexpected* destruction. The implication is that those who are materialistic don't realize that in fact this is their besetting sin, and therefore their rejection in the end because of it will be so tragically unexpected. It's rather like pride; if you're proud and you don't know it, then you really are proud. And if we're materialistic and don't know it, we likewise really have a problem. The idea of riches being a snare connects with frequent references to idols as Israel's perpetual snare (Ex. 23:33; Dt. 7:16; Jud. 2:3; 8:27; Ps. 106:36; Hos. 5:1). Paul's point is that the desire for wealth in our generation is the equivalent of idolatry in the Old Testament.

The Death of Gideon

²⁸ So Midian was subdued before the Israelites, and they exalted their heads no more. The land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon. ²⁹ Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and lived in his own house. ³⁰ Gideon had seventy sons conceived from his body, for he had many wives. ³¹ His concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son and he named him Abimelech. ³² Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. ³³ As soon as Gideon was dead, the people of Israel turned again and played the prostitute after the Baals, and made Baal Berith their god. ³⁴ The Israelites didn't remember Yahweh their God Who had delivered them out of the hand of all their enemies on every side, ³⁵ neither did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, that is, Gideon, according to all the kindness which he had showed to Israel.

CHAPTER 9 Jun. 11

Abimelech Is Made King

Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to his mother's brothers, and spoke with them and

with all the family of the house of his mother's father saying, ² Please speak to all the men of Shechem and say, 'Is it better for you that all the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy persons, should rule over you, or that one rule over you?' Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh. ³ His mother's brothers told all the men of Shechem all these words, and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, He is our brother. ⁴ They gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Baal Berith, with which Abimelech hired reckless adventurers who followed him. ⁵ He went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his brothers the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy persons, on one stone; but Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal escaped, for he hid himself. ⁶ All the men of Shechem assembled themselves together, and all the house of Millo, and went and made Abimelech king by the oak of the pillar that was in Shechem.

Jotham's Parable

⁷ When they told Jotham he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim and shouted to them, Listen to me, you men of Shechem, so that God will listen to you. ⁸ The trees went

8:30 Although Heb. 11:32 speaks of Gideon as one of the faithful who will be resurrected to live eternally in God's Kingdom on earth at Christ's return, it seems that he rested on the laurels of earlier spiritual victories, and in later life became complacent. Although this is a failure we should avoid, we are comforted by God's grace in still accepting Gideon.

9:7 *Listen to me... so that God will listen to you* – Jotham was speaking prophetic words from God. Insofar as we hear God's word, so He will hear our words in prayer; if His words abide in us, we shall know His will, and our will becomes His will, and thereby our prayers according to His will are heard (Jn. 15:7). See on 13:9.

out one day to anoint a king to be over them; they said to the olive tree, ‘Reign over us’.⁹ But the olive tree said to them ‘Should I give up my oil with which they honour God and man to go and hold sway over the trees?’¹⁰ The trees said to the fig tree, ‘Come and reign over us’.¹¹ But the fig tree said to them, ‘Should I give up my good, sweet fruit to go to hold sway over the trees?’¹² The trees said to the vine ‘Come and reign over us’.¹³ The vine said to them, ‘Should I give up my new wine, which cheers God and man, to go to hold sway over the trees?’¹⁴ Then all the trees said to the thorn bush, ‘Come and reign over us’.¹⁵ The thorn bush said to the trees, ‘If in truth you anoint me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade; if not, let fire come out of the thorn bush and devour the cedars of Lebanon’.¹⁶ Now therefore, consider whether you have done what is true and right in making Abimelech king, and whether you have done justly to Jerubbaal and his house as he deserves.¹⁷ (For my father fought for

you and risked his life and delivered you out of the hand of Midian,¹⁸ yet you have risen up against my father’s house this day and have slain his sons, seventy persons, on one stone, and have made Abimelech the son of his female servant king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brothe.)¹⁹ If you have done what is true and right with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech and let him also rejoice in you.²⁰ But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and the house of Millo, and let fire come out from the men of Shechem and from the house of Millo and devour Abimelech.²¹ Jotham ran away and fled and went to Beer and lived there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

Gaal Leads a Rebellion against Abimelech

²² Abimelech was prince over Israel for three years.²³ God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with

9:9, 10 People of true integrity will get on with what they are obviously called to do by God, rather than seeking leadership for the sake of it, swaying around in a light and meaningless way above others.

9:18 *You... have slain his sons* – Abimelech personally had slain Gideon’s sons, but the people of Shechem had enabled it by their lack of resistance. The Bible doesn’t teach ‘guilt by association’, but there is also a sense in which communities are counted as guilty for allowing evil to be perpetrated by individuals.

9:23 *God sent an evil spirit* – To say that demons were cast out of someone is to say that they were cured of a mental illness, or an illness which was not understood at the time. People living in the first century tended to blame everything which they couldn’t understand on imaginary beings called ‘demons’. Mental illness being hard to understand with their level of medical knowledge, the people spoke of those afflicted as ‘demon possessed’. In Old Testament times, an evil or unclean spirit referred to a troubled mental state (as here and 1 Sam. 16:14; 18:10), in that the ‘spirit’ often refers

Abimelech, ²⁴ so that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be avenged, and that their blood might be laid on Abimelech their brother who killed them, and on the men of Shechem who helped him to kill his brothers. ²⁵ The men of Shechem set an ambush for him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed all who came along that way. This was reported to Abimelech. ²⁶ Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers and went over to Shechem, and the men of Shechem put their trust in him. ²⁷ They went out into the field and harvested their vineyards, trod the grapes and held a festival, and went into the house of their god, ate and drank and cursed Abimelech. ²⁸ Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who is Abimelech and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Isn't he the son of Jerubbaal and Zebul his

officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem, but why should we serve Abimelech? ²⁹ If only this people were under my hand! Then I would remove Abimelech. He said to Abimelech, Increase your army and come out! ³⁰ When Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled. ³¹ He sent messengers to Abimelech secretly saying, Look, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem and they are inciting the city against you. ³² Now therefore, go up by night, you and the people who are with you, and lie in wait in the field. ³³ In the morning, as soon as the sun is up, you can rise early and rush on the city, and when he and the people who are with him come out against you, then may you do to them as you see fit. ³⁴ Abimelech and all the people who were with him got

to the mind or disposition. Note that in every Old Testament reference to evil spirits, they were sent *by God*, not a personal, sinful 'Satan' being.

God is capable of sending a spirit of disunity between people, as He did to Egypt (Is. 19:1,2,14). God created the division between Israel and Judah as a punishment for their apostasy. Whilst division between people is a work of the flesh, it's also true that God confirms people in the divisions they wish to have, and He does this as a punishment. There are times when people who have an existing disagreement encounter situations which involve genuine misunderstanding and unfortunate coincidence of circumstances which confirm their division yet further; and this 'extra' factor in their relationship breakdown is sent by God. In this sense stubborn hearts are also sent from God (Ps. 81:13); God can work positively and negatively directly upon the human heart. Likewise God confirms a desire for unity amongst His people.

9:27 This was some kind of dedication of the harvest to Baal; yet God had commanded that the firstfruits of the harvest should be given to Him, and His people should rejoice before *Him* (Lev. 19:23-25). We see here how Israel appropriated pagan rituals and mixed them with Yahweh worship, in the same way as an apostate church took the pagan Winter solstice festival of December 25 and applied it to Jesus. We too are ever tempted to worship our own flesh in the guise of Yahweh worship – e.g. we may gossip, kidding ourselves that this is in the defence of God's Truth (as if it needs any defence by us); hoard huge wealth under the excuse we may one day use it for God.

up by night and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies. ³⁵ Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city, and Abimelech and the people who were with him got up from the ambush. ³⁶ When Gaal saw the people he said to Zebul, Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains. Zebul said to him, You are seeing the shadows of the mountains as if they were men. ³⁷ Gaal spoke again and said, Look, people are coming down by the middle of the land, and one company is coming by the way of the oak of Meonenim. ³⁸ Then Zebul said to him, Now where is your boast when you said ‘Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?’ Isn’t this the people that you have despised? Go out now and fight with them. ³⁹ Gaal went out before the men of Shechem and fought with Abimelech. ⁴⁰ Abimelech chased him and he fled from him, and many fell wounded, up to the entrance of the gate. ⁴¹ Abimelech lived at Arumah, and Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers, so that they should not dwell in Shechem. ⁴² Next day the people went out into the field and told Abimelech. ⁴³ He took the people and divided them into three companies and laid wait in the field, and when he saw the people coming out of the city, he rose up against them and struck them. ⁴⁴ Abimelech and the companies that were with him rushed forward and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city, and the two companies rushed on all who were in the field and struck them.

⁴⁵ Abimelech fought against the city all that day, and he took the city and killed the people who were in it, and he beat down the city and sowed it with salt.

The Death of Abimelech

⁴⁶ When all the men of the tower of Shechem heard of it, they entered the stronghold of the house of Elberith. ⁴⁷ It was told Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. ⁴⁸ Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who were with him, and Abimelech took an axe in his hand and cut down a branch from the trees, took it up and laid it on his shoulder, and he said to the people who were with him, What you have seen me do, hurry and do the same! ⁴⁹ All the people likewise each cut down his branch and followed Abimelech, and they put them at the base of the stronghold and set the stronghold on fire on them, so that all the people of the tower of Shechem died, about one thousand men and women. ⁵⁰ Then Abimelech went to Thebez and encamped against Thebez and took it. ⁵¹ But there was a strong tower within the city, and all the men and women of the city fled to it and shut themselves in, and went up to the roof of the tower. ⁵² Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it and drew near to the door of the tower to burn it with fire. ⁵³ A woman cast an upper millstone on Abimelech’s head and broke his skull. ⁵⁴ Then he called hastily to the young man who carried his armour and said to him,

Draw your sword and kill me, so that men will not say of me, ‘A woman killed him’. His young man thrust him through and he died.⁵⁵ When the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead they departed each man to his place.⁵⁶ Thus God rewarded the wickedness of Abimelech which he did to his father, in killing his seventy brothers,⁵⁷ and all the wickedness of the men of Shechem God repaid on their heads, and on them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

CHAPTER 10 Jun. 12

Tola and Jair

After Abimelech, Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar arose to save Israel, and he lived in Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim.² He judged Israel twenty-three years and died, and was buried in Shamir.³ After him arose Jair the Gileadite, and he judged Israel twenty-two years.⁴ He had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkey colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havvoth Jair to this day, which are in the land of Gilead.⁵ Jair died and was buried in Kamon.

Israel Returns to Idolatry

⁶ The people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and

served the Baals and Ashtaroath, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites and the gods of the Philistines; they forsook Yahweh and didn’t serve Him.⁷ The anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel and He sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the people of Ammon.⁸ They troubled and oppressed the Israelites that year. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites that were beyond the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead.⁹ The Ammonites passed over the Jordan to fight also against Judah and Benjamin and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was very distressed.¹⁰ The Israelites cried to Yahweh saying, We have sinned against You because we have forsaken our God and have served the Baals.¹¹ Yahweh said to the Israelites, Didn’t I save you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the Ammonites, and from the Philistines?¹² The Sidonians also and the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you, and you cried to Me, and I saved you out of their hand.¹³ Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods; therefore I will save you no more.¹⁴ Go and cry to the gods which you have cho-

9:54 Abimelech therefore knew that it was a woman who had thrown the millstone; presumably he had looked up at her and seen her and assumed that a woman could never kill him as a man. His despising of the person of another and assumption of intrinsic superiority because of his gender led him to his death.

9:56 Abimelech appeared to have had a very blessed and successful life; but the lesson of the story is that finally, sin catches up with us and will have its judgment, if not in this life, then at the day of judgment when Christ returns.

10:13 *I will save you no more* – But they begged Him, and He did. Likewise in Hosea,

sen. Let them save you in the time of your distress! ¹⁵ The Israelites said to Yahweh, We have sinned; do to us whatever seems good to You, only deliver us, please, this day. ¹⁶ They put away the foreign gods from among them and served Yahweh; and His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. ¹⁷ Then the Ammonites were gathered together and encamped in Gilead. The Israelites assembled themselves and encamped in Mizpah. ¹⁸ The people, the princes of Gilead, said one to another, Who will begin to fight against the Ammonites? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

CHAPTER 11 Jun. 12

Jephthah

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and

he was the son of a prostitute; and Gilead was the father of Jephthah. ² Gilead's wife also bore him sons, and when his wife's sons grew up they drove out Jephthah, and said to him, You shall not inherit in our father's house because you are the son of another woman. ³ Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob, and a group of adventurers gathered to Jephthah, and they went out with him. ⁴ After a while the Ammonites made war against Israel. ⁵ When the Ammonites made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah out of the land of Tob, ⁶ and they said to Jephthah, Come and be our chief, so that we can fight the Ammonites. ⁷ Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, Didn't you hate me and drive me out of my father's house? Why have

He said He would love them no more, but just couldn't bring Himself to do it (Hos. 9:15; 14:4). These aren't contradictions, but rather a window onto the passion and emotion of God; how His love is greater than His anger with sin. And this God is our God.

10:16 *His soul was grieved* – There is in the Hebrew text here something which defies translation. We read there that God was so hurt by Israel's sufferings that in sympathy with them, "His *nephesh* ["soul"] was grieved / shortened" or expended. The phrase is used in 16:16 and Num. 21:4 about death or the diminishment of life. God's pain was such that this was how He felt, because He so internalized the sufferings of His people. And how much more in the death of His Son? He even feels like that for the sufferings of Gentiles. As something of each of us dies in the death of those we love, so "God was in Christ", sharing in His sufferings and death. It was not of course that God died. But He fully shared in the sufferings of His Son unto death. We also see here how God truly takes no pleasure in punishing His children; eternal conscious torment of the wicked isn't a Bible teaching (Ez. 18:32; 33:11).

11:2 Again we see how God worked to save Israel through a man whom others despised and rejected, looking forward to His Son, Jesus, the stone whom the Jewish builders rejected who became the corner stone (Mt. 21:42).

11:7,8 Israel's attitude to Jephthah was their attitude to God; they rejected Him, but turned to Him in times of trouble. The way Jephthah speaks in :7 and :12 suggests he appreciated this, and took comfort from it.

you come to me now when you are in distress? ⁸ The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, Therefore we have turned again to you now, so that you may go with us and fight the Ammonites, and you shall be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. ⁹ Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, If you bring me home again to fight the Ammonites and Yahweh delivers them to me, shall I be your head? ¹⁰ The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, Yahweh shall be witness between us; certainly we will do as you say. ¹¹ Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and chief over them, and Jephthah spoke all his words before Yahweh in Mizpah. ¹² Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites saying, What have you against me, that you have come to me to fight against my land? ¹³ The king of the Ammonites answered the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land when he came up out of Egypt, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and to the Jordan; now therefore restore that territory again peaceably. ¹⁴ Jephthah sent messengers back to the king of the Ammonites ¹⁵ and said to him, This is what Jephthah says: Israel didn't

take away the land of Moab, nor the land of the Ammonites, ¹⁶ but when they came up from Egypt Israel went through the wilderness to the Red Sea and came to Kadesh. ¹⁷ Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom saying, 'Please let me pass through your land;' but the king of Edom didn't listen. In the same way he sent to the king of Moab, but he would not, and Israel stayed in Kadesh. ¹⁸ Then they went through the wilderness and skirted around the land of Edom and the land of Moab and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and they encamped on the other side of the Arnon, but they didn't come within the border of Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab. ¹⁹ Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon, and Israel said to him, 'Please let us pass through your land to our place'. ²⁰ But Sihon didn't trust Israel to pass through his border, but Sihon gathered all his people together and encamped in Jahaz and fought against Israel. ²¹ Yahweh the God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they struck them; so Israel took possession of all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country.

11:8 Both illegitimate children like Jephthah and Ammonites were excluded from Yahweh's congregation (Dt. 23:2,3). But God brought the Israelites to such desperation that they had to recognize that the letter of God's law couldn't save them. Jephthah could have reasoned that because his brethren excluded him, therefore he would have no passion for his own people and would certainly not fight for them. But he adopted, as we should, a more gracious perspective. Whatever the rejections suffered at the hands of God's hypocritical people, he still saw them as God's people and identified with them. This is a lesson for the many who have been unjustly excluded from congregations of God's people over technical issues which weren't their personal fault; this is no reason to be unfaithful to or cease to identify with God's people as a whole.

22 They captured all the border of the Amorites from the Arnon to the Jab-bok, and from the wilderness to the Jordan. 23 So now Yahweh, the God of Israel has driven out the Amorites from before His people Israel, and should you take it over? 24 Won't you inherit that which Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever Yahweh our God has given to us, that we will take. 25 Now are you any better than Balak the son of Zip-por king of Moab? Did he ever strive successfully against Israel, or did he ever fight against them? 26 While Israel lived in Heshbon and its towns, in Aroer and its towns and in all the cities that are along by the side of the Arnon, for three hundred years, why didn't you recover them within that time? 27 I therefore have not sinned against you, but you do me wrong to fight against me. Let Yahweh the Judge be judge this day between the people of Israel and the people of Ammon. 28 However the king of the Ammonites didn't listen to the words of Jephthah which he sent him. 29 Then the Spirit of Yahweh came

on Jephthah and he crossed over Gilead, Manasseh and Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he crossed over to the Ammonites.

Jephthah's Vow

30 Jephthah made a vow to Yahweh and said, If You will indeed deliver the Ammonites into my hand, 31 then whatever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites, it shall be Yahweh's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. 32 So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them and Yahweh delivered them into his hand. 33 He struck them from Aroer to Minnith, twenty cities, and to Abelcheramim, with a very great slaughter. So the Ammonites were subdued before the children of Israel. 34 Jephthah came to Mizpah to his house and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. She was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter. 35 When he saw her he tore his clothes and said, Alas my daughter! You have made

11:24 Jesus spoke about demons as if such things existed, even though He did not believe they did; for demons referred to idols, which have no real existence (1 Cor. 8:4). In a similar way, faithful Jephthah spoke of the idol Chemosh *as if* he existed.

11:27 We are in God's judgment presence in this life just as much as we will be in the last day. The day of the Lord is coming, but it is even now (Mic. 7:4 Heb.). Jephthah understood this when he said that Yahweh the Judge *is* judge "this day". Because God *is* judge right now, this means we should realize that He will and does judge here and now.

11:35 Jephthah could have redeemed his daughter from the vow he involved her with (Lev. 27:4). But he decided in his mind: "I have made a vow to Yahweh and I can't go back on it". Actually he could have done; but he so firmly chose the higher level that it was as if there was no way back. Ps. 15:4, in evident allusion to Jephthah, describes those who will attain the Kingdom as fearing Yahweh, and swearing to their own hurt and changing not. Some may swear and change and attain the Kingdom; but we are in-

me very sad and troubled, for I have made a vow to Yahweh and I can't go back on it. ³⁶ She said to him, My father, you have made a vow to Yahweh; do to me what you have vowed, because Yahweh has taken vengeance for you on your enemies the people of Ammon. ³⁷ She said to her father, Let this one thing be done for me: let me alone two months to go around on the mountains and bewail my virginity, I and my companions. ³⁸ He said, Go. He sent her away for two months, and she and her companions went and mourned her virginity on the mountains. ³⁹ At the end of two months she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed, and she was a virgin. It was a custom in Israel, ⁴⁰ that the daughters of Israel went each year to celebrate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

CHAPTER 12 Jun. 13

Jephthah Fights Ephraim

The men of Ephraim were gathered together and passed northward, and they said to Jephthah,

Why did you go to fight against the Ammonites and didn't call us to go with you? We will burn your house around you with fire! ² Jephthah said to them, I and my people were at great strife with the Ammonites and when I called you, you didn't save me out of their hand. ³ When I saw that you didn't save me, I put my life in my hand and went against the Ammonites, and Yahweh delivered them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day, to fight against me? ⁴ Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought with Ephraim, and the men of Gilead struck Ephraim because they said, You Gileadites are renegades of Ephraim from Ephraim and Manasseh. ⁵ The Gileadites took the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites. When the fugitives of Ephraim said, Let me cross over, the men of Gilead said to him, Are you an Ephraimite? If he said No; ⁶ then they said to him, Now say 'Shibboleth;' and he said Sibboleth, for he couldn't manage to pronounce it right, then they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. At that time, forty-two

vited to follow Jephthah to the highest level. Another possibility is that Jephthah was ignorant of the Lev. 27:4 provision that he could rescind a vow. In which case we learn that someone can be of great faith and acceptability to God even if they are ignorant of part of His word. This shouldn't justify us in a careless attitude to His service, but rather should inspire our toleration and acceptance of our more ignorant brethren.

12:2 An identical thing happened to Gideon – see on 8:3. Gideon could've said the same as Jephthah, but instead gave a soft answer and turned away wrath (Prov. 15:1). Here, Jephthah answers the complaint on a purely factual level – and conflict ensued. We are perhaps left to conclude that we can answer provocation in either of these two ways – it's not a moral issue, it's totally our choice, but we can avoid conflict if we take the “soft answer” route.

12:6 *Shibboleth* means 'the river', so presumably the Gileadites made them ask if they could cross 'the river'.

thousand of Ephraim fell. ⁷ Jephthah judged Israel for six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in a city of Gilead.

Ibzan, Elon and Abdon

⁸ After him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. ⁹ He had thirty sons and thirty daughters. He sent his daughters away in marriage, and brought in thirty women for his sons. He judged Israel for seven years. ¹⁰ Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem. ¹¹ After him Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel for ten years. ¹² Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun. ¹³ After him Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. ¹⁴ He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy donkey colts, and he judged Israel for eight years. ¹⁵ Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in

Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

CHAPTER 13 Jun. 13

The Birth of Samson

The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and Yahweh delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years. ² There was a man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah, and his wife was barren and childless. ³ The angel of Yahweh appeared to the woman and said to her, Look now, you are barren and childless but you will conceive and bear a son. ⁴ Now therefore you must be careful and drink no wine nor strong drink, and don't eat any unclean thing. ⁵ You shall conceive and bear a son, and no razor must come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he will begin to save Israel out of the

12:8, 10 The double connection of Ibzan with Bethlehem exemplifies how all the judges – the Hebrew word means ‘saviours’ – were types of Jesus, the ultimate ‘saviour’ of God’s people. The Hebrew form of “Jesus” means ‘Yahweh is saviour’.

13:5 Although he was to be the beginning of serious deliverance of Israel from the Philistines, the whole story of Samson is prefaced by the fact that during the 40 years of Samson’s ministry (15:20;16:31), “Yahweh delivered (Israel) into the hand of the Philistines” (:1). It is emphasized in 14:4 that “at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel” (see too 15:11). The point is hammered home in 15:20: “He judged Israel in the days of the Philistines for twenty years”. God’s intention was that Samson was to deliver Israel from the Philistines; but somehow he never rose up to it. They remained under the Philistines, even during his ministry. One interpretation of his life is that he made a few sporadic attempts in red hot personal zeal, confirmed by God, to deliver Israel. But he never rose up to the potential level that God had prepared for him in prospect. And yet for all this, he was accepted in the final analysis as a man of faith. This provides comfort not only to us in our weakness, but assists us in more positively and hopefully perceiving others whose weaknesses are so apparent to us. When she relayed the incident to her husband, Samson’s mother omitted to repeat the part of the Angel’s conversation about Samson delivering Israel from the Philistines (:7) – perhaps because she didn’t believe that her child would be capable of this. And perhaps this was a factor in his failure to achieve what God had intended for him.

hand of the Philistines. ⁶ Then the woman went and told her husband, A man of God came to me, and his face was like the face of the angel of God, very awesome. I didn't ask him where he was from, neither did he tell me his name, ⁷ but he said to me 'You will conceive and bear a son; drink no wine or strong drink, and eat no unclean thing, for the child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb to the day of his death'. ⁸ Then Manoah entreated Yahweh and said, Oh Lord, please let the man of God whom you sent come again to us and teach us what we should do to the child who will be born. ⁹ God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman as she sat in the field, but

Manoah her husband, wasn't with her. ¹⁰ The woman quickly ran and told her husband, and said to him, The man has appeared to me, who came to me that day. ¹¹ Manoah arose and went after his wife and came to the man and said to him, Are you the man who spoke to the woman? He said, I am. ¹² Manoah said, Now may your words come true. What should the child's way of life and mission be? ¹³ The angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, All that I said to the woman she must do. ¹⁴ She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her let her observe. ¹⁵ Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh, Please, let us detain you

13:7 It may be possible to understand that the breaking of his Naziriteship was yet another way in which he never lived up to his God-given potential. He was "a Nazirite unto God from the womb to the day of his death". Yet he broke the Nazirite vow by touching dead bodies and having his hair shaven (Num. 6:6). This may mean that he chose to break God's ideal intention for him, to take a lower and lower level of service to God until actually he had slipped away altogether. This is the problem with eagerly making use of God's concessions to human weakness. However, it may be that God counted *his desire* for the high standard of Naziriteship to him. He saw him as if this never happened, in the same way as He saw Abraham as if he had offered up Isaac, even though ultimately he didn't (Heb. 11:17; James 2:21). Intention, not the human strength of will to do the act, seems to sometimes be what God earnestly looks for.

13:8 *The child who will be born* – We see here Manoah's respect and belief of his wife's word, which he accepted as God's word. When a wife says she is pregnant because an Angel visited her – it's quite something for the husband to believe that, especially in a culture which stereotyped women as untruthful and likely to be unfaithful. Manoah's example likely inspired Joseph centuries later when Mary said the same. Manoah's respect of his wife's word was again put to the test in :9,10.

13:9 *God listened to the voice of Manoah* – His hearkening to *God's* word led to God hearing *his* word in prayer – see on 9:7. Manoah asked for the prophet (whom he thought the Angel was) to come again and tell them how to train their new child. His prayer was answered – but actually, his request wasn't specifically dealt with. The Angel came – not a prophet, as he asked – and confirmed to Manoah that really his wife was going to have a child. The spirit behind his request was understood and answered, rather than the actual words which he spoke.

so that we may make a young goat ready for you. ¹⁶ The angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, Though you detain me, I won't eat your food, and if you prepare a burnt offering, you must offer it to Yahweh. Manoah didn't know that he was the angel of Yahweh. ¹⁷ Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh, What is your name, that when your words come true, we may honour you? ¹⁸ The angel of Yahweh said to him, Why do you ask about my name, since it is beyond understanding? ¹⁹ So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering and offered it on the rock to Yahweh. Then the angel did a wonderful thing as Manoah and his wife looked on. ²⁰ When the flame went up toward the sky from the altar, the angel of Yahweh ascended in the flame of the altar, and Manoah and his wife looked on, and they fell on their faces to the ground. ²¹ But the angel of

Yahweh didn't appear to Manoah or to his wife any more. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of Yahweh. ²² Manoah said to his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. ²³ But his wife said to him, If Yahweh wanted to kill us He wouldn't have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from us, neither would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have told us such things as these. ²⁴ The woman bore a son, and named him Samson, and the child grew and Yahweh blessed him. ²⁵ The Spirit of Yahweh began to trouble him in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

CHAPTER 14 Jun. 14

Samson Marries a Philistine woman

Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.

13:15 The record of Samson and his parents has a large number of situations where he was connected into the experience of those who had gone before; they were intended to learn the lessons, as we are to turn God's word into flesh, making the historical accounts have practical relevance to life today. Consider: Manoah's desire to detain the Angel (cp. Gen. 18:5). Manoah's desire to detain the Angel and offer sacrifice was exactly that of Gideon (6:18). His belief after he had seen the Angel ascend (13:20 = 6:21), and his subsequent fear, were again expressed in the words of Gideon (13:21,22 cp. 6:22). As Gideon was, perhaps subconsciously, the hero of Manoah, so Samson followed his father's spirituality in this (see on 14:1; 15:4). It seems he lived out parental expectation, and imbibed the spirituality of his father without making it his own. Born and raised believers, beware. See on :24; 14:1,3; 15:4,15,19; 16:24,25.

13:24 *The child grew, and Yahweh blessed him* – cp. Samuel, John, the Lord Jesus – all chosen from the womb.

13:25 The Spirit of the Lord had been troubling his conscience as to why the people of Dan had not followed up Joshua's victories, and had allowed themselves to be overrun by the uncircumcised. The only other references to "troubled" are in Gen. 41:8; Ps. 77:4; Dan. 2:1,3. The Spirit of God worked with Samson's spirit, so that it was troubled as he went for his solitary walks of meditation.

14:1 Judah also did wrong in Timnah (14:1) with a woman, and was deceived and shamed by her (15:1 = Gen. 38:17). Earlier Scripture, which it seems Samson well

² He came up and told his father and mother, I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore get her for me as my wife. ³ Then his father and mother said to him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of your brothers, or among all our people, that you go to take a wife of the un-

circumcised Philistines? Samson said to his father, Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes. ⁴ But his father and mother didn't know that it was from Yahweh, for He sought an occasion against the Philistines, for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. ⁵ Then Samson went down with his father and mother, to

knew and appreciated, was crying out to Samson to take heed. But he was blind to the real import of it all. See on 13:15.

Samson “went *down*” to take a Philistine girl for wife (:1,5,7,10); and yet by doing so he was seeking an opportunity to slay Philistines. He may well have had in mind the emphasis on the fact that Gideon went *down* to destroy the Midianites (7:9,10,11,24). He went down morally and physically, and yet he justified this by thinking that as Gideon went down physically, so would he. Such is the complexity of the process of temptation.

14:2 It could be argued that because the father was responsible for his son's marriage partner (12:9; 15:2; Gen. 24:3-9; Neh. 10:30), therefore Samson's father was equally guilty for Samson's marriage out of the faith. Many of the commands against intermarriage were directed to parents, commanding them not to give their children in intermarriage.

14:3 The disappointment of Samson's parents cp. that of Esau's (cp. Gen. 26:35; 27:46; 28:1). See on 13:15.

“Is there *never* a woman among the daughters of your brothers” implies that she wasn't the first one; he had often got involved with Philistine girls down in the valley, despite his conscience for Yahweh troubling him as he walked alone on the heights (13:25 Heb.). Samson gave no good answer to his parents: simply “Get her for me; for she is right in my eyes” (repeated in :7 for emphasis – he really did fall for the lust of the eyes). This insistence rather than explanation would suggest a bad conscience in Samson. Likewise the crowd only shouted out the more when asked why and for what crime they wished to crucify Jesus (Mt. 27:23). But she was ‘right in his eyes’, not for beauty but in the sense that ‘she suits my purpose’ (Heb.). The same Hebrew is used not concerning beauty but rather utility in 1 Sam. 18:20; 2 Sam. 17:4; 1 Kings 9:12. The way in which Samson set up the riddle, almost expecting that they might tease it out of him through his wife, the way in which he agreed that if they did this, he would give them the clothes of 30 Philistines... it all suggests that Samson set the whole thing up to seek an opportunity against the Philistines.

14:4 The whole question of Samson's marriage is overshadowed by the fact that “It was from Yahweh”; He used this failure to deliver His people. There are a number of other passages which mention how “it was of the Lord” that certain attitudes were adopted by men, resulting in the sequence of events which He desired (Dt. 2:39; Josh. 11:20; 1 Sam. 2:25; 1 Kings 12:15; 2 Chron. 10:15; 22:7; 25:20). It is tempting to read 14:4 in this context, meaning that God somehow made Samson desire that woman in order to bring about His purpose of freeing Israel from Philistine domination. How-

Timnah and came to the vineyards of Timnah, and suddenly a young lion roared against him. ⁶ The Spirit of Yahweh came mightily on him and he tore it as he would have torn a young goat, having nothing in his hand, but he didn't tell his father or his mother what he had done. ⁷ He went down and talked with the woman, and she pleased Samson well. ⁸ After a while he returned to take her and he turned

aside to see the carcass of the lion. In it there was a swarm of bees, in the body of the lion, and honey, ⁹ which he took it into his hands and went on, eating as he went. He came to his father and mother and gave some to them and they ate, but he didn't tell them that he had taken the honey out of the body of the lion. ¹⁰ His father went down to the woman, and Samson made a drinking feast as was the

ever, it is more likely that God worked through Samson's wrong desires, through his human weakness, to bring about God's purpose and glory.

14:5 Not only do circumstances repeat between the lives of God's children, but also within our lives. We may pass through a very similar experience more than once. The similarity and repetition may be so that we learn the lesson we failed to learn; or it could even be a punishment for not learning the lessons we should have learned. Samson's life demonstrates this. The lion roared against him as the Philistines did (s.w. 15:14); and not least in the uncanny similarities between the way his first wife enticed him and wrung his secrets from him, and the way 40 years later another worthless woman did the same to him (14:15-17 = 16:5,15,16). He just didn't see the similarities, or if he did, he didn't learn any lessons. Admittedly, it's far easier for us, presented with the records as they are, spanning 40 years within a few pages.

To the vineyards – Why did he as a Nazirite go for a walk in vineyards, among the forbidden fruit? This was typical of him: a great zeal and understanding, mixed with a desire to walk as close to the edge as possible, and to ultimately have a little of both. He had a fascination with vineyards, which the record brings out. Like an ex-alcoholic staring at the bottles in the shop 'just out of interest', so Samson fooled about with what was forbidden – just as we all tend to. He later teased Delilah to tie him with seven "cords" (16:7), the Hebrew word implying made from a vine. He just would mess with the forbidden. The way he burnt up those vineyards in 15:5 may have been as a result of realizing that the answer lay in total devotion and rooting out of temptation; cutting out the eye that offends.

14:6 Samson's zeal to deliver Israel was confirmed by God, in that he was given gifts of Holy Spirit in order to enable him to deliver Israel. However, this doesn't mean that he himself was a man rippling with muscle. The Philistines wanted to find out the *secret* of his strength; it wasn't that he had such evidently bulging muscles that the answer was self-evident. He told Delilah that if his head were shaved, he would be like any other man (16:17). He was therefore just an ordinary man, made strong by the Father after the pattern of the Saviour he typified. The stress is on the way in which the Spirit came upon Samson (14:6,19; 15:14), as it did on other judges (3:10; 6:34; 11:29). The New Testament gifts of the Holy Spirit were likewise for specific things at specific times, and were withdrawn once the intended work had been done.

14:10 Samson was a Nazirite to God (i.e. in God's eyes?) all his life (13:7) – although he broke his Naziriteship by contact with dead bodies (14:19; 15:15 cp. Num. 6:6) and

custom for the young men. ¹¹ When they saw him they brought thirty companions to be with him.

Samson's Riddle

¹² Samson said to them, Let me tell you a riddle now. If you can give me the answer within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. ¹³ But if you can't give me the answer, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. They said to him, Tell us your riddle, that we may hear it. ¹⁴ He said to them, Out of the eater came forth food. Out of the strong came forth sweetness. They couldn't give the answer in three days. ¹⁵ On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, Entice your husband to tell us the riddle, or we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you called us here to

mock us? ¹⁶ Samson's wife wept before him and said, You must hate me, and don't love me. You have given a riddle to my people but you haven't told it me. He said to her, I haven't even told it to my father or my mother; why should I tell you? ¹⁷ She wept before him for seven days, while their feast lasted, and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him severely. Then she told the riddle to her people. On the seventh day before the sun went down, ¹⁸ the men of the city said to him, What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion? He said to them, If you hadn't ploughed with my heifer you wouldn't have found out my riddle. ¹⁹ The Spirit of Yahweh came mightily on him, and he went down to Ashkelon and struck thirty men of them and took their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. His anger

probably here by drinking wine at his wedding ("drinking feast"). This was not only imputed righteousness, but God counting the essential intentions of a weak willed man to him as if he had actually achieved what he fain would do.

14:16 "Why should I tell *you*" implied that his wife should expect that he was closer to his Hebrew parents than to her. Gen. 2:24 taught that a man must leave his parents and cleave to his wife in marriage; she must be closer to him than them. It could be that by saying this, Samson was reminding her that he didn't see their relationship as full marriage; he was only using her (cp. how he 'used' a Philistine as his best man, :20). Yet he did what only days before had been unthinkable: he told her his finest and most personal secret, which he wouldn't even tell his dear parents. Such is the fickleness of our nature. Yet it seems no accident that he chose Timnah, 'a portion assigned' – to Israel. This was part of the land promised to Dan, but which they had allowed the Philistines to overrun (Josh. 19:43,47).

14:18 They had to declare the riddle "and find it out" (:12). This would indicate that they had to actually find the carcass of a lion with honey in it. They ploughed behind his wife as a heifer, and so were led by her to Samson's secret place of meditation where the dead lion was (:18).

14:19 When he slew the thirty men at Ashkelon, as he seemed to have planned right at the start in his seeking occasion against the Philistines, he was burning with anger.

was burning, and he went up to his father's house. ²⁰ But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had considered a friend.

CHAPTER 15 Jun. 14

Samson Takes Revenge

But after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a young goat. He said, I will go in to my wife into the room.

But her father wouldn't allow him to go in. ² Her father said, I was certain that you utterly hated her, therefore I gave her to your companion. Isn't her younger sister more beautiful than she? Please take her instead. ³ Samson said to them, This time I will be blameless of harm to the Philistines. ⁴ Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took torches, tied them tail to tail in pairs and put a

His motive was partly bitterness and the revenge of a man humiliated and deceived by a woman; but his slaughter of the Philistines was also done in faith (Heb. 11:32-34), with God given strength to confirm his faith. Our motives can be terribly mixed, even when doing God's work.

15:2 He seems angry that he had let himself fall too deeply for that Philistine girl (14:19), and "utterly hated her" (15:2). He transferred his anger with himself onto someone close to him; and we must beware we deal with our guilt and sin by repentance, rather than transferring it onto another and harshly punishing them for our own sin. Yet Samson really loved that girl (14:3,17; 15:1,7,11), even though he also hated her (15:2; he must have gone through this process again with Delilah in the time that led up to her final betrayal). This true love for her makes Samson's marriages look more questionable.

15:3 He burnt those vineyards in a desire to be "blameless in regard to the Philistines". The same word is translated unpunished, guiltless, innocent, clean, acquitted; as if he knew he had sinned, but believed that by further fighting of Philistines he could gain his forgiveness. He had to be brought to the shame of Gaza Prison to learn that forgiveness was by absolute faith, not works and hatred of this present world, nor by transferring our sin and deserving of judgment onto others.

15:4 As the Spirit came upon Gideon (6:34), so it is described as coming upon Samson (14:6). It seems that when Samson visits his wife with a kid and uses this as an excuse to kill many Philistines, this was planned by him to reflect Gideon's zeal. The way Gideon brought a kid to Yahweh (6:19) may reflect how Samson came with a kid (15:1). He then takes 300 foxes and puts firebrands in their tails. Why 300? Maybe in conscious imitation of how Gideon took 300 men and put firebrands in their hands, and with them destroyed God's enemies (7:16). The connection between the faithful 300 and the foxes could suggest that in Samson's eyes, he didn't even have one faithful Israelite to support him; he had to use animals instead. As Gideon "went down" to destroy God's enemies (7:9), so Samson justified his 'going down' to the Philistines to take their women, as well as to destroy their warriors (14:1,5,7,10). As Gideon was somehow 'separate from his brethren' in his zeal, so was Samson. And yet Samson seems to have copied just the externalities of Gideon; not the real spirit. And therefore as Gideon foolishly multiplied women to himself in the spiritual weakness of his middle age, so perhaps Samson saw justification for his attitude. 'If heroic Gideon could indulge the flesh in this area, I surely can'. He fell into our common trap: to compare

firebrand between each pair of tails.
 5 When he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing grain of the Philistines and burnt up both the shocks and the standing grain, and also the olive groves. 6 Then the Philistines said, Who has done this? They said, Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because his his wife was given her to his companion. The Philistines came up and burnt her and her father with fire. 7 Samson said to them, If you behave like this, surely I will be avenged on you. 8 He attacked them viciously and slaughtered many of them, then he went and lived in the cave in the rock of Etam. 9 Then the Philistines went up, and encamped in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi. 10 The men of Judah

said, Why have you come up against us? They said, We have come up to take Samson prisoner, to do to him as he has done to us. 11 Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, Don't you know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that you have done to us? He said to them, As they did to me, so have I done to them. 12 They said to him, We have come down to tie you up so that we can deliver you into the hand of the Philistines. Samson said to them, Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves. 13 They said, No, we will tie you up and deliver you into their hand, but we will not kill you. They bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from

ourselves amongst ourselves, to measure ourselves against human standards as we find them among the contemporary brotherhood (2 Cor. 10:12). See on 13:15.

15:5 Burning up the corn and vineyards of the Philistines was in conscious allusion to how the law stipulated that a man who did this to his Israelite neighbour must make retribution (Ex. 22:5). He was emphasizing that these people were *not* his neighbours, they were not in covenant relationship, and he openly showed that he treated them accordingly. Likewise he took vengeance on the Philistines (15:5; 16:28), when the Law taught that Israel were not to take vengeance (same word) *on each other* (Lev. 19:18), but could do so on their enemies (Num. 31:2; Dt. 32:43 cp. Josh. 10:13).

15:11 *As they did to me, so have I done to them* – If we ask ‘What exactly did they do to him? What did they kill and burn of his?’, the answer must be ‘His wife’. He perhaps felt that she was worth hundreds of them, and the burning of their livelihood, causing famine as a result, was what they had done to him emotionally. Yet it is curious how he loved the Philistines and yet hated them; was humble and yet had too high an opinion of himself. We see the same contradictions of human nature within ourselves. The Philistines had earlier said that they wanted to take Samson “to do to him as he did to us” (:10). And Samson replies in the same primitive way: that he only did to them what they did to him. It seems that Samson spoke to them on their level. It seems his zeal for God was also very humanly motivated.

15:12 It should be noted that his strength was not somehow magically associated with his hair; his strength went from him because Yahweh departed from him (16:19,20). He had to beg his own people not to try to kill him themselves (even whilst he had long hair), because he knew that the strength he had was only for certain specific purposes – i.e., to deliver God's people from the Philistines.

the rock. ¹⁴ When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him, and the Spirit of Yahweh came mightily on him. The ropes that were on his arms became as charred flax, and his ropes dropped off his hands. ¹⁵ He found a fresh jawbone of an ass and struck down a thousand men with it. ¹⁶ Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps on heaps; with the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men. ¹⁷ When he had finished speaking he threw away the jawbone, and that place was called Ramath Lehi. ¹⁸ He was very thirsty and called on Yahweh and said, You have given this great deliverance by

the hand of Your servant; now shall I die for thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? ¹⁹ But God split the hollow place that is in Lehi and water came out of it. When he had drunk, his spirit came again and he revived, therefore its name was called En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day. ²⁰ He judged Israel in the days of the Philistines for twenty years.

CHAPTER 16 Jun. 15

Samson and Delilah

Samson went to Gaza and saw there a prostitute, and went in to her. ² The Gazites were told, Sam-

15:14 When he was strolling in the Timnah vineyards, a lion had come across him (14:5). It was only after it roared against him that the Spirit came upon him and enabled him to kill it. He had to take the first nervous steps towards that lion in faith, and then the Spirit came upon him and confirmed his actions. The fact he didn't tell his parents what he had done may not only indicate his humility, but also suggests he was not naturally a strong man. To say he had just killed a lion would seem ridiculous (14:6). The Spirit likewise came upon him to kill the Philistines in Lehi (15:14). It wasn't a permanent strength. This is in harmony with the way in which the Spirit was used in the NT. The Spirit came upon the apostles and they were filled up with it, as it were, and then drained of it once the work was done; and had to be filled with it again when the next eventuality arose.

15:16 Samson slaying Philistines with a jawbone suggests Shamgar slaying Philistines with an ox goad (15:15 cp. 3:31). See on 13:15. Samson grabbed a jawbone and exalted that with *that* he had slain a thousand men at Lehi. This was a conscious allusion to Josh. 23:10 (and Lev. 26:8), that one faithful man would chase a thousand. It could be that he counted the bodies, or counted each man he slew, consciously trying to get up to 1,000 in order to fulfil the prophecy. Samson doesn't say that he alone killed the thousand men; he did it with the jawbone (coming from a Hebrew root meaning 'soft', 'weak'). This jaw bone is one of the seven weak things which are mentioned in Judges as being the tools of God's salvation: a left handed man (3:21); an ox goad (3:31); a woman (4:4); a nail (4:21); a piece of a millstone (9:53); a pitcher and trumpet (7:20).

15:19 Samson dying of thirst crying desperately for water recalls Hagar's experience (15:19 cp. Gen. 21:19). See 13:15.

16:1 When Samson decided to attack Gaza by going into a harlot's house, he may have been consciously imitating the way the spies played their part in Jericho's destruction. And yet it was once again only a surface imitation. He fell for the 'little of both' syn-

son is here! They surrounded him and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, staying quiet all night and saying, Wait until dawn, then we will kill him! ³ Samson lay until midnight, then arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts, picked them up, along with the bar, put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain that faces Hebron. ⁴ Afterward, he fell in love with a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. ⁵ The lords of the Philistines came to her and said, Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies, and how we might prevail against

him to tie him up and subdue him. Then we will each one of us give you eleven hundred pieces of silver. ⁶ Delilah said to Samson, Please tell me where your great strength lies, and how you might be tied up and subdued. ⁷ Samson said to her, If I am tied with seven fresh cords that were never dried, then shall I become weak like other men. ⁸ Then the lords of the Philistines brought to her seven fresh cords which had not been dried, and she tied him with them. ⁹ Now she had an ambush waiting in the inner room. She said to him, The Philistines are upon you, Samson! He broke the cords, as a string of tow is

drome, justifying it under the guise of Scriptural examples. The warnings about not *looking* at a strange woman recall how Samson *saw* the Philistine girl in Timnah and the prostitute in Gaza (14:1; 16:1). The wicked woman lying in wait to kill the simple man (Prov. 23:25-27) is a clear enough reference to Delilah and her henchmen lying in wait in the bedroom. And yet, for all this reflection upon Samson, Solomon went and did *par excellence* according to Samson's well-studied folly. And we can do the same, in principle. There is a vast distance between knowledge and belief.

16:3 Samson went in to spend the night with the prostitute, but Samson lay there only until the middle of the night. Then he got up and took hold of the city gate. If he went in to spend the night there, he presumably entered the house at around 7 or 8. He had what he wanted, and then lay there thinking, the record seems to suggest, and decided to not lay there all night as he planned, but get up and do God's work. Whilst it is unrecorded, surely there were prayers of deep and fervent repentance as he lay there? His conscience likewise seems to have struck him after he attempted to marry the Philistine girl, and also when he burnt up the vineyards. And so again here. He may have justified his behaviour by reference back (in his deep subconscious, maybe) to how the spies sought to destroy Jericho by entering the city and lodging with a whore. We must ever examine our motives.

16:7 *Cords* – See on 14:5.

16:9 *Samson should have already learnt.* As his first wife had vexed her with her words to tease his secret from him, so Delilah did. As the Philistines laid wait for Samson as he lay with the whore in Gaza (16:2), so they laid wait in Delilah's bedroom (16:9). He had already repented of using God's service as an excuse for satisfying his own flesh in the incident with the Gaza prostitute. He had bitterly walked away from his first Philistine wife. He burnt down the vineyards, recalling how he had foolishly strolled in them as a Nazirite. He must have looked back and seen how he had played with fire. And now, he goes and does it all again. He goes to the valley of

broken when it touches the fire. So his strength was not known. ¹⁰ Delilah said to Samson, You have made a fool of me and told me lies! Now please tell me how you can be tied. ¹¹ He said to her, If I am tied with new ropes with which no work has been done, then I shall become weak like other men. ¹² So Delilah took new ropes and tied him with them and said to him, The Philistines are upon you, Samson! The ambush was waiting in the inner room. He broke them off his arms like a thread. ¹³ Delilah said to Samson, Until now you have fooled me and told me lies. Tell me how you can be tied. He said to her, If you weave the seven braids of

my hair into the fabric on the loom, I will become as weak as other men. ¹⁴ She wove his hair into the fabric and fastened it with the pin, and said to him, The Philistines are upon you, Samson! He awoke and pulled away the pin from the loom and the fabric. ¹⁵ She said to him, How can you say, ‘I love you’, when your heart is not with me? You have fooled me three times and have not told me where your great strength lies. ¹⁶ When she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, he became tired to death. ¹⁷ So he told her everything, and said to her, No razor has ever come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If I am

Sorek, ‘choice vines’, and Samson falls for Delilah, ‘the vine’. He went down to the vineyards again; the Nazirite tried to take fire into his bosom again.

16:13 “If *they* tie me...” (:7) now changes to “If *you* [singular]”; he knew beforehand that she would betray him, although couldn’t admit it to himself. And so we see the complexity of Samson’s situation. It was not that his telling of the secret to Delilah was necessarily a sin in itself. He trusted her and yet knew on another level she would betray him. This is just a psychological condition. It helps explain why the Lord Jesus knew from the beginning that Judas would betray him (Jn. 6:64), and yet how He could really trust in Judas as his own familiar friend, confide in him (Ps. 41:9), telling him that he would sit with the other eleven on thrones in the Kingdom (Mt. 19:28). A man can know something about someone on one level, but in love act and feel towards them in a quite different way than this knowledge requires.

16:17 The question arises: Why did Samson tell Delilah that if his hair were cut, he would become weak? Surely he must have known within him that she would do it, in line with past experience? He went out as before to fight the Philistines, surely aware that he had been shaved, and yet assuming God would still be with him. He had come to realize that his long hair was not the real source of his strength, on some kind of metaphysical level. He saw that his strength was from the Spirit of God, not long hair or Naziriteship. He went out knowing, presumably, that his hair had been shaven, and yet still assumed he would have God’s strength. And even when his hair began to grow again, he still had to pray for strength (:28). He fell into the downward spiral of reductionism. He figured that if his hair was shaved, well it was no big deal. He was supposed to be a Nazirite all the days of his life, and yet perhaps he came to reason that because he had touched plenty of dead bodies, he therefore needed to be shaved anyway (Num. 6:9). He thought that therefore God would accept him in principle as a Nazirite even though he had broken the letter of Naziriteship, and therefore losing

shaved, then my strength will go from me and I will become weak like any other man. ¹⁸ When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent for the lords of the Philistines saying, Come up once more, for he has told me everything. Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money with them. ¹⁹ She made him sleep on her knees, and then she called for a man who shaved off the seven braids of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. ²⁰ She said, The

Philistines are upon you, Samson! He awoke out of sleep and said, I will go out as before and shake myself to be free of them. But he didn't know that Yahweh had departed from him. ²¹ The Philistines seized him and put out his eyes, and they brought him down to Gaza, bound him with fetters of brass, and made him work at grinding in the mill in the prison.

The Death of Samson

²² However the hair of his head began to grow again after he had been

his hair was only a surface level indicator of spirituality. And yet there is also good reason to think that there was an association in Samson's mind between his hair and his God-given strength. For why did he "tell her all his heart" by saying that if he were shaved, he would lose his strength? And of course, when his hair was cut off, then his strength went. Samson saw a link between being a Nazirite and having strength (:17). When Samson went outside from Delilah and shook himself as he usually did, was he not shaking his hair free before attacking the Philistines, as if he saw in his hair the source of his strength?

16:20 The way Samson was so deeply sleeping on Delilah's knees that he didn't feel them shave him, and then he went out and shook himself – all this could suggest he was drunk. There is no concrete evidence for this, but his love of vineyards would suggest he had a yearning for the forbidden fruit. He had broken the Nazirite vow by touching dead bodies, he obviously thought that having unshaven hair was only tokenistic and irrelevant to the real spirit of Naziriteship, and therefore he may have reasoned that alcohol was also another tokenism. Thus his reductionism destroyed him (almost). Perhaps it was brought about by a misunderstanding of God's waiving of the Nazirite ban on touching dead bodies; for after all, God had made Samson a Nazirite, and then empowered him to go and kill Philistines in personal combat, thereby touching dead bodies. So God waived one principle for a more important one; and yet Samson abused this, taking the principle far further than God intended, to the point that he ended up justifying sin as righteousness. The idea of binding the strong man (Mt. 12:29) must surely look back to Samson. This means that Jesus saw Samson at that time as the very epitome of Satan, even though ultimately he was a man of faith (Heb. 11:32). Thus the Spirit doesn't forget a man's weakness, even though ultimately he may be counted righteous.

16:22 He only ground in the prison a short time, until the great sacrifice was offered to Dagon in thanks for Samson's capture. In that time, his hair grew – but not very long, in such a short time (no more than months, :22,23). The growth of his hair is to be associated with his renewed determination to keep the Nazirite vow. He was reckoned by God as a lifelong Nazirite (15:7); the time when his hair was cut was therefore

shaved. ²³ The lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to rejoice, for they said, Our god has delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. ²⁴ When the people saw him, they praised their god. They said, Our god has delivered our enemy, the destroyer of our country who has slain many of us, into our hand! ²⁵ When their hearts were merry they said, Call for Samson so that he can entertain us. They called Samson out of the prison, and he performed before them. They set him between the pillars, ²⁶ and Samson said to the boy who held him by the hand, Allow me to feel the pillars on which the house rests so that I can lean on them. ²⁷ Now the house was full of

men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there, and on the roof there were about three thousand men and women watching while Samson performed. ²⁸ Samson called to Yahweh and said, Lord Yahweh, remember me please, and strengthen me please, just this once oh God, that I may with one blow be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes. ²⁹ Samson took hold of the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and leaned on them, one with his right hand and the other with his left. ³⁰ Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines! He pushed with all his might and the house fell on the lords and on all the people who were there. So he killed more in his death than he killed in his life. ³¹ Then his

overlooked by God. His zealous repentance and desire to respond to the gracious way in which God still recognized him as a lifelong Nazirite, although he wasn't one, inspired him to a real faith and repentance. It was this, not the fact he had some hair again, which led to God empowering him to destroy the palace of Dagon.

16:24 Gentiles praising their gods, mocking Yahweh, and then suddenly being destroyed (16:24) was a scene repeated in Dan. 5:4. See on 13:15.

16:25 Samson suddenly called up out of the prison house cp. Joseph (Gen. 41:14) and John (Mt. 14:9). See on 13:15.

16:30 Samson's desire to die with the Philistines could be read as suicidal. In this case, he had elements of weakness at the end, and yet he was accepted as dying in faith. Or it could be understood that he wanted to die because he believed that through his death, he would achieve God's plan for taking the gates of his enemies. In this case he would have had the spirit of Christ. Samson's death plea for vengeance against the Philistines for his two eyes (:28) sounds woefully human. In some ways, for all the intensity of weeping before God in repentance (16:28 LXX), Samson had not progressed much from his attitude in 15:7, over 20 years before – where he once again had admitted that his motive for 'seeking occasion against the Philistines' was partly just personal revenge. The spirit of not avenging oneself but leaving it to God to do was evidently something he never quite rose up to in his life (Rom. 12:19). Although it seems to me it was wrong, and betrayed some unspirituality, yet it is taken as the epitome of the desire of all the faithful for vindication through the coming of Christ (Rev. 6:10).

16:31 Heb. 11:34 says that that Samson was a man of outstanding faith – yet the record in Judges seems framed to paint Samson as a womanizer, a man who lacked self-control and who only came to God in times of dire personal need. But imagine if

brothers and all the household of his father came down and took him, and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burial site of Manoah his father. He had judged Israel for twenty years.

CHAPTER 17 Jun. 16

Micah Makes Idols

There was a man of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah. ² He said to his mother, The eleven hundred pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which I heard you utter a curse - I took them. His mother said, Yahweh bless you my son. ³ He returned the eleven hundred pieces of silver to his mother and she said, I solemnly dedicate my silver to Yahweh for my son to make an engraved image and a molten image. Then I will give it back to you. ⁴ So he returned the

money to his mother and she took two hundred pieces of it and gave them to the silversmith, who made it into an engraved image and a molten image, and they were put into Micah's house. ⁵ This man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and household gods and consecrated one of his sons to be his priest. ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.

A Levite Comes to Micah

⁷ There was a young Levite who had been living in Bethlehem Judah, ⁸ and he left the city to find a better place, and came to the hill country of Ephraim to the house of Micah. ⁹ Micah said to him, Where have you come from? He said to him, I am a Levite of Bethlehem Judah, and I am looking for a place to live. ¹⁰ Micah

only the negative incidents in our own lives, over a period of 40 years, were recorded. Anyone reading it would conclude that we were hypocritical to claim to have any hope of salvation. In our self-examination, we sometimes see only this negative record; we fail to see that God has justified us, that in His record book, we are ranked among the faithful, as Samson was in Hebrews 11. Any reflection on Samson needs to bear this in mind. He seems to have lived the rest of his life full of faith and zeal – although this doesn't minimize the mistakes he made.

17:3 We see here the continued theme of Judges – that the people confused serving the true God with serving idols. The man repents, he has a conscience; and his mother isn't an atheist, she's not rejected Yahweh; but their morality has become so confused. We see the same all around us today both doctrinally and practically, and we can easily be sucked into the same nexus of confusion unless we base our conscience, faith and understanding upon God's revealed word. The fault for the situation is also put upon the fact there was no leadership, and people did what *they* felt was right rather than what God had declared in His word (:6). There is no 'light within', as the Proverbs frequently declare, the way that seems right to man is often not (Prov. 14:12; 16:25; 21:2).

17:10, 11 Micah asked the young Levite, who was "unto him as one of his sons", to "be unto me a father and a priest" (note the paradox – the son is as a father), resulting in others likewise asking him to "be unto us a father and a priest" (18:19). The

said to him, Live with me and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give you ten pieces of silver per year, a suit of clothing and your food. So the Levite agreed. ¹¹ The young Levite was content to dwell with the man and became unto him as one of his sons. ¹² Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest, living in his house. ¹³ Then Micah said, Now know I that Yahweh will do good to me, since I have a Levite as my priest.

CHAPTER 18 Jun. 16

The Danites Invade Laish

In those days there was no king in Israel, and at that time the tribe of the Danites looked for a place to live in, because up until then they had not come into their inheritance among the tribes of Israel. ² The children of Dan sent five men of their family, men of valour, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land and

to search it, and they said to them, Go, explore the land! They came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there. ³ When they were near the house of Micah they recognised the voice of the young Levite, so they went in there and said to him, Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? Why are you here? ⁴ He said to them, This is what Micah has done with me, and he has hired me to be his priest. ⁵ They said to him, Please enquire of God to find out whether our journey will be successful. ⁶ The priest said to them, Go in peace. Your way has the approval of Yahweh. ⁷ Then the five men departed and came to Laish. They saw that the people there lived in security like the Sidonians, quiet and unsuspecting, and they were prosperous, lacking nothing. Also they were far from the Sidonians and had no dealings with anyone else. ⁸ The men returned to

point is, no matter how unqualified a person may be for the job, they may be pressed into being leaders because that's what nominally religious people so desperately need. There's a desire in most people for religious leadership rather than forging a direct relationship with God through personal response to His word and accepting His system of mediation between Him and us, which in our day is through His Son.

18:2 Again we see the quasi spirituality of the people at this time; this sending out of spies was framed in the language of Joshua sending out spies and then taking the land. They likewise say that the land is "good" (:9) just as the faithful spies said; and their description of the land as lacking nothing good (:10) is quoting Moses' words about the land in Dt. 8:9. But these Danites hadn't taken the land assigned to them by Joshua (:1). Mixing the flesh and the spirit is the way to total destruction; unless we are completely devoted to God's ways we will fail.

18:6 The men ask him to enquire of "God" but he immediately replies that "Yahweh" is blessing their plans. He didn't know the true God in practice but he used all the right language. There are other examples of men assuming all too quickly that they are speaking on God's behalf (2 Sam. 7:3; 1 Kings 22:15-17). We aren't to assume that we instinctively, intuitively know what God's will is, but to base our view upon His revealed word.

their brothers to Zorah and Eshtaol, and their brothers asked them, What did you find? ⁹ They said, Come on, let us go up against them, because we have seen the land, and it is very good. Do you doubt? Don't hesitate; go in to take possession of the land. ¹⁰ When you get there, you will find an unsuspecting people, and the land is large. God has given it to you, a place where there is no lack of anything that is in the earth. ¹¹ Six hundred armed men of the family of the Danites set out from there, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol. ¹² They went up and encamped in Kiriath Jearim in Judah. That is why they called that place The Camp of Dan, to this day; it is behind Kiriath Jearim. ¹³ They went from there to the hill country of Ephraim, and came to the house of Micah.

The Levite Joins the Danites

¹⁴ Then the five men who went to spy out the country of Laish said to their brothers, Do you know that there is in these houses an ephod and household gods, an engraved image and a molten image? Now therefore consider what you have to do. ¹⁵ They turned in there and came to the house of the young Levite, to the house of Micah, and asked him how he was. ¹⁶ The six hundred armed men of Dan stood by the entrance of the

gate. ¹⁷ The five men who had gone to spy out the land went in there and took the engraved image, the ephod, the household gods and the molten image; and the priest stood by the entrance of the gate with the six hundred armed men. ¹⁸ When these men went into Micah's house and fetched the engraved image, the ephod, the household gods and the molten image, the priest said to them, What are you doing? ¹⁹ They said to him, Keep quiet, put your hand on your mouth and go with us, and be unto us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and a family in Israel? ²⁰ The priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, the household gods and the engraved image, and went with the people. ²¹ So they turned and departed, putting the little ones, the livestock and the goods in front of them. ²² When they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men who were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together and overtook the Danites. ²³ They shouted after the Danites, who turned round and said to Micah, What is the matter with you that you come with such a company? ²⁴ He said, You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and have gone away, and what else do I have? How then can

18:19 – see on 17:10,11.

18:24 *What else do I have* – This man's false religion meant everything to him; he was very religious, but didn't know the true God. Sincerity of devotion won't save us if we are devoted to the wrong understanding of God; those like Cornelius who sincerely seek the true God will find Him, but religious devotion of itself isn't serving God in spirit and truth as He requires (Jn. 4:24).

you say to me, ‘What is the matter with you?’²⁵ The Danites said to him, Don’t argue with us, or angry fellows might attack you, and you will lose your life, with the lives of your household.²⁶ The Danites went on their way, and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house.²⁷ They took what Micah had made and his priest and came to Laish, to a people unsuspecting and secure, and attacked them with the sword, and they burnt the city with fire.²⁸ There was no deliverer, because it was far from Sidon and they had no dealings with anyone else; it was in the valley that lies by Beth Rehob. They built the city and lived there.²⁹ They called the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel, but the name of the city before was Laish.³⁰ The Danites set up for themselves the engraved image, and Jonathan the son of Gershom the son of Moses and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the time of the captivity of the land.³¹ So they set up for themselves Micah’s engraved image which he had made, using it all the time that God’s house was in Shiloh.

CHAPTER 19 Jun. 17

A Levite and His Concubine

In those days, when there was no king in Israel, there was a Levite living on the farther side of the hill country of Ephraim, who took a concubine out of Bethlehem Judah.² His concubine was unfaithful to him, and went away from him to her father’s

house to Bethlehem Judah, and was there for four months.³ Her husband went after her to persuade her to return. He had his servant with him and a couple of donkeys, and she brought him into her father’s house. When her father saw him, he was pleased to meet him.⁴ His father-in-law, the girl’s father, persuaded him to stay, and he stayed with him three days, eating and drinking and sleeping there.⁵ On the fourth day they arose early in the morning, and he got ready to depart, and the girl’s father said to his son-in-law, Strengthen yourself with something to eat and then go on your way.⁶ So they sat down, ate and drank together, and then the girl’s father said to the man, Please stay another night and enjoy yourself.⁷ When the man got up to go, his father-in-law urged him to stay, so he stayed there again.⁸ On the fifth day he got up early to leave, and the girl’s father said, Please refresh yourself and stay until the afternoon; and they ate together.⁹ When the man, his concubine and his servant got up to leave, his father-in-law, the girl’s father, said to him, Look now, it’s nearly evening; please stay all night. Stay here and enjoy yourself, and tomorrow set off early and go home.¹⁰ But the man wouldn’t stay that night; he got up and departed, and went towards Jebus (that is Jerusalem) with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine.¹¹ When they were near Jebus, the light was almost gone, and the servant said to his master, Please come and let us go into this city of the

Jebusites, and stay the night there. ¹² His master said to him, We won't go into the city of a foreigner whose people are not Israelites; we will go on to Gibeah. ¹³ He said to his servant, Come and let us get to one of these places; we will spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah. ¹⁴ So they went on and towards evening they were near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin. ¹⁵ They stopped there to spend the night in Gibeah. They went in and sat down in the street, because no-one took them into his house for the night. ¹⁶ In the evening there came an old man from his work in the field. He was from the hill country of Ephraim and he lived in Gibeah, but the men of the place were Benjamites. ¹⁷ When he saw the traveller in the street the old man said, Where are you going? Where have you come from? ¹⁸ He said to him, We are on our way from Bethlehem Judah to the far side of the hill country of Ephraim. I am from there and I have been in Bethlehem Judah. I am going to the house of Yahweh, and no-one has taken me into his house. ¹⁹ Yet we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine also for me and for the maidservant and for the young man who is with us. We don't need anything. ²⁰ The old man said, Peace to

you! But I will provide for you; don't stay all night in the street. ²¹ So he brought him into his house and gave the donkeys fodder, and they washed their feet and ate and drank. ²² As they were enjoying themselves the wicked men of the city surrounded the house, beating on the door; they said to the owner of the house, the old man, Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may have sex with him! ²³ The owner of the house went out to them and said to them, No my brothers, please don't act so wickedly; since this man is my guest don't do this disgraceful thing. ²⁴ Look, here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. I will bring them out now and you can use them and do with them what seems good unto you, but don't do any such disgusting thing to this man. ²⁵ But the men wouldn't listen to him, so the man took his concubine and brought her out to them and they raped her and abused her all night until the morning, and when the day began to dawn they let her go. ²⁶ Then the woman went back and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, and lay there until it was light. ²⁷ Her master got up in the morning and opened the door and went out to continue on his way, and there was his concubine fallen down at the

19:12 This man was likely an alcoholic (note he got drunk four days in a row, and took wine with him, :19), a polygamist and hard hearted and brutal toward his woman (he told her when unconscious and gang-raped to just get up and carry on the journey, :28). Yet he still had a religious conscience, and thought that separation from the Gentile world was important; we note that he emphasized the externality of his religious devotions in :18. But separation from the flesh must begin internally; it's no good to be separate from the world and yet live the life of the flesh in our private lives.

door of the house with her hands on the threshold. ²⁸ He said to her, Get up, and let us be going! but there was no answer. Then he put her up on the donkey and set off for home. ²⁹ When he had come into his house, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, and divided her, limb by limb, into twelve pieces, and sent them throughout all the regions of Israel. ³⁰ All who saw it said, Such a deed has never been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of Egypt until this day! Consider it! Decide what should be done.

CHAPTER 20 Jun. 18

The Israelites Attack the Benjamites

Then all the Israelites went out, and the congregation assembled as one man, from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead, to Yahweh at Mizpah. ² The leaders of the

people from all the tribes of Israel took their places in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand armed soldiers. ³ Now the Benjamites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah. The Israelites said, Tell us how this wicked thing happened. ⁴ The Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered, I came to Gibeah in Benjamin, I and my concubine, to stay the night. ⁵ The men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house at night. They intended to kill me, and they raped my concubine and she is dead. ⁶ I took my concubine and cut her in pieces and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel because they have committed this disgraceful and abominable act in Israel. ⁷ Now you Israelites, all of you, give your advice and counsel. ⁸ All the people arose as one man saying, None of us will go to his tent, neither will any of us go home.

19:30 This was done so that all who received the parts of that broken body would “consider” and be motivated in response. It was designed to elicit the declaration of their hearts, and above all to provoke to concrete action. Splitting up a body and sharing it with all Israel was clearly a type of the breaking of bread, where in symbol, the same happens. Consider some background, all of which points forward to the Lord’s sufferings: The person whose body was divided up was from Bethlehem, and of the tribe of Judah (:1); They were ‘slain’ by permission of a priest; They were dragged to death by a wicked Jewish mob; They were “brought forth” to the people just as the Lord Jesus was to the crowd (:25); “Do... what seems good unto you” (:24) is very much Pilate language; A man sought to dissuade the crowd from their purpose – again, as Pilate. There should be a like effect upon us as we receive the emblems of the Lord’s body – the inner thoughts of our hearts are elicited, and we are provoked to action.

20:1 *As one man* – Repeated in :8,11. In the same way as disparate parties became united in killing Christ, so self-righteous anger against brethren who are scapegoated can produce an apparent unity (Lk. 23:12; Acts 4:26). But the parties soon go back to their anger with each other once the group they have set up as their common enemy is either destroyed or the situation moves on.

⁹ This is what we will do to Gibeah: we will go up against it by lot, ¹⁰ and we will take ten men of every hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred out of every thousand and a thousand out of ten thousand, to get food for the army so that when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin they can punish them for the disgusting thing they have done in Israel. ¹¹ So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united as one man. ¹² The tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin saying, What is this disgusting crime that has been committed among you? ¹³ Now surrender the wicked men of Gibeah so that we may put them to death and put away evil from Israel. But Benjamin would not listen to their brothers the Israelites. ¹⁴ The Benjamites gathered together out of their cities to Gibeah to go out to fight against the Israelites. ¹⁵ The Benjamites numbered twenty six thousand swordsmen out of the cities, besides the seven hundred chosen men of Gibeah. ¹⁶ Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed, each of whom could sling

stones at a hair's breadth and not miss. ¹⁷ The men of Israel apart from Benjamin were four hundred thousand swordsmen, all warriors. ¹⁸ The Israelites went up to Bethel and asked counsel of God. They said, Who shall go up for us first to battle against the children of Benjamin? Yahweh said, Judah first. ¹⁹ The next morning the Israelites got up and encamped against Gibeah. ²⁰ The men of Israel went out to fight against Benjamin and took up battle positions against them at Gibeah. ²¹ The Benjamites came out of Gibeah and destroyed twenty-two thousand Israelites on that day. ²² The men of Israel encouraged one another and took up their positions again in the place where they had stationed themselves on the first day. ²³ They went up and wept before Yahweh until evening, and they asked Yahweh, Shall we go up to fight again against the Benjamites, our brothers? Yahweh said, Go up against them. ²⁴ The Israelites went against the Benjamites the second day. ²⁵ Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah the second day, and destroyed another eighteen thousand Israelite men, all

20:16 We read of men being able to sling stones and not miss “a hair’s breadth” – an idiom which of course isn’t literally true. The Bible uses such inexact language at times in that it uses human terms; which explains why the New Testament speaks of ‘demons’ as if they exist whereas elsewhere it shows clearly that they have no real existence.

20:23 Both sides were in the wrong. But God as it were lead the idolatrous and hypocritical Israelites further down the downward spiral. We learn from this that division amongst God’s people is in a sense sent from Him in the sense that He confirms divisive brethren in their position they wish to adopt, and even uses it to destroy communities which displease Him. Even with Gentile nations, His preferred manner of destroying their armies was to turn their swords against themselves.

armed with swords. ²⁶ Then the Israelites, all the people, went up to Bethel and wept and sat there before Yahweh and fasted that day until evening. They offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to Yahweh. ²⁷ The Israelites asked Yahweh (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, ²⁸ and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron ministered before it), Shall we yet again go out to fight against Benjamin our brother, or not? Yahweh said, Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver him into your hand. ²⁹ Israel set ambushes all around Gibeah. ³⁰ They went up against the Benjamites on the third day and set themselves in position against Gibeah as before. ³¹ The Benjamites went out against them and were drawn away from the city. They began to fight the Israelites as before, on the highways on the way to Bethel and Gibeah, and in the field, killing about thirty men of Israel. ³² The Benjamites said, We are defeating them as before. But the Israelites said, Let's retreat and draw them away from the city to the highways.

The Benjamites Defeated

³³ All the men of Israel arose up from their camp and set themselves in position at Baal Tamar, and the ambush charged from Maareh Geba. ³⁴ Ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel attacked Gibeah and the battle was severe, but the Benjamites didn't know that disaster was upon them. ³⁵ Yahweh defeated Benjamin before Israel, and the Israelites de-

stroyed twenty five thousand one hundred armed Benjamites that day. ³⁶ Then the Benjamites saw that they were defeated, for the men of Israel had given way to Benjamin, trusting in the ambush which they had set against Gibeah. ³⁷ The men in the ambush rushed into Gibeah, spread out and put all the city to the sword. ³⁸ Now the appointed signal between the men of Israel and the ambush was that they should send up a great cloud of smoke out of the city. ³⁹ Then the men of Israel would turn in the battle. Benjamin began to attack and killed about thirty of the men of Israel, for they said, Surely they are being defeated as before. ⁴⁰ But when the smoke began to go up out of the city, the Benjamites looked behind them and saw the whole city going up in smoke. ⁴¹ Then the men of Israel turned on them and the men of Benjamin were terrified, seeing that disaster had come on them. ⁴² So they fled before the men of Israel towards the wilderness, but they could not escape the battle, and the Israelites who came out of the cities destroyed them there. ⁴³ They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them and ran them down as far as Gibeah toward the east. ⁴⁴ Eighteen thousand valiant men of Benjamin fell. ⁴⁵ They turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and the Israelites killed five thousand of them along the way and chased them to Gidom, killing two thousand more. ⁴⁶ So that day twenty-five thousand valiant fighters of Benjamin were killed. ⁴⁷ But six hundred men turned

and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and stayed there four months. ⁴⁸ The men of Israel went back to Benjamin and put to the sword everything in the towns, including the livestock, and anything they found. All the towns which they found they set on fire.

CHAPTER 21 Jun. 19

Finding Wives for the Benjamites

Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah: Not one of us will give his daughter to a Benjamite as wife. ² The people came to Bethel where they sat until evening before God, raising their voices and weeping bitterly. ³ They said, Yahweh, the God of Israel, why has this happened to Israel, that there should be today one tribe missing from Israel? ⁴ Next day the people rose early and built an altar and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. ⁵ They asked, Who is there among all the tribes of Israel who didn't come up to the assembly before Yahweh? For they had taken a solemn oath that anyone who

didn't come up to Yahweh to Mizpah should surely be put to death. ⁶ The Israelites grieved for Benjamin their brother. There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day. ⁷ How shall we provide wives for those who remain, since we have sworn by Yahweh that we will not give them our daughters as wives? ⁸ They asked, Which of the tribes of Israel didn't come up to Yahweh to Mizpah? They found that none from the camp from Jabesh Gilead came to the assembly. ⁹ For when the people were counted, none of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead were there. ¹⁰ The congregation sent twelve thousand valiant fighting men and commanded them: Go and put the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead to the sword, including the women and children. ¹¹ This is what you are to do: kill every male and every woman who is not a virgin. ¹² They found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known man by lying with him, and they brought them to the camp at

21:2 This repentance of people who had many other weaknesses in their lives is similar to the situation in 17:1-4. It shows there is a religious conscience in people, no matter how far they stray from God. We should bear this in mind when we become discouraged in our preaching by the thought that 'nobody's interested'. People are, passively.

21:4 Peace offerings were offered in times of Israel's sadness and defeat (see too 20:26). In our traumas of life, we need to remember that the only thing that matters is our peace with God, the joyful fact that we have nothing separating us. As Israel made their peace offerings at those times, so we too should consider the possibility of breaking bread, perhaps alone, as we meet the desperate traumas of our lives.

21:5 Israel made oaths before Yahweh which they didn't keep and yet God worked through their failure in order to preserve His people... we see here how God works through human self-righteousness, failure and hypocrisy, in order to do His work and save people. We likewise shouldn't totally turn away from those guilty of such things but try to patiently work through them still to God's glory.

Shiloh in the land of Canaan. ¹³ The whole congregation sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites who were in the rock of Rimmon. ¹⁴ So then Benjamin returned and they gave them the women whom they had saved alive from Jabesh Gilead, but they weren't enough for them. ¹⁵ The people grieved for Benjamin because Yahweh had made a gap in the tribes of Israel. ¹⁶ Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we provide wives for those who remain, since the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? ¹⁷ They said, There must be an inheritance for the surviving Benjamites so that a tribe will not be blotted out from Israel. ¹⁸ We can't give them wives from our daughters since the Israelites have taken this oath saying, 'Cursed be he who gives a wife to Benjamin'. ¹⁹ They said, Look, there is an annual feast of Yahweh in Shiloh, which is on the north of Bethel, east of the highway

from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah. ²⁰ They instructed the Benjamites: Go and lie in wait in the vineyards ²¹ and watch. When the daughters of Shiloh come out to join in the dances, then rush out of the vineyards and each of you catch a wife from the girls of Shiloh and go to the land of Benjamin. ²² When their fathers or their brothers come to complain to us, we will say to them, 'Allow them to do this because we didn't get wives for them in the war. You didn't give them to them, so you are not guilty'. ²³ So that is what the Benjamites did. They took wives for each of them from the girls who danced, and carried them off. They returned to their inheritance, rebuilt the cities and lived in them. ²⁴ Then the Israelites departed each to his tribe and family. ²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel; each man did that which was right in his own eyes.

21:24 *Each man did that which was right in his own eyes* – It was right that there was no human king in Israel, because God was their king. This statement may therefore not be a criticism, but rather an observation – that in the absence of a human king, the people were to make their own personal decisions about what was right and wrong, just as we should. The sad thing was that Israel turned away from God's word and therefore lost a correct sense of right and wrong.

RUTH

CHAPTER 1 Jun. 20

The Family Background of Ruth

In the days when the judges judged, there was a famine in the land. A man of Bethlehem Judah went with his wife and two sons to live in the country of Moab. ² The name of the man was Elimelech; his wife's, Naomi; his two sons', Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites of Bethlehem Judah. They came into the country of Moab, and stayed there. ³ Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. ⁴ The sons took wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other was Ruth. They lived there about ten years. ⁵ Mahlon and Chilion both died, and the woman was bereaved of her two children and of her husband. ⁶ Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, to return from the country of Moab; for she had heard in the country of Moab how that Yahweh had visited His people in giving them bread. ⁷ She left the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law went with her. They began the journey to the land of Judah. ⁸ Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to your mother's house, Yahweh deal kindly with you,

as you have dealt with the dead, and with me. ⁹ Yahweh grant you that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice, and wept. ¹⁰ They said to her, No, but we will return with you to your people. ¹¹ Naomi said, Go back, my daughters. Why do you want to go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? ¹² Go back, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, 'I have hope', if I should even have a husband tonight, and should also bear sons; ¹³ would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from having husbands? No, my daughters, for it grieves me much for your sakes, for the hand of Yahweh has gone out against me.

Ruth Returns with Naomi to Judah

¹⁴ They lifted up their voices, and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law farewell, but Ruth stayed with her. ¹⁵ She said, Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people, and to her god. Follow your sister-in-law. ¹⁶ Ruth said, Don't entreat me to leave you, and to return from following after you, for

1:5 The simple message is that marriage out of the faith and leaving God's people – no matter how apostate they are – and going into the world, simply doesn't bring blessing.

1:8, 9 Naomi uses the term "Yahweh" freely to her Gentile relatives; she was quite open about her faith, even though the Moabites had their own gods.

1:16 In Jn. 20:18, the risen Jesus stresses to the disciples that their Father is His Father, and their God is His God. He appears to be alluding to Ruth 1:16 LXX where

where you go, I will go; and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God; ¹⁷ where you die, will I die, and there will I be buried. Yahweh do so to me, and more also, if anything but death part you and me. ¹⁸ When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, she stopped speaking to her. ¹⁹ So those two travelled to Bethlehem. When they had come to Bethlehem, it happened that all the city was agitated about them, and they asked, Is this Naomi? ²⁰ She said to them, Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara; for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. ²¹ I went out full, and Yahweh has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since Yahweh has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me? ²² So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who re-

turned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of the barley harvest.

CHAPTER 2 Jun. 20

Ruth Meets Boaz

Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. ² Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find grace. She said to her, Go, my daughter. ³ She went, and came and gleaned in the field behind the reapers: and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. ⁴ Behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, Yahweh be with you! They answered him, Yahweh bless you! ⁵ Then Boaz said to his servant who was set over

Ruth is urged to remain behind in Moab [cp. Mary urging Jesus?], but she says she will come with her mother in law, even though she is of a different people, and "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God". This allusion would therefore be saying: 'OK I am of a different nature / people to you now, but that doesn't essentially affect our *relationship*; I so love you, I will always stick with you wherever, and my God is your God'.

1:17 To swear by a god meant that the swearer had accepted that god as theirs. The fact Ruth swears by Yahweh means that she had accepted Yahweh as her God; thanks to the quiet witness of her mother in law. Ruth came to really love the God of Israel. She willingly decided to forego re-marriage after her husband died for the wonder of the fact she had been allowed in to the commonwealth of Israel. As it happened, this is a story with a happy ending. But she was prepared for it not to be. Humanly speaking, Naomi's life had been a disaster. If Ruth was looking for a God which gave His devotees present blessing, then it wasn't Yahweh; for all she had seen of Him was in the life of Naomi and her family. That woman had lost all her men, and thus become a nobody in the eyes of society. Naomi wasn't seeking any present benefit from her God; it must've been the relationship with God right now which Naomi had, His grace to her in spiritual terms, and the hope of the future Kingdom, which so attracted her. And the attraction must've been in the example of Naomi, rather than in the pages of a book.

the reapers, Whose young woman is this? ⁶ The servant who was set over the reapers answered, It is the Moabite woman who came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab. ⁷ She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves’. So she came, and has continued even from the morning until now, although she stayed a little in the house. ⁸ Then Boaz said to Ruth, Listen, my daughter: Don’t go to glean in another field, and don’t go away from here, but stay here close to my maidens. ⁹ Let your eyes be on the field that they reap, and go after them. Haven’t I commanded the young men not to touch you? When you are thirsty, go to the vessels, and drink from that which the young men have drawn. ¹⁰ Then she fell on her face and bowed herself to the ground, and said to him, Why have I found grace in your sight, that you should take knowledge of me, since I am a foreigner? ¹¹ Boaz answered her, I have come to know all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband; and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a

people that you didn’t know before. ¹² May Yahweh repay your work, and a full reward be given you from Yahweh, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge. ¹³ Then she said, Let me find grace in your sight, my lord, because you have comforted me, and because you have spoken to the heart of your handmaid, although I am not as one of your handmaids. ¹⁴ At meal time Boaz said to her, Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your morsel in the wine. She sat beside the reapers, and they reached her parched grain, and she ate, and was satisfied, and left some of it. ¹⁵ When she had risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and don’t reproach her. ¹⁶ Also pull out some for her from the bundles, and leave it; let her glean, and don’t rebuke her. ¹⁷ So she gleaned in the field until evening; and she beat out that which she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. ¹⁸ She carried it, and went into the city where her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned and she brought out and gave to her that which she had left after she herself had enough to eat. ¹⁹ Her mother-

2:12 See on 3:7.

A full reward – 2 Jn. 8 quotes this in saying that the hard mental effort to know Christ and believe in Him will be given a ‘full reward’. Here a ‘full reward’ is given to Ruth for working hard all day gleaning in the fields. It may be that this allusion was because “the elect lady” addressed by John was in fact a proselyte widow, like Ruth. But the point is, we have to *labour*, as much as one might work hard gleaning in the field all day, in order to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

2:14 Offering bread and wine was a sign of fellowship and acceptance. The fact we are invited to do this by the Lord Jesus is a sign that He eagerly accepts us and seeks fellowship with us.

in-law said to her, Where have you gleaned today? Where have you worked? Blessed be he who took notice of you! She showed her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz. ²⁰ Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of Yahweh, Who has not left off His grace to the living and to the dead. Naomi said to her, The man is a close relative to us, one of our near kinsmen. ²¹ Ruth the Moabitess said, Yes, he said to me, 'You shall stay close to my young men, until they have ended all my harvest'. ²² Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maidens, and that they not meet you in any other field. ²³ So she stayed close to the maidens of Boaz, to glean to the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and she lived with her mother-in-law.

CHAPTER 3 Jun. 21

Naomi's Bold Plan for Ruth and Boaz

Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for you, that it may be well

with you? ² Now isn't Boaz our kinsman, with whose maidens you were? Behold, he winnows barley tonight in the threshing floor. ³ Therefore wash yourself, anoint yourself, get dressed up, and go down to the threshing floor, but don't make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ It shall be, when he lies down, that you shall note the place where he shall lie, and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lay down; then he will tell you what you shall do. ⁵ She said to her, All that you say I will do. ⁶ She went down to the threshing floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law told her. ⁷ When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. She came softly, uncovered his feet, and laid herself down. ⁸ It happened at midnight, that the man was startled and turned himself; and noticed a woman lay at his feet. ⁹ He said, Who are you? She answered, I am Ruth your handmaid. Therefore spread your skirt over your handmaid; for you are a near kinsman. ¹⁰ He said, Blessed are you by Yahweh, my daughter. You have shown

2:20 *Near kinsman* – Yahweh is repeatedly described in Isaiah as Israel's *go'el*, redeemer (Is. 41:14; 43:14; 44:6,24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7,26; 54:5,8). The redeemer could redeem a close relative from slavery or repurchase property lost during hard times (Lev. 25:25,26,47-55). This is how close God becomes to us in Christ. Boaz was therefore manifesting God to Ruth by marrying her, in the same way as in Christian marriage the husband manifests Christ's saving work to the wife (Eph. 5:23).

3:7 Ruth is a wonderful example of a spiritually ambitious person. It was unheard of in those times for a woman to propose to a man; yet by coming to him, uncovering his feet and laying under his mantle, she was stating that she wished to see him as a manifestation of God to her (:7,9 = 2:12). She went after him, following him (:10); the poor, landless Gentile aspired to be a part of a wealthy Jewish family, in order to fulfil the spirit of the Law. And she attained this.

more grace in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as you didn't go after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹ Now, my daughter, don't be afraid; I will do to you all that you say; for all my people in this city know that you are a worthy woman. ¹² Now it is true that I am a near kinsman; however there is a kinsman nearer than I. ¹³ Stay this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform for you the part of a kinsman, so be it; let him do the kinsman's part. But if he will not do the part of a kinsman for you, then will I do the part of a kinsman for you, as Yahweh lives. Lie down until the morning.

Ruth Returns to Naomi

¹⁴ She lay at his feet until the morning. She rose up in the dark; for he said, Let it not be known that a woman came to the threshing floor. ¹⁵ He said, Bring the mantle that is on you, and hold it. She held it; and he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her; and he went into the city. ¹⁶ When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, How did it go, my daughter? She told her all that the man had done to her. ¹⁷ She said,

He gave me these six measures of barley; for he said, 'Don't go empty to your mother-in-law'. ¹⁸ Then she said, Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will end; for the man will not rest, until he has finished the thing this day.

CHAPTER 4 Jun. 21

Boaz Redeems Naomi's Land and Ruth

Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. When the near kinsman of whom Boaz spoke came by he said to him, Come over here, friend, and sit down! He turned aside, and sat down. ² He took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit down here. They sat down. ³ He said to the near kinsman: Naomi, who has come back out of the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's. ⁴ I thought to disclose it to you saying, 'Buy it in the presence of those who sit here, and of the elders of my people'. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then let me know. You have first right to redeem it; and I am next in line. He said, I will redeem it. ⁵ Then Boaz said, On the day you buy the

3:16-18 It is hard to find women-only scenes in contemporary literature written during Biblical times. The women are presented in terms of the men with whom they inter-relate. Yet Elizabeth and Mary are recorded as having a conversation with no male present (Lk. 1:39-45); and there are other such passages here in Ruth (1:6-2:2; 3:16-18; 4:14-17). In all these passages, the reader is invited to share the woman's perspective. It can hardly be said that the Bible is somehow anti-women, in fact God's acceptance of both male and female and deep recognition of the value of the human person, whether man or woman, marks it out as quite different from human literature of the time.

4:5 A man *had* to redeem the property of a dead relative in some cases by marrying his late brother's wife; but this would have resulted in polygamy (Boaz surely had other

field from the hand of Naomi, you must buy it also from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead on his inheritance. ⁶ The near kinsman said, I can't redeem it for myself, otherwise I will spoil my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption for yourself; for I can't redeem it. ⁷ Now this was the custom in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning exchanging, to confirm all things: a man took off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour; and this was the way of affirmation in Israel. ⁸ So the near kinsman said to Boaz, Buy it for yourself. He took off his shoe. ⁹ Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, You are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. ¹⁰ Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, I have purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of

the dead on his inheritance, that the name of the dead not be cut off from among his brothers, and from the gate of his place. You are witnesses this day. ¹¹ All the people who were in the gate and the elders said, We are witnesses. May Yahweh make the woman who has come into your house like Rachel and like Leah, who built the house of Israel; and treat you worthily in Ephrathah, and bring you fame in Bethlehem. ¹² Let your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, of the seed which Yahweh shall give you of this young woman.

Boaz Marries Ruth

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife; and he went in to her, and Yahweh gave her conception, and she bore a son. ¹⁴ The women said to Naomi, Blessed be Yahweh, who has not left you this day without a near kinsman; and let his name

wives), thus creating a situation whereby one principle had to be broken (in this case, of one man : one woman as ordained in Eden), in order to keep another principle (to raise up children in love to your deceased brother). God has made spiritual life not always so black and white – in order that our personal ethical debates, our prayerfulness and reflection upon God's word, will result in our taking whatever decisions we do from a good motivation, rather than out of mere submission to a law we have no understanding of.

4:6 *Otherwise I will spoil my own inheritance* – He was concerned that if he had children by another woman apart from those he already had, then his land which he would leave them as an inheritance would have to be split up between his existing children, and those children he would have by Ruth. It's clear from 2:3 that the fields were split up into strips, each strip belonging to different people. The best thing was to have one large field, rather than strips here and there. This nameless relative didn't want to spoil or break up his inheritance, he wanted to preserve it intact. He thought only of himself, not his brother. This man died and even his name wasn't preserved; yet Boaz who did care for his brother and was prepared to spoil or split up his physical inheritance received as it were an eternal inheritance, in that through Ruth he became the ancestor of Jesus (4:21).

be famous in Israel. ¹⁵ He shall be to you a restorer of life, and sustain you in your old age, for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him. ¹⁶ Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse to it. ¹⁷ The neighbouring women gave him a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi! And they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David. ¹⁸ Now this is the

history of the generations of Perez: Perez became the father of Hezron, ¹⁹ and Hezron became the father of Ram, and Ram became the father of Amminadab, ²⁰ and Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon became the father of Salmon, ²¹ and Salmon became the father of Boaz, and Boaz became the father of Obed, ²² and Obed became the father of Jesse, and Jesse became the father of David.

4:15 Hezekiah had lamented that he would die without a seed (Is. 38:12), and so did those who had also become (in their minds?) eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom (Is. 56:3-8). There was that human desire for a seed, a “house” to perpetuate their name. But they are promised a name in God’s house (family) in the Kingdom, better than of sons and daughters in this life (Is. 56:5). This alludes here, where Ruth is described as being better than sons to Naomi. In other words, the Ruth: Naomi relationship, featuring as it did a willingness to deny marriage to unbelievers for the sake of the God of Israel, is a type of *our* relationship with God.

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

CHAPTER 1 Jun. 22

Hannah Prays for a Son

Now there was a man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. ² He had two wives; the name of one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah; Peninnah had children but Hannah had no children. ³ This man went up out of his city from year to year to worship and to sacrifice to Yahweh of Armies in Shiloh. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests to Yahweh, were there. ⁴ When the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he gave to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and her daughters portions, ⁵ but to Hannah he gave a double portion, for he loved Hannah, but Yahweh had shut up her womb. ⁶ Her rival provoked her severely, to make her fret because Yahweh had shut up her womb. ⁷ This went on year after year when she went up to the house of Yahweh; she provoked her, therefore she wept and didn't eat. ⁸ Elkanah her husband said to her, Hannah, why do you weep? Why don't you eat? Why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons? ⁹ So Hannah rose up after they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh. Now Eli

the priest was sitting on his seat by the doorpost of Yahweh's temple. ¹⁰ She was in bitterness of soul and prayed to Yahweh and wept bitterly. ¹¹ She vowed a vow and said, Yahweh of Armies, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your handmaid and remember me and not forget Your handmaid, but will give to Your handmaid a boy, then I will give him to Yahweh all the days of his life, and no razor shall come on his head. ¹² As she continued praying before Yahweh, Eli saw her mouth. ¹³ Now Hannah spoke in her heart, only her lips moved but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. ¹⁴ Eli said to her, How long will you be drunk? Put away your wine from you. ¹⁵ Hannah answered, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before Yahweh. ¹⁶ Don't count your handmaid a wicked woman, for I have been speaking out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation. ¹⁷ Then Eli answered, Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him. ¹⁸ She said, Let your handmaid find grace in your sight. So the woman went her way and ate, and her face wasn't sad any more.

1:18 After praying for a child, Hannah went her way “and her face wasn't sad any more” because she truly believed she would soon become pregnant. She's a great example to us of believing and feeling that what we have prayed for, we have actually received (Mk. 11:24).

The Birth of Samuel

¹⁹ They rose up in the morning early and worshipped before Yahweh and returned home to Ramah, and Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and Yahweh remembered her. ²⁰ When the time had come, Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she named him Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of Yahweh. ²¹ The man Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to Yahweh the yearly sacrifice and his vow. ²² But Hannah didn't go up, for she said to her husband, Not until the child is weaned, then I will bring him that he may appear before Yahweh and stay there forever. ²³ Elkanah her husband said to her, Do what seems good to you. Wait until you have weaned him, only may Yahweh establish His word. So the woman waited and nursed her son until she weaned him.

Samuel Is Dedicated to Yahweh

²⁴ When she had weaned him she took him up with her, with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of meal and a bottle of wine, and brought him to Yahweh's sanctuary in Shiloh. The

child was young. ²⁵ They killed the bull and brought the child to Eli. ²⁶ She said, Oh my lord, as your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to Yahweh. ²⁷ For this child I prayed, and Yahweh has given me my petition which I asked of Him. ²⁸ Therefore I have given him to Yahweh. As long as he lives he is given to Yahweh. Eli worshipped Yahweh there.

CHAPTER 2 Jun. 23***The Prayer of Hannah***

Hannah prayed, and said: My heart exults in Yahweh! My horn is exalted in Yahweh. My mouth boasts over my enemies because I rejoice in Your salvation. ² There is none as holy as Yahweh, for there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God. ³ Talk no more so exceedingly proudly. Don't let hardness come out of your mouth, for Yahweh is a God of knowledge, though actions be not weighed. ⁴ The bows of the mighty men are broken, those who stumbled are armed with strength. ⁵ Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread. Those

1:19 Hannah's prayer of thanks is clearly the basis for Mary's prayer; and Hannah had requested a child, and received it. As Hannah described herself as "Your handmaid" (1 Sam. 1:18), so did Mary too (Lk. 1:38). God remembered His mercy in making Mary conceive (Lk. 1:54), just as God had remembered Hannah in answering her prayer (:19). And just as Hannah "rose up" and went to Ramah, so Mary "rose up" and went to Judea (Lk. 1:39). There is reason to think that Hannah too desired to bear Messiah. The lesson is that examples of prayer influence others.

2:3 Hannah had reflected upon God's omniscience; and on this basis she tells Peninah not to be proud and use hard words against her, exactly because of this. That He sees and knows all things should humble us and affect our speech.

Yahweh is a God of knowledge, though actions be not weighed – Although actions are not judged immediately and publically ("weighed"), they surely will be – because, quite simply, God knows.

who were hungry are satisfied. Yes, the barren has borne seven; she who has many children languishes. ⁶ Yahweh kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. ⁷ Yahweh makes poor and makes rich. He brings low and He also lifts up. ⁸ He raises up the poor out of the dust. He lifts up the needy from the dunghill, to make them sit with princes and inherit the throne of glory. For the pillars of the earth are Yahweh's; He has set the world upon them. ⁹ He will keep the feet of His holy ones, but the wicked shall be put to silence in darkness; for no man shall prevail by strength. ¹⁰ Those who strive with Yahweh shall be broken to pieces. He will thunder against them in the sky. Yahweh will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to His king and exalt the horn of His anointed. ¹¹ Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the child served Yahweh before Eli the priest.

The Wicked Sons of Eli

¹² Now the sons of Eli were men of Belial; they didn't know Yahweh. ¹³ The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand. ¹⁴ He thrust it into the pan, kettle, cauldron or pot; all that the fork brought up the priest took for him-

self. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. ¹⁵ Moreover, before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came and said to the man who sacrificed, Give meat to roast for the priest, for he will not accept boiled meat from you, but raw. ¹⁶ If the man said to him, Let the fat be burned first, and then take as much as you want; he would say, No, give it to me now, and if you don't, I will take it by force. ¹⁷ The sin of the young men was very great before Yahweh, for they despised the offering of Yahweh. ¹⁸ But Samuel ministered before Yahweh, being a child, clothed with a linen ephod. ¹⁹ Moreover his mother made him a little robe and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. ²⁰ Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife and said, Yahweh give you children by this woman for the petition which was asked of Yahweh. They went to their own home. ²¹ Yahweh visited Hannah and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. The child Samuel grew before Yahweh. ²² Now Eli was very old, and he heard all that his sons did to all Israel, how they lay with the women who served at the door of the Tent of Meeting. ²³ He said to them, Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil deeds from all the people. ²⁴ No my sons, it is

2:6 Clearly *sheol* refers to the grave and not any place of eternal condemnation in fire.

2:12 *Men of Belial* – The idea is 'sinful men'. In the Old Testament, sin was personified as 'Belial', so we shouldn't be surprised if it's personified as 'the enemy' or 'satan' in the New Testament.

no good report that I hear; you make Yahweh's people disobey. ²⁵ If one man sins against another, God will judge him; but if a man sins against Yahweh, who shall entreat for him? However, they didn't listen to their father, because Yahweh intended to kill them. ²⁶ The child Samuel grew and increased in favour with Yahweh and with men.

Prophecy against Eli's House

²⁷ A man of God came to Eli and said to him, Thus says Yahweh, 'Did I not reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt, in bondage to Pharaoh's house? ²⁸ Did I not choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to go up to My altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before Me? Did I not give to the house of your father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire? ²⁹ Why then do you despise

My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded for My dwelling, and honour your sons above Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?' ³⁰ Therefore Yahweh the God of Israel says, 'I said indeed that your house, and the house of your father, should walk before Me forever'. But now Yahweh says, 'Far be it from Me. Those who honour Me I will honour, and those who despise Me shall be despised. ³¹ The days are coming when I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father's house so that there shall not be an old man in your house. ³² In distress you would look with envy upon the wealth which I would have given Israel, but there shall not be an old man in your house forever. ³³ Any man of yours whom I shall not cut off from My altar, will only blind your eyes with tears and grieve your heart; all the

2:24 *You make Yahweh's people disobey* – We can spiritually *destroy* our brother, for whom Christ died (Rom. 14:15); we can undo the work of the cross for a brother who would otherwise be saved by it. We can make others sin (Ex. 23:33; 1 Kings 16:19). There is an urgent imperative here, to really watch our behaviour; e.g. to not drink alcohol in the presence of a brother whose conscience is weak.

2:25 *They didn't listen to their father, because Yahweh intended to kill them* – God has an ability to confirm men in the path to destruction they choose to tread. The very experience of sin confirms sinners in that way: "The way of the wicked seduces them" (Prov. 12:26). The spiritual effect of God upon men over and above their own strength is indicated by this example (cp. Josh. 11:20; Jud. 14:4; 2 Chron. 10:15).

2:30 God is unashamed about the fact that He can change His stated purposes about people in response to human behaviour; the fact God does this is simply an indication of the extent to which He is sensitive to our actions and decisions.

2:32 *The wealth which I would have given Israel* – Some prophecies simply won't come true because they refer to what God had potentially prepared for His people, but they disallow Him from giving them what He had intended. This is an example. Knowing this, women like Hannah clearly hoped and prayed that their sons would be Messiah (2:10 = Ps. 89:24); for they perceived that God's purpose was open to such a thing.

increase of your house shall die in the prime of life.³⁴ This will be the sign to you which will come on your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall both die.³⁵ I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall minister before My anointed one forever.³⁶ Each one who is left in your house shall come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a loaf of bread, and shall say, ‘Please put me into one of the priests’ offices, that I may eat a morsel of bread’.

CHAPTER 3 Jun. 24

Samuel Called by the Lord

The child Samuel ministered to Yahweh before Eli. The word of Yahweh was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision.² At that time, when Eli was laid down in his place (now his eyes had begun to grow dim, so that he could not see),³ and the lamp of God hadn’t yet gone out, and Samuel had laid down in Yahweh’s sanctuary where the ark of God was,⁴ Yahweh called Samuel, and he said Here I am.⁵ He ran

to Eli, and said, Here I am, for you called me. He said, I didn’t call; lie down again. He went and lay down.⁶ Yahweh called again, Samuel! Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, Here I am; for you called me. He answered, I didn’t call my son; lie down again.⁷ Now Samuel didn’t yet know Yahweh, neither was the word of Yahweh yet revealed to him.⁸ Yahweh called Samuel again the third time. He arose and went to Eli and said, Here I am; for you called me. Eli perceived that Yahweh had called the child.⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, Go, lie down, and if He calls you, say, ‘Speak, Yahweh, for Your servant hears’. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.¹⁰ Yahweh came and stood and called as at other times, Samuel! Samuel! Then Samuel said, Speak; for Your servant hears.¹¹ Yahweh said to Samuel, Behold, I will do something in Israel which will make both the ears of everyone who hears it tingle.¹² In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end.¹³ For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which

3:13 Eli *did* rebuke his sons; but in God’s eyes he didn’t (cp. 2:24). He said words for the sake of saying words, but in his heart he didn’t mean them. He honoured his sons above God, to make himself “fat with the best of all the offerings”. The description of Eli as being fat surely reflects his guilt (2:29; 4:18). And yet he appeared on the surface to run his family life on a spiritual footing. Eli is presented as a kindly old man who had a heart for God but was too soft on his children; but God’s judgment of him is much harsher, teaching us the serious consequence of sins of omission, and of allowing abuse to continue when it is in our power to stop it. Because Eli wouldn’t restrain the abuse, he was seen as committing those very things which he failed to rebuke. Likewise the man who wouldn’t discipline his wayward ox was to be treated as if he had committed the crime the ox did, and therefore must die if the ox killed a man (Ex. 21:29).

he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he didn't rebuke them. ¹⁴ Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the guilt of Eli's house shall not be removed with sacrifice nor offering forever. ¹⁵ Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of Yahweh. Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. ¹⁶ Then Eli called Samuel and said, Samuel, my son! He said, Here I am. ¹⁷ He said, What was it that He said to you? Please don't hide it from me. May God deal with you severely if you hide anything from me of all the things that He said to you. ¹⁸ Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. He said, It is Yahweh. Let Him do what seems good to Him. ¹⁹ Samuel grew, and Yahweh was with him, and he let none of His words fall to the ground. ²⁰ All Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Yahweh. ²¹ Yahweh appeared again in Shiloh, for Yahweh revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of Yahweh.

CHAPTER 4 Jun. 25

The Ark Captured

Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle and encamped beside Ebenezer, and the Philistines encamped in Aphek. ² The Philistines put themselves in position against Israel; when they

joined battle Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand Israelite soldiers. ³ When the people had returned to the camp the elders of Israel said, Why has Yahweh struck us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of Yahweh out of Shiloh that it may go with us and save us out of the hand of our enemies. ⁴ So the people sent to Shiloh and they brought from there the ark of the covenant of Yahweh of Armies, who sits above the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. ⁵ When the ark of the covenant of Yahweh came into the camp all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth resounded. ⁶ When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout they said, What does the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean? When they understood that the ark of Yahweh had come into the camp ⁷ they were afraid, for they said, God has come into the camp. They said, Woe to us! Nothing like this has happened before. ⁸ Woe to us! Who can deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods that struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness. ⁹ Be strong, and behave like men, you Philistines, so that you will not be servants to the Hebrews as they have

3:18 When Samuel told Eli of the prophetic vision which he had received, Eli commented: "It is Yahweh". He meant 'It is the word of the Lord'; but he saw God as effectively His word. "The word", the "word of the Kingdom", "the Gospel", "the word of God" are all parallel expressions throughout the Gospels. Our attitude to God's word is our attitude to Him.

been to you. Strengthen yourselves like men and fight! ¹⁰ The Philistines fought and Israel was defeated and they fled every man to his tent and there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand Israelite foot soldiers were killed. ¹¹ The ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed.

Eli's Death

¹² A man of Benjamin ran out of the army that day and came to Shiloh with his clothes torn and earth on his head. ¹³ When he came, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. When the man came into the city and reported what had happened, all the city cried out. ¹⁴ When Eli heard the noise of the crying he said, What does this noise mean? The man hurried and told Eli. ¹⁵ Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were bad so that he could not see. ¹⁶ The man said to Eli, I am the one who came out of the army, and I fled today from the battle. He said, What happened, my son? ¹⁷ The man who

brought the news answered, Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has been a great slaughter among the people. Your two sons Hophni and Phinehas are dead, and the ark of God has been captured. ¹⁸ When he made mention of the ark of God, Eli fell off his seat backward by the side of the gate and his neck broke and he died, for he was an old man and heavy. He had judged Israel for forty years. ¹⁹ His daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was pregnant, near the time of delivery. When she heard the news that the ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labour and gave birth, but was overcome by her pains. ²⁰ As she was dying the women attending her said, Don't be afraid, for you have given birth to a son. But she didn't answer, neither did she pay any attention. ²¹ She named the child Ichabod saying, The glory has departed from Israel, because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband. ²² She said, The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken.

4:10 God wished to demonstrate by this defeat that mere religious tokenism wouldn't save anyone. Israel's tokenistic use of the ark, a mere wooden box, is similar to the way some use the crucifix and icons today. It is the essence behind the symbol rather than the symbol itself which we must understand and believe in. See on 5:9.

4:13 *His heart trembled for the ark of God* – The record emphasizes Eli's love for the ark; even after the shock of hearing that his sons had been killed, it was only when he heard that the ark had been taken that he had a stroke and died (:18). Likewise his daughter in law died with mourning for the ark on her lips (:22). But this love of the external things of one's religion (see on :10) wasn't the same as true spirituality. For all Eli's love of the things associated with the true God, he was severely condemned for not having the glory of God and care for His people at heart (see on 3:13). It's not difficult to love the external trappings of our religion – the church hall, the social events, the regular activities, the general ambience. But this isn't the same as true spirituality.

CHAPTER 5 Jun. 26***The Ark Goes to Ashdod, Gath and Ekron***

Now the Philistines had taken the Ark of God, and they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. ² They took the ark of God into the house of Dagon and set it beside Dagon. ³ When the people of Ashdod arose early the next day, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of Yahweh. They took Dagon and set him back in his place. ⁴ When they arose early the next morning, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of Yahweh and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were broken off, lying on the threshold. Only Dagon's torso was intact. ⁵ Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor anyone who comes into Dagon's house will tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod, to this day. ⁶ But the hand of Yahweh was heavy on the people of Ashdod and those nearby, and He destroyed them, afflicting them with tumours. ⁷ When the men of Ashdod saw what was happening they said, The ark of the God of Israel must not stay with us, for His hand is severe on us and on Dagon our god. ⁸ They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the

Philistines together and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? They answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried over to Gath. They carried the ark of the God of Israel there. ⁹ But after they had carried it there, the hand of Yahweh was against the city, causing panic, and He struck the men of the city, small and great, and tumours broke out upon them. ¹⁰ So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. As the ark of God came to Ekron, the Ekronites cried out, They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people! ¹¹ They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and they said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go back to its own place so that it does not kill us and our people. For there was a deadly panic throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. ¹² The men who didn't die were struck with the tumours, and the cry of the city went up to Heaven.

CHAPTER 6 Jun. 26***The Philistines Return the Ark to Israel***

The ark of Yahweh was in the country of the Philistines for

5:9 God didn't give Israel victory because they had the ark with them in battle, and yet He kills many Philistines because they have the ark with them. So strong was His desire to demonstrate that religious tokenism will not bring blessing, in fact the very opposite – it is the path to death (see on 4:10 and 4:13).

5:12 God has a sensitive heart even for the sufferings of unbelievers. He so hates to see any of His creation suffering. Those believers who fear God's final rejection should remember this; that He has a hugely sensitive heart. Note that as 'ascending to Heaven' is hyperbole and not literal (see too 2 Chron. 28:9; Ezra 9:6; Ps. 107:26), so likewise the language of 'falling from heaven' in verses like Is. 14:12-14 must also not be read literally.

seven months. ² The Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, asking, What shall we do with the ark of Yahweh? Show us how we should send it back to its place. ³ They said, If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, don't send it empty; by all means return Him a trespass offering, then you will be healed and you will know why His hand has not been removed from you. ⁴ Then they said, What should the trespass offering be, which we should send to Him? They said, Five golden tumours and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines, for the same plague struck you all and your lords. ⁵ Therefore you must make images of your tumours and your mice that are destroying the land, and give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will lift His hand from you, your gods and your land. ⁶ Why do you harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had done wonders among them, didn't they send the people away and they departed? ⁷ Now therefore prepare a new cart, and get two milk cows which have never been yoked; tie the cows to the cart and bring their calves home from them. ⁸ Put the ark of Yahweh on the cart and put the jewels of gold, which you are sending Him for a trespass offering, in a chest beside it- and send it away. ⁹ If it goes up to

its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, then He has done us this great evil; but if not, then we shall know that it is not His hand that struck us; it was a chance that happened to us. ¹⁰ The men did so, and took two milk cows, tied them to the cart and shut up their calves at home. ¹¹ They put the ark of Yahweh on the cart, and the chest with the mice of gold and the images of their tumours.

The Ark Arrives at Beth-Shemesh

¹² The cows went straight towards Beth Shemesh; they went along the highway, lowing as they went, and didn't turn aside to the right hand or to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth Shemesh. ¹³ The people of Beth Shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced to see it. ¹⁴ The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh and stood there beside a great stone. The people split the wood of the cart and offered up the cows for a burnt offering to Yahweh. ¹⁵ The Levites took down the ark of Yahweh and the chest with the jewels of gold and put them on the great stone, and the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices to Yahweh that day. ¹⁶ When the five lords of the Philistines had seen this. they returned to Ekron the

6:9 *He has done us this great evil* – God is repeatedly described as the source of both good and “evil” in the sense of disaster; God is all powerful, and it isn't the case that all good comes from Him and all “evil” from some supposed ‘Satan’ figure. God creates both good and “evil” (Is. 45:5-7).

same day. ¹⁷ These are the golden tumours which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering to Yahweh: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath and one for Ekron. ¹⁸ The number of golden mice was according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, fortified cities and country villages. The great stone on which they put the ark of Yahweh remains to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh. ¹⁹ But God struck down some of the men of Beth Shemesh because they had looked into the ark of Yahweh. He killed seventy of the men, and the people mourned, because Yahweh had struck the people with a great slaughter. ²⁰ The men of Beth Shemesh said, Who is able to stand before Yahweh, this holy God? To whom shall He go from us? ²¹ They sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath Jearim saying, The Philistines have brought back the ark of Yahweh; come down and take it up to your place.

CHAPTER 7 Jun. 27

The Ark Goes from Beth-Shemesh to Kiriath Jearim

The men of Kiriath Jearim came and fetched up the ark of Yahweh and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of Yahweh. ² The ark stayed for a long time in Kiriath Jearim, twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after Yahweh. ³ Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, If you do return to Yahweh with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and Ashtaroth from among you and direct your hearts to Yahweh, and serve Him only, and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. ⁴ Then the people of Israel removed the Baals and Ashtaroth and served Yahweh only. ⁵ Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah and I will pray for you to Yahweh. ⁶ They gathered together to Mizpah and drew water, poured it out before Yahweh and fasted on that day. They said there, We have sinned against Yahweh.

6:19 The men of Beth-Shemesh were smitten because they looked into the ark, probably because they wanted to find more jewels which the Philistines might have placed there (:15). In the face and presence of the things of the supreme glory of Yahweh of Israel, they scavenged around in a spirit of petty materialism – just as men gambled for the clothes of Jesus at the foot of His cross; they trampled upon the supreme holiness of God in their crazed fascination with wealth. And people are doing this all around us.

7:6 The pouring out of water before God symbolized the state of their hearts in repentance before God. Repentance is literally a re-thinking, something internal, a pouring out of self before God. Water poured on the ground can never again be gathered up where it was before; some permanent change happens every time we experience an episode of true repentance. Water being poured on the ground became a Hebraism for death (2 Sam. 14:14); in repentance, we recognize that we have sinned and ought to die for what we have done, but in the continued life given us by God's grace we will seek to live for Him.

Samuel judged the people of Israel in Mizpah.

The Philistines Defeated at Mizpah

⁷ When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. When the Israelites heard it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. ⁸ The Israelites said to Samuel, Don't cease to cry to Yahweh our God for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines! ⁹ Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it for a whole burnt offering to Yahweh, and Samuel cried to Yahweh for Israel, and Yahweh answered him. ¹⁰ As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to fight against Israel, but on that day Yahweh thundered with a great thunder upon the Philistines, and confused them; and they were struck down before Israel. ¹¹ The men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and killed them, all the way to Beth Kar. ¹² Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called it Ebenezer, saying, Yahweh helped us until now. ¹³ So

the Philistines were subdued and they came no more within the border of Israel. The hand of Yahweh was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. ¹⁴ The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel recovered its border out of the hand of the Philistines. There was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

The Circuit of Samuel the Judge

¹⁵ Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. ¹⁶ He went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah; and he judged Israel in all those places. ¹⁷ He always returned to Ramah where his home was, and there he judged Israel. He built there an altar to Yahweh.

CHAPTER 8 Jun. 27

Israel Demands a King

When Samuel was old he made his sons judges over Israel. ² The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. ³ His sons didn't walk in his ways, but turned aside after money, tak-

7:9 As the Philistines closed in upon Israel, Samuel was busy offering up the burnt offering, symbolizing Israel's plea to God for help, with all the intensity of the suckling lamb crying to its mother – when the natural reaction would have been to think 'Enough of that, come on, do something practical now...'. We see here the supreme priority of prayer and the urgent intensity of powerful prayer.

8:3 Samuel failed as a father in the same way as his mentor Eli did, although he wasn't condemned for it as Eli was. The lesson is that even in later life, we are influenced by the examples we saw in the spiritual mentors of our youth. The power of influence is far greater than we imagine; we have more responsibility for our actions and examples than we think. Nobody lives life to and for themselves, because every life has such a powerful effect upon others (Rom. 14:7 and context).

ing bribes and perverting justice. ⁴ Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel to Ramah, ⁵ and they said to him, Look, you are old and your sons don't walk in your ways; now appoint a king to judge us like all the nations. ⁶ But this displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us.

Yahweh Advises Samuel to Appoint a King

Samuel prayed to Yahweh. ⁷ Yahweh said to Samuel, Listen to the people in all that they tell you; they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not be king over them. ⁸ As they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, in forsaking Me and serving other gods, so they also do to you. ⁹ Now therefore listen to

their voice, but protest solemnly to them and show them what the king who shall reign over them will do.

Samuel's Warning to Israel

¹⁰ Samuel told all the words of Yahweh to the people who asked for a king. ¹¹ He said, This is what the king who shall reign over you will do: he will take your sons and appoint them to serve with his chariots and to be his horsemen, and they will run before his chariots; ¹² he will appoint them to be captains of thousands and captains of fifties; he will assign some to plough his ground and reap his harvest, and to make his weapons of war and the equipment for his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take your fields, your vineyards and your olive groves,

8:7, 8 Here is an example of the mutuality between God and man: 'They didn't reject you, they rejected Me, but they rejected you, in that you are with Me'.

8:8 Israel sinned not only by worshipping idols but by thereby omitting to worship God as He required. God is highly sensitive to human sin; sins of commission often lead to and involve sins of omission, which are equally significant to God.

8:11, 12 Israel were told *three times* that Saul would have many chariots. If they were spiritually aware, they would have realized that by multiplying horses and chariots, he was going to be a King who ruled in studied disobedience to the Mosaic Law (Dt. 17:16-21). They were given the spiritual potential to grasp this. But they were already hardened in their rebellion, and this potential spiritual help went unheeded (although God still gave it to them potentially, even at a time when it seemed pointless. He is so *ever* willing to coax His people back!).

8:14 When God offered Israel a king, He did so with a series of warnings that this king would treat them just like the prophesied invasion of condemnation described in Dt. 28; he would take their sons, seed, vineyards etc. in just the same way. The links are unmistakable (8:14 = Dt. 28:30,33; 8:11,14 = Dt. 28:41; 8:15 = Dt. 28:38; 8:17 = Dt. 28:43). Through these allusions, Yahweh was saying to Israel: Do you want the condemnation for disobedience? And they answered 'Yes!'. And yet, in His grace, Yahweh still worked through the system of human kingship to bring about His purpose of salvation with Israel. Thus through our unfaithful actions now we will be witnesses against ourselves at the final judgment (Mt. 23:31); indeed, in that the judgment proc-

even their best, and give them to his servants. ¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage to give to his officers and his servants. ¹⁶ He will take your male and female servants and your best young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. ¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you will be his servants. ¹⁸ You will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen, but Yahweh will not answer you in that day. ¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to Samuel; they said, No; but we will have a king over us, ²⁰ so that we may be like all the other nations, and so that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles. ²¹ Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them before Yahweh. ²² Yahweh said to Samuel, Listen to them and give them a king. Samuel said to the men of Israel, Every man is to go back to his town.

CHAPTER 9 Jun. 28

Saul Chosen As King

There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Bec-

orath, son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of valour. ² He had a son whose name was Saul, an impressive young man; there was not among the people of Israel a more impressive person than he. From his shoulders and upward he was taller than any of the people. ³ The donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. Kish said to Saul, Take now one of the servants with you and go to look for the donkeys. ⁴ He passed through the hill country of Ephraim and the land of Shalishah, but they didn't find them. Then they went through the land of Shaalim and they weren't there; he went through-out the land of the Benjamites, but they didn't find them. ⁵ When they reached the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, Come, let us return, lest my father stop caring about the donkeys and be anxious for us. ⁶ The servant said, Look now, in this city there is a man of God, and he is a man who is held in honour. All that he says comes true. Now, let us go there; perhaps he can tell us which way to go. ⁷ Then Saul said to his servant, But if we go, what shall we bring

ess is now ongoing, we *are right now* witnesses against ourselves when we sin. And we are not only witnesses, but also the judge who pronounces the verdict of condemnation: for the sinner is condemned *of himself* (Tit. 3:11). In this lies the illogicality of sin and the blindness of man to the implications of his actions before God.

8:22 God was Israel's King and they were His Kingdom. To reject Him as king was therefore to count themselves as not His Kingdom. And yet God still tried to work with them through the system of human kingship. Likewise, He didn't want a physical temple; but they wanted one, and so He came and dwelt in it and worked through it, but it wasn't His ideal intention. God thus makes concession to human weaknesses, so eager is He to remain at work with us; and yet our use of those concessions often makes spirituality harder rather than easier. We should also learn to allow others some concessions to their human weaknesses – for God certainly does so with us.

the man? For the food is finished from our bags and there is no gift to bring to the man of God. What do we have? ⁸ The servant replied, I have a quarter of a shekel of silver. I will give that to the man of God to tell us our way. ⁹ (In earlier times in Israel when a man went to inquire of God he would say, Come and let us go to the seer, for he who is now called a prophet was before called a seer). ¹⁰ Then Saul said to his servant, Good. Let us go. So they went to the city where the man of God was. ¹¹ As they went up the hill to the city they found young girls going out to draw water and they asked them, Is the seer here? ¹² They answered, He is. Look, he is ahead of you. Hurry now, for he has come today into the city because the people have a sacrifice today in the high place. ¹³ As soon as you have come into the city you will immediately find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people will not eat until he

comes, because it is he blesses the sacrifice. Afterwards, those who are invited eat. Now therefore go up, for at this time you should find him.

Saul Meets Samuel

¹⁴ They went up to the city. As they came into the city, Samuel came out toward them, to go up to the high place. ¹⁵ Now Yahweh had revealed to Samuel a day before Saul came, saying, ¹⁶ Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man out of the land of Benjamin, and you must anoint him to be prince over My people Israel, and he will save My people out of the hand of the Philistines, for I have looked on My people, because their cry has come to Me. ¹⁷ When Samuel saw Saul, Yahweh said to him, Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He will have authority over My people. ¹⁸ Then Saul came near to Samuel in the gate and said, Please tell me where the seer's house is. ¹⁹ Samuel answered Saul, I

9:15, 25 What we hear in the ear, that we must preach on the housetops (Mt. 10:27). This is built on these verses, where God speaks in Samuel's ear, and then he speaks that word to Saul on the housetop. Jesus is saying that in essence, we are all in Samuel's position; we hear the word of this world's salvation, the word about "the Kingdom" as it was for Saul, and that very fact is in itself the imperative to overcome our natural reservations and share it with those for whom it is intended – even if, as with Saul, we may consider them unlikely and unspiritual hearers.

9:16 Their request for a human king was, as God Himself mightily demonstrated to them, a rejection of Him, and He grieved because of it. And yet when God gave them a King, He expresses His decision in quite a different tone – as if Saul would save them from the Philistines in response to the people's request to God. God speaks as if the gift of Saul was akin to the provision of Moses, to save poor Israel from their unwarranted persecution. Actually, Saul was slain by the Philistines – in His foreknowledge, the Almighty knew all about Saul. But in His pure grace, He doesn't reflect this in the way He speaks at this time. Another view would be that Saul could have saved Israel from the Philistines, that potential scenario had been enabled by God, but like so many people, he failed to live up to the potential God had created for him.

am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today. In the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart. ²⁰ As for your donkeys which were lost three days ago, don't worry about them; they have been found. To whom has all the desire in Israel turned? Is it not to you and all your father's house? ²¹ Saul answered, Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? And is not my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak to me like this? ²² Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the guest room, and made them sit in the best place among the guests about thirty people. ²³ Samuel said to the cook, Bring the portion which I gave you, telling you to set it aside. ²⁴ The cook took up the thigh and what was on it and set it before Saul. Samuel said, Here is what has been kept for you! Eat it because it has been kept for you for this occasion since I said, 'I have invited guests'. So Saul ate with Samuel that day. ²⁵ When they had come down from the high place into the city, he talked with Saul on the housetop. ²⁶ They arose early, at daybreak, and Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, Get up, that I may send you away. Saul arose, and they went outside together. ²⁷ As they were going down to the outskirts of the city Samuel said to Saul, Tell the servant to go on ahead of us (and he did so), but you stay here first, so that I may tell you the message of God.

CHAPTER 10 Jun. 29

Samuel Anoints Saul

Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, Hasn't Yahweh anointed you to be prince over His inheritance? ² When you have departed from me today you will find two men by Rachel's tomb, in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will tell you, 'The donkeys which you went to seek have been found, and your father has stopped caring about the donkeys, and is anxious for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?'. ³ Then you will go on from there and you will come to the oak of Tabor. Three men will meet you there, going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread and another carrying a bottle of wine. ⁴ They will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them. ⁵ After that you will come to the hill of God, where the garrison of the Philistines is, and when you come near to the city you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, a tambourine, a pipe and a harp being played before them. They will be prophesying, ⁶ and the Spirit of Yahweh will come mightily on you, and you will be changed into another person. ⁷ When these signs have happened, then do as occasion demands, for God is with you. ⁸ Go down before me to Gilgal and I will come down to you, to offer burnt offerings and to make sacrifices of peace offerings. Wait

seven days until I come to you and show you what you must do.

Saul among the Prophets

⁹ When Saul had turned to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart, and all those signs happened that day.

¹⁰ When they came to the hill a band of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God came mightily on him and he prophesied among them. ¹¹ When all who knew him before saw that he prophesied with the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? ¹² A man who lived there answered, Who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb: Is Saul also among the prophets? ¹³ When he had stopped prophesying, he came to the high place. ¹⁴ Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, Where did you go? He said, To seek the donkeys. When we saw that they were not to be found we came to Samuel. ¹⁵ Saul's uncle said, Please tell me

what Samuel said to you. ¹⁶ Saul said to his uncle, He told us plainly that the donkeys were found. But concerning the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel spoke, he didn't tell him.

Saul's Kingship Announced

¹⁷ Samuel called the people together to Yahweh to Mizpah, ¹⁸ and he said to the people of Israel, Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you, ¹⁹ but you have this day rejected your God, who Himself saves you out of all your calamities and your distresses. You have said to Him, 'No! Set a king over us'. Now therefore present yourselves before Yahweh by your tribes and by your thousands. ²⁰ So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel together, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken. ²¹ He brought the tribe of Benjamin forward by their families,

10:9 *God gave him another heart* – God is able to work directly on the human mind, giving us mindsets and attitudes which are more spiritual than we would otherwise have. He can make us “another person” (:7). But despite this will and ability of God to do this, Saul was ultimately untransformed, because he simply preferred the flesh.

10:19-21 It was God's wish that Israel would not have a human king; hence His sorrow when they did. Yet in the Law, God foresaw that they would want a human king, and so He gave commandments concerning how he should behave (Dt. 17:14,15). God foresaw their weaknesses and somehow provided for them, as He does with us. These passages speak of how Israel would choose to set a King over themselves, and would do so. Yet God worked through this system of human kings; hence the Queen of Sheba speaks of how *God* had set Solomon over Israel as King, and how he was king on God's behalf (2 Chron. 9:8). Israel set a king over themselves; but God worked with this, so that in a sense *He* set the King over them. However, by opting to make use of God's concessions to human weakness, real spirituality became harder to achieve. Thus it was harder to accept Yahweh as King if they had a human king demanding their allegiance.

and the family of the Matrites was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken, but when they sought him he could not be found. ²² Therefore they asked of Yahweh further, Did the man come here? Yahweh answered, He has hidden himself among the baggage. ²³ They ran and fetched him, and when he stood among the people he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. ²⁴ Samuel said to all the people, You see the one whom Yahweh has chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? All the people shouted, Long live the king! ²⁵ Then Samuel told the people the regulations of the kingdom, wrote them in a book and laid it up before Yahweh. Samuel sent all the people away to their homes. ²⁶ Saul also went to his house to Gibeah and with him the valiant men whose hearts God had touched. ²⁷ But some worthless fellows said, How can this

man save us? They despised him and brought him no present. But he was as though he had been deaf.

CHAPTER 11 Jun. 30

Saul Rescues the City of Jabesh

Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh Gilead, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, Make a treaty with us and we will serve you. ² Nahash the Ammonite said to them, On this condition I will make it with you, that each of you has his right eye put out, bringing disgrace on all Israel. ³ The elders of Jabesh said to him, Give us seven days so that we can send messengers to all the borders of Israel, and then, if there is no one to save us, we will come out to you. ⁴ Then the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and reported these words to the people, and they all wept aloud. ⁵ Just then Saul came, following the oxen out of the field, and he said,

10:27 *As though he had been deaf* – Much later, David describes himself as responding to criticism like this: “I as a deaf man, heard not” (Ps. 38:13). Yet he was alluding to how Saul, when likewise criticized by wicked men, “was as though he had been deaf” to their words. David learnt the secret of seeing the positive in our weak brethren, even in our persecutors, and he didn’t let all that was wrong with Saul interfere with this. He saw the good in Saul, he remembered that one good example he showed – and it empowered him to follow it. This not only develops and reflects humility, but it helps us cope with ongoing abusive situations without completely losing any sense of the value and significance of every human person – including the person of our abusers.

11:5 The call of God comes to us right in the midst of ordinary, mundane life. Gideon was called whilst in the middle of threshing wheat in a time of famine (Jud. 6:1), Saul whilst he was out looking for lost cattle (1 Sam. 9:10) and again whilst he was coming home from work one evening (1 Sam. 11:5); David whilst he was looking after the sheep; Samuel whilst he was asleep; Amos whilst he was leading the flocks to water (Am. 7:14); and see too 1 Kings 11:29; 19:16; 2 Kings 9:1-13,18. Christ likewise called men, arresting them with His radical call in the very midst of daily life, at the most inconvenient moment, even the most humanly inappropriate moment – such as

What is wrong with the people that they weep? They told him what the men of Jabesh had said. ⁶ The Spirit of God came mightily on Saul when he heard those words, and his anger was kindled greatly. ⁷ He took a yoke of oxen, cut them in pieces and sent them throughout all Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, Whoever doesn't come forth after Saul and after Samuel, this is what shall be done to his oxen. The dread of Yahweh fell on the people, and they came out as one man. ⁸ Saul numbered them in Bezek and there were three hundred thousand men of Israel and thirty thousand of Judah. ⁹ They said to the messengers who came, Thus you shall tell the men of Jabesh Gilead: 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you shall have deliverance'. The messengers came and told the men of Jabesh, and they were glad. ¹⁰ Therefore the men of Jabesh said to the Ammonites, Tomorrow we will come out to you and you can do to us what seems good to you. ¹¹ The next day Saul put the people into three companies, and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch and slaughtered the Ammonites until the heat of the day. Those who remained were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

Saul's Kingship Confirmed

¹² The people said to Samuel, Who was it who said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?'. Bring those men out so that we can put them to death! ¹³ But Saul said, No-one is to be put to death today, for today Yahweh has worked deliverance in Israel. ¹⁴ Then Samuel said to the people, Come, let us go to Gilgal and reaffirm the kingship there. ¹⁵ All the people went to Gilgal and there they made Saul king before Yahweh in Gilgal, and there they offered sacrifices of peace offerings before Yahweh, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

CHAPTER 12 Jun. 30

Samuel's Farewell

Samuel said to all Israel, I have listened to all that you said to me, and have made a king over you. ² Now, the king is your leader; I am old and grey-headed and my sons are with you, and I have been your leader from my youth to this day. ³ Here I am. Testify against me before Yahweh and before His anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Of whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes? I will restore it to you. ⁴ They

being on the way to your father's funeral, or in the very act of casting a net into the sea.

11:11 Saul attacked in three groups because he was trying to imitate Gideon, whom he had as his spiritual hero: 1 Sam.11:11 = Jud.7:16; 13:2 = Jud. 7:8; 13:5 = Jud.7:12; 13:6 = Gideon offering before fighting Midian; 14:5,20 = Jud.7:22; 14:24 = imitating Gideon and his men going without food; 14:28,31 = Jud.8:4,5; 11:7 = Gideon killing his father's oxen. But merely replicating the outward actions of a faithful person doesn't of itself mean we are spiritually minded nor finally acceptable to God.

said, You have not defrauded us or oppressed us, neither have you taken anything from any man. ⁵ He said to them, Yahweh is witness against you and His anointed is witness this day that you have not found anything in my hand. They said, He is witness. ⁶ Samuel said to the people, It is Yahweh who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. ⁷ Now therefore stand still, that I may plead with you before Yahweh concerning all the righteous acts of Yahweh, which He did to you and to your fathers. ⁸ When Jacob had come into Egypt and your fathers cried to Yahweh, then Yahweh sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place. ⁹ But they forgot Yahweh their God, and He sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the army of Hazor, into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. ¹⁰ They cried to Yahweh and said, ‘We have sinned, because we have forsaken Yahweh and have served the Baals and Ashtaroth; but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies

and we will serve You’. ¹¹ Yahweh sent Jerubbaal, Bedan, Jephthah and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you lived in safety. ¹² When you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, ‘No, we want a king to reign over us’, when Yahweh your God was your king. ¹³ Now therefore, see the king whom you have chosen and whom you have asked for; Yahweh has set a king over you. ¹⁴ If you will fear Yahweh and serve Him, listen to His voice and not rebel against the commandment of Yahweh, then it will be well with both you and the king who reigns over you. ¹⁵ But if you will not listen to the voice of Yahweh but rebel against the commandment of Yahweh, then the hand of Yahweh will be against you, as it was against your fathers.

Storm As a Sign from Yahweh

¹⁶ Now therefore stand still and see this great thing which Yahweh will do before your eyes. ¹⁷ Isn’t it wheat harvest today? I will call to Yahweh to send thunder and rain, and you shall know and see that

12:14 *With both you and the king* – If all Israel had been obedient, then Saul would have been too. If a majority are spiritually minded, this can at times and in some ways influence a potentially weaker minority; even though the reverse is more often true. And yet Saul made the people “follow him trembling” because they weren’t spiritually stronger than him (13:7).

12:14, 15 Israel requested a human king. God was Israel’s king, and therefore their desire was effectively a rejection of God and Israel’s special relationship with Him. And yet God gave them a human king. If they had a human king, it was harder for them to be God’s Kingdom, to personally realize that God was their King, that He was the one to whom they owed all allegiance and duty. And yet God gave them a human king, because this was the path they had chosen; and by so doing He in one sense pushed them down the downward spiral of disobedience because they had chosen this themselves.

your wickedness is great which you have done in the eyes of Yahweh, in asking for a king. ¹⁸ So Samuel called to Yahweh, and Yahweh sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared Yahweh and Samuel. ¹⁹ All the people said to Samuel, Pray for your servants to Yahweh your God that we do not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for a king. ²⁰ Samuel said to the people, Don't be afraid. You have indeed done all this evil, yet don't turn aside from following Yahweh, but serve Yahweh with all your heart. ²¹ Don't turn aside to go after vain things which can't profit or save you, for they are vain. ²² Yahweh will not forsake His people, for the sake of His great name, because it has pleased Yahweh to make you His own people. ²³ As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against Yahweh in ceasing to pray for you; I will instruct you in the good and the right way. ²⁴ Only fear Yahweh and serve Him in truth with all your heart; consider what great things He has done for you. ²⁵ But if you still do wickedly you will be consumed, both you and your king.

CHAPTER 13 Jul. 1

Saul Rebuked by Samuel

Saul reigned a year, and when he had reigned two years over Israel ² Saul chose three thousand men of

Israel, of which two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the Mount of Bethel, and one thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin, and the rest of the people he sent back to their tents. ³ Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear! ⁴ All Israel heard that Saul had attacked the garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel had become odious to the Philistines. The people were gathered together to Saul in Gilgal. ⁵ The Philistines assembled themselves to fight with Israel: thirty thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen and people as numerous as the sand which is on the seashore, and they came up and encamped in Michmash, east of Beth Aven. ⁶ When the men of Israel saw that they were in great peril and the people were distressed, they hid themselves in caves, thickets, rocks, coverts and in pits. ⁷ Now some of the Hebrews had gone over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead, but Saul was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. ⁸ He waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel, but Samuel didn't come to Gilgal, and the people were scattered from him. ⁹ Saul said, Bring here the burnt offering to me, and the peace offerings. He offered

12:20, 21 If we don't serve God whole-heartedly, we will serve the idols of this present age. There's no third road.

12:23 It is an actual sin – albeit a sin of omission – to cease to pray for our brethren.

13:9 Are we going to be like those Israelites who offered a peace offering, when actually they were not at peace with God at all (see too 2 Kings 16:13; Prov. 7:14; Am.

the burnt offering. ¹⁰ As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering Samuel came, and Saul went out to meet him, to greet him. ¹¹ Samuel said, What have you done? Saul said, When I saw that the people were scattered from me and that you didn't come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines assembled at Michmash, ¹² I thought 'Now the Philistines will come down on me to Gilgal, and I haven't entreated the favour of Yahweh'. I forced myself therefore, and offered the burnt offering. ¹³ Samuel said to Saul, You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of Yahweh your God which He commanded you; for now Yahweh would have established your kingdom in Israel forever. ¹⁴ But now your kingdom shall not continue. Yahweh has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and Yahweh has appointed him to be prince over His people, because you have not kept what Yahweh commanded you. ¹⁵ Samuel arose and went from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men.

Israel without Weapons

¹⁶ Saul and Jonathan his son and the people who were with them stayed in Geba of Benjamin, but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. ¹⁷ Raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned towards Ophrah in the land of Shual; ¹⁸ another company turned towards Beth Horon, and another company turned towards the border land overlooking the valley of Zebouim facing the wilderness. ¹⁹ Now there was no smith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears. ²⁰ All the Israelites went down to the Philistines to have their ploughshares, mattocks, axes and sickles sharpened. ²¹ The price was two thirds of a shekel to sharpen a mattock and a ploughshare, and one third for the forks and axes, and to set the goads. ²² So on the day of battle no soldier had either sword or spear among the people who were with Saul and Jonathan; only Saul and Jonathan his son had swords and spears. ²³ The garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

5:22)? This is a thought worth bearing in mind as we approach the breaking of bread service.

13:13 *Yahweh would have established your kingdom in Israel forever* – God sets up amazing potentials for people, and yet they fail to achieve them. It must be so tragic for God, seeing all the wasted potentials of humanity. And yet this would explain His enthusiasm to confirm us in our attempts to rise up to the potentials He has enabled for us. God's punishment of Saul may appear severe, but Saul's actions obviously embodied a large amount of unspirituality which was beneath the surface.

13:14 *A man after His own heart* – The God whose ways are above our ways as far as Heaven is above earth can say that David was of the same mind as Himself. This shows the extent of God's humility, His enthusiasm to connect with man, and His eagerness to count our feeble spiritual mindedness for far more than it really is of itself.

CHAPTER 14 Jul. 2***The Philistines Attacked by Jonathan***

One day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armour, Come, let us go over to the Philistines' garrison on the other side. But he didn't tell his father. ² Saul stayed on the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron; the people who were with him were about six hundred men. Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of Yahweh in Shiloh was there, wearing an ephod. The people didn't know that Jonathan had gone. ⁴ On each side of the pass by which Jonathan intended to go over to the Philistines' garrison there was a rocky crag; one was called Bozez and the other Seneh. ⁵ The one crag was on the north in front of Michmash and the other on the south in front of Geba. ⁶ Jonathan

said to the young man who carried his armour, Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised people. Perhaps Yahweh will work for us, for nothing can hinder Yahweh from saving, by many or by few. ⁷ His armour bearer said to him, Do all that you have in mind; I am with you according to your heart. ⁸ Then Jonathan said, We will cross over to them and let them see us. ⁹ If they say 'Wait until we come to you!', then we will stay where we are and will not go up to them. ¹⁰ But if they say 'Come up to us!', then we will go up, for Yahweh has delivered them into our hand. This will be the sign to us. ¹¹ So they revealed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines, and the Philistines said, Look, the Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in! ¹² The men of the garrison shouted to Jonathan and his armour bearer, Come up to us and we will show you something! Jonath-

14:6 Perhaps David was in fact "the young man who carried his armour". Saul also calls him "young man" in 17:58. There was evidently an intense spiritual and physical rapport between Jonathan and his armour bearer which was similar to that described between Jonathan and David. "I am with you according to your heart" (:7) has firm connection with David and Jonathan being described as having their souls knit together in 18:1. The record of David's battle with the Philistines in 2 Sam. 5:17-24 has certain similarities with the exploits of 14:8-11; as if, years later, David replicated his early adventure of faith. David already had a reputation in Israel for being "a mighty man of valour, a man of war" (16:18), even before the Goliath incident. This would be understandable if he had gone with Jonathan in chapter 14. His becoming *Saul's* armour bearer (16:21) would then be seen as a logical promotion from being Jonathan's armour bearer. David came to lead Jonathan, rather than the other way around. And yet Jonathan accepted this, recognizing his own weakness and David's spiritual superiority to him, without any jealousy. In this we see a wonderful humility. See on 18:3.

14:10 It is open to debate whether we should set up signs for God to fulfil. As we mature spiritually, it should become clearer and more intuitive to us from His word what we should do and how we should decide issues, without the agonies of indecision and dilemma.

an said to his armour bearer, Come up after me, for Yahweh has delivered them into the hand of Israel. ¹³ Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet and his armour bearer followed, and the Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armour bearer followed and killed behind him. ¹⁴ That first slaughter by Jonathan and his armour bearer killed about twenty men in an area of about half an acre.

The Philistines Defeated by Israel

¹⁵ Then panic struck the whole Philistine army, those in the camp, in the field, and among all the outposts and raiding parties, and the ground shook. There was panic. ¹⁶ Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of Benjamin saw that the army had melted away and scattered. ¹⁷ Then Saul said to the men with him, Count now and see who is missing from us. When they had counted, Jonathan and his armour bearer were not there. ¹⁸ Saul said to Ahijah, Bring the ark of God here. For the ark of God was with the Israelites at that time. ¹⁹ While Saul was talking to the priest the tumult in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased, and Saul said to the priest, Withdraw your hand! ²⁰ Saul and all the men with him were gathered together and came to the battle, and found that every man's sword was against his fellow; a very great

confusion. ²¹ Now the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines previously and had gone with them into the camp, turned to join the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. ²² Also all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines had fled, followed hard after them in the battle. ²³ So Yahweh saved Israel that day, and the battle moved beyond Beth Aven.

Jonathan Eats Some Honey

²⁴ The men of Israel were in distress that day because Saul had bound the people with an oath saying, Cursed is the man who eats any food before evening, and I have been avenged of my enemies. So none of the people ate any food. ²⁵ All the army came into the forest, and there was honey on the ground. ²⁶ When they had come to the forest the honey was oozing out, but no-one tasted any because the people feared the oath. ²⁷ But Jonathan hadn't heard when his father commanded the people with the oath, so he dipped the end of his rod into the honeycomb and ate some, and his eyes brightened. ²⁸ Then one of the people said, Your father bound the people with an oath saying, 'Cursed is the man who eats food this day'. The people were exhausted. ²⁹ Then Jonathan

14:20 *Every man's sword was against his fellow* – This was God's preferred method of destroying Israel's enemies in so many of the victories He gave them. Division within a community is therefore a sign of God's judgment of it; and those who justify and encourage division are therefore living out a position of condemnation.

14:33 Pointless following of legalistic obedience often leads people into sin because of their basic humanity.

said, My father has troubled the land. Please look how my eyes have been brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. ³⁰ How much better it would have been if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies? Would not the slaughter among the Philistines have been greater? ³¹ They struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. The people were exhausted, ³² and they pounced on the spoil, and took sheep, cattle and calves and killed them on the ground and ate them with the blood. ³³ Then they told Saul, Look, the people are sinning against Yahweh, eating meat with the blood. He said, You have broken faith. Roll a large stone here at once! ³⁴ Saul said, Go out among the people and tell them, ‘Each man bring to me here his ox and sheep; kill them here and eat; don’t sin against Yahweh by eating meat with the blood’. So each of them brought his ox with him that night, and killed them there. ³⁵ Saul built an altar to Yahweh. This was the first altar that he built to Yahweh. ³⁶ Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them until the morning, and let us not leave any of them alive. They said, Do whatever seems good to you. But the priest

said, Let us enquire of God. ³⁷ Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hand of Israel? But He didn’t answer him that day.

Saul Condemns Jonathan

³⁸ Saul said, Come here, all you chiefs of the people and let us find out which of us has sinned today. ³⁹ For as Yahweh lives, Who saves Israel, even if it is Jonathan my son, he must die. But there was not a man among all the people who answered him. ⁴⁰ Then he said to all Israel, You stand on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. The people said to Saul, Do what seems good to you. ⁴¹ Therefore Saul said to Yahweh, the God of Israel, Show me the right answer. Jonathan and Saul were chosen, but the people escaped. ⁴² Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. Jonathan was selected. ⁴³ Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what you have done! Jonathan told him, I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand, and now must I die? ⁴⁴ Saul said, God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan. ⁴⁵ But the people said to Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who has worked this great salvation

14:37 In the same way as answered prayer reflects God’s pleasure, so prayer which God doesn’t respond to at all is one indicator of His displeasure (e.g. Saul’s experience in 1 Sam. 14:37). This isn’t to say that when we don’t receive the answers we expect, then God hasn’t responded. There’s a difference between God *responding* to prayer and God *answering* prayer as we expect Him to answer.

14:39 *Even if it is Jonathan my son* – It would seem that Saul was purposefully manipulating circumstance in order to kill his own son. This is how far jealousy blinds eyes, breaks families and relationships and obsesses people beyond reason.

in Israel? Far from it! As Yahweh lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day! So the people rescued Jonathan so that he didn't die. ⁴⁶ Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own land. ⁴⁷ After Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side: Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah and the Philistines; wherever he turned he defeated them. ⁴⁸ He fought valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them.

The Family of Saul

⁴⁹ Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishvi and Malchishua, and the names of his two daughters were Merab the firstborn and Michal the younger, ⁵⁰ and the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. The captain of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. ⁵¹ Kish was the father of Saul and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel. ⁵² There was severe war against the Philistines all the days of Saul, and when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he took him into his service.

CHAPTER 15 Jul. 3

Saul Defeats the Amalekites

Samuel said to Saul, Yahweh sent me to anoint you to be king

over His people Israel. Now therefore, listen to the words of Yahweh. ² Thus says Yahweh of Armies, 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel, opposing them when they came up out of Egypt. ³ Now go and attack Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have; don't spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and nursing baby, ox and sheep, camel and donkey'. ⁴ Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. ⁵ Saul went to the city of Amalek and laid wait in the valley. ⁶ Saul said to the Kenites, Go away from among the Amalekites so that I don't destroy you with them, for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. ⁷ Saul attacked the Amalekites from Havilah to Shur east of Egypt. ⁸ He took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people. ⁹ But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, cattle, fat calves and lambs and all that was good, and wouldn't utterly destroy them; everything that was bad and worthless they destroyed utterly.

Saul Rejected as King

¹⁰ Then the word of Yahweh came to Samuel saying, ¹¹ It grieves Me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he

15:6 Guilt by association isn't a Biblical idea; in fact the very opposite is taught, and we should be careful not to practice this.

15:11 God tells Samuel of His rejection of Saul, and Samuel cries to Him all night.

has turned back from following Me and has not obeyed My commandments. Samuel was troubled and he cried out to Yahweh all night. ¹² Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, and he was told: Saul came to Carmel and he set up a monument for himself, then went down to Gilgal. ¹³ Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, Yahweh bless you! I have obeyed the commandment of Yahweh. ¹⁴ Samuel said, Then what is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What does this lowing of cattle mean? ¹⁵ Saul said, They have brought them from the Amale-

kites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to Yahweh your God. We have utterly destroyed the rest. ¹⁶ Then Samuel said to Saul, Stop! I will tell you what Yahweh said to me last night. He said to him, Tell me. ¹⁷ Samuel said, When you were once little in your own sight, weren't you made the head of the tribes of Israel? Yahweh anointed you king over Israel, ¹⁸ and Yahweh sent you on a mission and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy those sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are destroyed'. ¹⁹ Why then didn't you

The implication is that Samuel was pleading with God to consider another future with Saul (see too :35; 16:1). Having stated His intentions, God is open to persuasion before He carries them out; that gap period is intended to inspire intense prayer and dialogue with God on our part.

15:17 Notice the links between Saul and Paul. "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (10:11) was directly matched by 'Is Saul of Tarsus also among the Christians?'. The way Paul was let down through a window to escape persecution (Acts 9:25; 2 Cor. 11:33) was surely to remind him of what King Saul had done to David (see on 19:12). They were both Benjamites, and perhaps his parents saw him as following in Saul's footsteps. And it seems Paul was aware of this. The implication is that Paul changed his name from Saul to Paul ('the little one'), consciously alluding to this statement that when Saul was little (Heb. 'the littlest one') in his own sight, God anointed Saul and made him the *rosh*, the chief, over Israel. Maybe Paul's parents intended him to be the *rosh* over Israel; and it seems he would have made it had he not been converted. Paul saw how he had persecuted Christ, as Saul had David. He saw the self-will within him as it was in Saul. Yet he went on to see how pride had destroyed a man who could have achieved so much for God. And he determined that he would learn the lesson from Saul's failure; so he changed his name to Paul, the little one. What influence his sustained meditation on one Old Testament verse had upon him! It affected some basic decisions in his life; e.g. the decision to change his name. There was a time when Saul felt he was 'the littlest one' (as demonstrated in 9:21; 10:22). Paul alludes to it when he says he is less than the *least* of all saints, *least* of the apostles, chief of sinners (1 Cor. 15:9; Eph. 3:8; 1 Tim. 1:15). He earnestly resolved to be like Saul was at the beginning. "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19) is surely a reference back to Saul's *disobedience* (:22). What Bible characters are we trying to consciously learn from? For the Bible is largely history, and the range of characters and situations recorded are chosen so that we can always find some Biblical precedent and guidance for whatever situation we are in (Rom. 15:4).

obey the voice of Yahweh, but took the spoils and did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh? ²⁰ Saul said to Samuel, But I have obeyed the voice of Yahweh, and have gone on the mission which Yahweh gave me and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. ²¹ But the people took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of the devoted things, to sacrifice to Yahweh your God in Gilgal. ²² Samuel said, Has Yahweh as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. ²³ For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of Yahweh, He has also rejected you from being king. ²⁴ Saul said to Samuel, I have sinned; I have transgressed the commandment of Yahweh and your words because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. ²⁵ Now therefore, please pardon my sin and come back with me so that I may worship Yahweh. ²⁶ Samuel said to Saul, I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of Yahweh, and Yahweh has rejected you

from being king over Israel. ²⁷ As Samuel turned to go away, Saul grabbed the skirt of his robe and it tore. ²⁸ Samuel said to him, Yahweh has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbour of yours who is better than you. ²⁹ The Strength of Israel will not lie nor change His mind, for He is not a man that He should change His mind. ³⁰ Then he said, I have sinned, yet please honour me now before the elders of my people and before Israel; come back with me so that I may worship Yahweh your God. ³¹ So Samuel went back with Saul and Saul worshipped Yahweh. ³² Then Samuel said, Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites! Agag came to him confidently, thinking, Surely the bitterness of death is past. ³³ Samuel said, As your sword has made women childless, so your mother will be childless among women! Samuel cut Agag in pieces before Yahweh in Gilgal. ³⁴ Then Samuel went to Ramah and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. ³⁵ Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death, yet Samuel mourned for Saul, and Yahweh grieved that He had made Saul king over Israel.

15:23 *Because you have rejected the word of Yahweh, He has also rejected you* – Our attitude to God's word is our attitude to Him; as we treat God's word, so He will treat us.

15:35 *Samuel mourned for Saul* – Any condemnation of the wicked by God or occasional separation from them which we are asked to make must be the result of much sorrow (see too Lev. 10:6; 1 Cor. 5:2; Phil. 3:17-19). The idea of 'block disfellowship' – the cutting off of whole groups of believers because of their association with some more questionable ones – hardly enables 'mourning' and pleading with individuals as is required.

CHAPTER 16 Jul. 4*David Anointed by Samuel*

Yahweh said to Samuel, How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided a king for Myself from among his sons. ² Samuel said, How can I go? If Saul hears it he will kill me. Yahweh said, Take a heifer with you and say, I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. ³ Call Jesse to the sacrifice and I will show you what you must do. You are to anoint for Me the one whom I name to you. ⁴ Samuel did what Yahweh said and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Do you come peaceably? ⁵ He said, Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice. He consecrated Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. ⁶ When they had come he looked at Eliab and said, Surely Yahweh's anointed is before Him. ⁷ But Yahweh said to Samuel, Don't look at his appearance or height, because I have rejected him. I do not look at the things man looks at; man looks at the outward appearance but Yahweh looks at the heart.

⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, Neither has Yahweh chosen this one. ⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. He said, Neither has Yahweh chosen this one. ¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. Samuel said to Jesse, Yahweh has not chosen these. ¹¹ Samuel said to Jesse, Are all your children here? He said, There is still the youngest; he is keeping the sheep. Samuel said to Jesse, Send and get him, for we will not sit down until he comes here. ¹² He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with a beautiful face and handsome appearance. Yahweh said, Arise, anoint him, for this is the one. ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of Yahweh came mightily on David from that day on. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

David Plays the Harp for Saul

¹⁴ Now the spirit of Yahweh had departed from Saul and an evil spirit from Yahweh troubled him. ¹⁵ Saul's servants said to him, See now, an evil spirit from God troubles you. ¹⁶ Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is a skilful player on

16:14 The "spirit" often refers to an attitude of mind (e.g. Dt. 2:30; Prov. 25:28; Is. 54:6; 61:3; Ez. 18:31; Mk.14:38; Lk. 2:40; 2 Cor. 2:13; 12:18; Eph. 4:23). The "evil spirit" refers to Saul's state of mind here; just as a "holy spirit" refers to a sanctified state of mind. The idea that 'evil spirits' refer to invisible cosmic beings isn't Biblical; they would hardly flee just because of how a man plays a harp. Notice that here the "evil spirit" was "from Yahweh" – this is emphasized (:14,15,16; 18:10); this attitude of the mind was sent by God, not a super-human evil being acting in radical opposition to God.

the harp. When the evil spirit from God comes on you, he can play and you will feel better. ¹⁷ Saul said to his servants, Find me someone who can play well and bring him to me. ¹⁸ Then one of the young men said, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is skilful in playing, a mighty man of valour, a man of war, who speaks well and is good-looking, and Yahweh is with him. ¹⁹ Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, Send me David your son, who is with the sheep. ²⁰ Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a bottle of wine and a young goat and sent them by David his son to Saul. ²¹ David came to Saul and stood before him. Saul loved him greatly and he became his armour bearer. ²² Saul sent to Jesse saying, Please let David stay with me, for I am pleased with him. ²³ When the spirit from God was on Saul, David took the harp and played, and Saul was refreshed and felt better and the evil spirit departed from him.

CHAPTER 17 Jul. 5

Goliath Challenges Israel

Now the Philistines gathered their armies to battle and assembled at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and they encamped between Socoh and Azekah in Ephesdammim. ² Saul and the men of Israel assembled and

encamped in the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. ³ The Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, and there was a valley between them. ⁴ A champion went out of the camp of the Philistines named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. ⁵ He had a helmet of bronze on his head and he wore a bronze coat of mail which weighed five thousand shekels. ⁶ He had bronze shin armour on his legs and a javelin of bronze between his shoulders. ⁷ The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam and his iron spear's head weighed six hundred shekels, and his shield bearer went before him. ⁸ He stood and shouted to the armies of Israel, Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. ⁹ If he is able to fight and kill me, then we will be your servants, but if I overcome him and kill him, then you will be our servants, and serve us. ¹⁰ The Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day! Give me a man and let us fight one another! ¹¹ When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine they were dismayed, and terrified.

17:9 This conflict is prophetic of Christ's victory over sin on the cross (see on :54). The way that Israel failed to find a man to fight until David arose is exactly the language of the prophecies which speak of our inability to find a single man who could overcome sin, until Christ did so on the cross (Is. 41:28; 50:2; 59:16). There was a very real possibility that Christ like David could have failed [for He was man, not God Himself] – with the same disastrous consequences.

David Visits the Army of Israel

¹² Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse. He had eight sons and was considered an old man in the days of Saul. ¹³ The three eldest sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle. Their names were Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab and the third Shammah. ¹⁴ David was the youngest; and the three eldest followed Saul. ¹⁵ Now David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem. ¹⁶ The Philistine drew near morning and evening and took his stand for forty days. ¹⁷ Jesse said to David his son, Now take an ephah of parched grain and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers; ¹⁸ and take these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand. See how your brothers are doing and bring back news. ¹⁹ Saul and David's brothers and all the men of Israel were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. ²⁰ David rose up early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper and took the gifts, and went as Jesse had commanded him; he came to the camp as the army was going forth to the battle, shouting the

war cry. ²¹ Israel and the Philistines put the battle in array, army against army. ²² David left his things with the keeper of supplies and ran to the army and came and greeted his brothers.

David Accepts Goliath's Challenge

²³ As he talked with them Goliath came up, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, out of the ranks of the Philistines. He shouted the same words, and David heard them. ²⁴ All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were terrified. ²⁵ The men of Israel said, Have you seen this man who keeps coming up? He comes up to defy Israel. The king has promised to give great riches to the man who kills him, and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel. ²⁶ David said to the men who stood by him, What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? ²⁷ The people repeated to him what they had said: This is indeed what is promised to the man who kills him. ²⁸ Eliab his

17:16 The faithful Israelite would have thought of the sacrifices being offered morning and evening, and would've reflected that they were powerless to give victory (cp. Heb. 10:4).

17:26 *What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine...?* – David asks this having just heard what would be done for the man who killed Goliath (:25); and then he asks it again (:30). The implication is that the offer of Saul's daughter he found motivating. As Saul's servant, from a poor family, he likely would've looked on at her from a distance, regretting that she was unreachable (18:23); and she was in love with him (18:20). Jonathan, her brother, was perhaps already his good friend (see on 14:6). Perhaps this looks forward to how Christ was motivated in His battle with sin by the thought of thereby winning us, His bride.

eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the presumption of your heart; you have only come down to see the battle. ²⁹ David said, What have I done now? Can I not speak? ³⁰ He turned away from him toward someone else and said the same, and the people answered him as before. ³¹ When the words of David were heard, they repeated them to Saul and he sent for him. ³² David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of this Philistine. Your servant will go and fight him. ³³ Saul said to David, You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight him; you are only a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth. ³⁴ David said, Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, ³⁵ I went out after it and struck it, and rescued it out of its mouth. When it turned on me I caught it by its beard and killed it. ³⁶ Your servant killed both the lion and the bear.

This uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God. ³⁷ David said, Yahweh who delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. Saul said to David, Go; and Yahweh be with you. ³⁸ Saul dressed David in his own clothes. He put a bronze helmet on his head and put a coat of mail on him. ³⁹ David strapped his sword onto his tunic and he tried to move, but he was not used to it. David said to Saul, I can't go with these; I am not used to them. So David took them off. ⁴⁰ He took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag. His sling was in his hand as he drew near to the Philistine.

David Kills Goliath

⁴¹ The Philistine advanced and came near to David with his shield-bearer in front of him. ⁴² When he looked at David he despised him, for he was only a youth, ruddy and handsome. ⁴³ The Philistine said to David, Am I a dog that you come at me with

17:32 *Let no man's heart fail* – Just before Christ destroyed the power of sin on the cross, He assured us in similar words (Jn. 14:1,27).

17:35 *I went out after it and struck it, and rescued it out of its mouth* – This shows an unusual level of commitment to the sheep, after the pattern of the unusual shepherd in Christ's parable who risks His life in fighting a wild animal to save a sheep – no normal shepherd would do this. David not only prefigured Christ as the ultimately “good shepherd”, but shows the value he attached to all God's creation.

17:40 *Five smooth stones* – He took five not because he thought he might miss a few times but because Goliath had four sons whom he likely intended to kill at the same time (2 Sam. 21:18-22; 1 Chron. 20:4-8). This was indeed spiritual ambition. But those four sons were killed later, by David's men; just as we are left with some aspects of Christ's victory against sin to follow up on ourselves.

sticks? The Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴ He said to David, Come here and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the animals of the field. ⁴⁵ Then David said to the Philistine, You come against me with a sword, a spear and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of Yahweh of Armies, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ Today Yahweh will deliver you into my hand. I will strike you down and cut off your head. I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines today to the birds of the air and the wild animals of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷ and that all those here may know that Yahweh doesn't save with sword and spear, for the battle is Yahweh's and He will give you into our hand. ⁴⁸ When the Philistine came closer to attack David, David ran quickly towards the Philistine army. ⁴⁹ He put his hand into his bag, took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead and he fell on his face to the ground. ⁵⁰ So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him without a

sword in his hand. ⁵¹ Then David ran and stood over the Philistine, took hold of his sword, drew it out of its scabbard and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. ⁵² The men of Israel and Judah arose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gate of Ekron. The wounded of the Philistines fell down all the way to Shaaraim, Gath and Ekron. ⁵³ The Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines and plundered their camp. ⁵⁴ David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armour in his own tent. ⁵⁵ When Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the captain of the army, Abner, whose son is this youth? Abner said, As your soul lives, O king, I don't know. ⁵⁶ The king said, Find out whose son the young man is! ⁵⁷ As David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him to Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. ⁵⁸ Saul said to him, Whose son are you, young man? David answered, I am the son of your servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite.

17:46 *I will strike you down and cut off your head* – David was completely confident in faith, and had worked out what he would do after the initial victory – he would cut off Goliath's head. Christ likewise was confident of victory on the cross and His parables and teachings assumed that victory ahead of time.

That all the earth may know that there is a God – The spirit of Christ's words just before He went out to kill the power of sin on Golgotha (Jn. 14:31; 17:23).

17:49 *His forehead* – This is twice emphasized; pointing forward to how Christ's victory over sin was ultimately in the mind.

17:54 'Golgotha' meaning 'The place of the skull' may well be the place near Jerusalem where David buried Goliath's skull. The whole incident opens up as a prototype of Christ's victory over sin on the cross, with Goliath presented as a "man of sin".

CHAPTER 18 Jul. 6***David and Jonathan***

When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan became bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ² Saul took him that day and would not let him go home to his father's house. ³ Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as his own soul. ⁴ Jonathan stripped himself of the robe he was wearing and gave it to David with his tunic and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

David's Successes in Battle

⁵ David went out wherever Saul sent him and behaved himself wisely, and Saul set him over the men of war, which pleased all the people and Saul's servants. ⁶ When David and

the men returned from the slaughter of the Philistine the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul with tambourines, with joy, and with instruments of music. ⁷ The women sang one to another as they played, Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands. ⁸ Saul was very angry; this song displeased him and he said, They have ascribed to David ten thousands and to me they have ascribed only thousands. What more can he have but the kingdom? ⁹ Saul eyed David from that day and onward.

Jealous Saul Seeks to Kill David

¹⁰ The next day an evil spirit from God came mightily on Saul, and he prophesied in his house. David played his harp, as he did day by

18:3 Our notes on chapter 17 have shown that David's killing of Goliath was typical of Christ's killing of sin on the cross. His victory there enabled the new covenant to come into operation with those who believe in Him; and so Jonathan becomes representative of us, and the covenant he enters with David looks ahead to the new covenant. Jonathan as the king's son and commander of the army was the one who ought to have fought Goliath; but he didn't (see on 14:6). Instead of being filled with envy, he humbled himself, stripped himself and gave his all to David, as we should to Christ, motivated by the wonder of His victory.

18:5 To achieve this state of mind must have required a lot of conscious thought and self-analysis by David. We get the sense that David pitted his wisdom against Saul's anger and bitter persecution; David's wisdom and prospering is repeatedly mentioned in tandem with Saul's anger against him (:5,11,14,15,30). These words are referring back to Dt. 29:9, which promised that those who kept the words of the covenant would prosper. David's charmed life and prospering despite all manner of plotting against him was due to his single-minded devotion to the Law; to those very chapters which tired Bible readers tend to skip over as boring and not motivating. Yet David found something immensely inspiring and practical about the Law. The word made him wiser than his foes (Ps. 119:98) – and there is reason to think that Ps. 119, which is all about how much David loved God's word, was written by David at the time of his persecution by Saul.

18:10 *An evil spirit from God* – See on 16:14.

day. Saul had his spear in his hand¹¹ and he threw the spear saying, I will pin David to the wall! David escaped from his presence twice.¹² Saul was afraid of David because Yahweh was with him but had departed from Saul.¹³ Therefore Saul sent David away from him and made him his captain over a thousand, and David went out and came in before the people.¹⁴ David behaved himself wisely in all he did, and Yahweh was with him.¹⁵ When Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he stood in awe of him.¹⁶ But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before them.¹⁷ Saul said to David, here is my elder daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife. Only be valiant for me, and fight Yahweh's battles. Saul thought, Don't let my hand be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him.¹⁸ David said to Saul, Who am I, and what is my clan or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?¹⁹ But when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as his wife.²⁰ Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David, and when they told Saul he was pleased.²¹ Saul said, I will give her to him so that she can be a snare to him, and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Therefore Saul said to David, You shall this day have a second opportunity to be my son-in-law.²² Saul commanded his servants, Speak to David secretly and say, 'Look, the king is pleased

with you, and all his servants love you; now therefore be the king's son-in-law'.²³ Saul's servants told David this. David said, Does it seem to you a light thing to be the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man, and little known?²⁴ The servants of Saul told him what David said.²⁵ Saul said, Tell David, 'The king desires no dowry except one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged on the king's enemies'. Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.²⁶ When his servants told David this, he was pleased to be the king's son-in-law. Before the allotted time²⁷ David arose and went with his men and killed two hundred of the Philistine men, and David brought their foreskins, and gave them in full number to the king so that he might be the king's son-in-law. Saul gave him Michal his daughter as his wife.²⁸ Saul saw and knew that Yahweh was with David, and Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him.²⁹ Saul was yet the more afraid of David, and Saul was David's enemy continually.³⁰ Then the princes of the Philistines went forth and whenever they did so, David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was highly esteemed.

CHAPTER 19 Jul. 7

Jonathan Speaks for David

Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to kill David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David.² Jonathan told David, Saul my father seeks to kill

you. Now therefore, please take extra care of yourself in the morning; hide in a secret place and stay there. ³ I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are and I will talk with my father about you, and if I find out anything, I will tell you. ⁴ Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, Don't let the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you and he has worked well for you; ⁵ he put his life in his hand and struck the Philistine, and Yahweh worked a great victory for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause? ⁶ Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: As Yahweh lives, he shall not be put to death. ⁷ Jonathan called David and told him all this. Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before.

David's Successes Enrage Saul

⁸ There was war again. David went out and fought the Philistines and killed them with a great slaughter, and they fled before him. ⁹ An evil spirit from Yahweh came on Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand, and David was playing his harp. ¹⁰ Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and the spear went into the wall. David fled, and escaped that night. ¹¹ Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him and to kill him in the morning. Michal, David's wife, told him, If you don't save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed. ¹² So Michal let David down through the window. He fled and escaped. ¹³ Michal took an idol and laid it in the bed, put a pillow of goats' hair at its head, and covered it with the clothes. ¹⁴ When Saul sent messengers to take David she said,

19:5 Saul wanting to slay "innocent blood" = Mt.27:4; his persecution of David "without a cause" was exactly what the Jews did to Christ (Jn. 15:25). We see clearly David as a type of Christ and Saul as representative of the Jewish opposition to Him.

19:12 There are many connections between Saul and Paul; and Paul noticed them and was motivated by them (see on 15:17). The way Paul was let down through a window to escape persecution (Acts 9:25; 2 Cor. 11:33) was not of his own choice; God set up that situation to make him realize that he should not be as Saul, his namesake. And so, led by God in this, he purposefully changed his name from Saul to Paul, 'the little one', recalling how when Saul was "little" in his own sight, he was acceptable to God (15:17). We too are to look for the similarities between our lives and those of Biblical characters, and act accordingly; and God will work in our lives to make the similarities, differences and lessons the more apparent to us.

19:13 *An idol* – Although both Michal and David were in love with each other when they married and they were both members of God's people, indeed Michal's brother Jonathan was a very faithful believer, Michal was clearly not devoted to Yahweh as she should've been – for she had a large idol in the house. Ultimately the marriage didn't work out. Being in love and both being nominally believers isn't enough to make a marriage work as God intends; there must be on both sides a genuine love of God.

He is sick. ¹⁵ Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed so that I can kill him. ¹⁶ When the messengers came in, there was just the idol in the bed, with the pillow of goats' hair at its head. ¹⁷ Saul said to Michal, Why have you deceived me like this and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped? Michal answered Saul, He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I kill you?'. ¹⁸ Now David fled and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. He and Samuel went and lived in Naioth. ¹⁹ Saul was told, David is at Naioth in Ramah! ²⁰ Saul sent messengers to take David, and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying and Samuel standing as head over them, the spirit of God came on the messengers of Saul and they also prophesied. ²¹ When Saul was told, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. Saul sent messengers again the third time and they also prophesied. ²² Then he went himself to Ramah, and came to the great well that is in Secu, and he asked, Where are Samuel and David? Someone said, They are at Naioth in Ramah. ²³ So he went towards Naioth in Ramah. Then the spirit of God came on him also, and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. ²⁴ He stripped off his clothes and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. There-

fore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?

CHAPTER 20 Jul. 8

Jonathan Helps David

David fled from Naioth in Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, What have I done? What is my iniquity? What is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life? ² He said to him, Far from it; you shall not die. Look, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me, so why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so. ³ But David took an oath and said, Your father knows well that I have found favour in your eyes, so he says, 'Don't let Jonathan know this, or he will be grieved'; but truly as Yahweh lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death. ⁴ Then Jonathan said to David, Whatever your soul desires, I will do it for you. ⁵ David said to Jonathan, Look, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to dine with the king; but let me go so that I can hide myself in the field until the third day at evening. ⁶ If your father misses me at all then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem, his city, for it is the yearly sacrifice there for all the family'. ⁷ If he says, 'Very well', your servant will have peace; but if he is angry, then know that evil is determined by him. ⁸ Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant

20:8 *Your servant* – David was respected by Jonathan as his spiritual superior because of David's victory over Goliath (see on 18:3), but despite that, David considers himself Jonathan's servant, in the spirit of servant leadership which characterizes Jesus.

of Yahweh. But if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself; why should you bring me to your father? ⁹ Jonathan said, Never! If I should know that evil were determined against you by my father, wouldn't I tell you? ¹⁰ Then David said to Jonathan, Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly? ¹¹ Jonathan said to David, Come, let us go out into the field. They both went out into the field. ¹² Jonathan said to David, By Yahweh, the God of Israel, when I have sounded out my father, by this time tomorrow or the third day, if he is favourable toward you I will send and tell you. ¹³ Yahweh deal with me severely, if my father intends evil against you and I don't disclose it to you so that I can send you away safely. May Yahweh be with you, as He has been with my father. ¹⁴ But while I live, show me the grace of Yahweh so that I will not be killed. ¹⁵ Also, do not cut off your kindness from my house forever, not even when Yahweh has cut off all the enemies of David from the surface of the earth.

Jonathan and David's Covenant

¹⁶ So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Yahweh

will require it at the hand of David's enemies. ¹⁷ Jonathan made David swear again, for the love that he had for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul. ¹⁸ Then Jonathan said to him, Tomorrow is the new moon and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. ¹⁹ When you have waited three days, go down quickly to the place where you hid yourself when this started, and stay by the stone Ezel. ²⁰ I will shoot three arrows to the side of it as though I shot at a mark. ²¹ Then I will send the boy saying, 'Go, find the arrows!'. If I tell the boy 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them', then come, for you are safe, as Yahweh lives. ²² But if I say this to the boy, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you', then go your way, for Yahweh has sent you away. ²³ Concerning the matter which you and I have spoken of, behold, Yahweh is between you and me forever. ²⁴ So David hid himself in the field, and when the new moon had come, the king sat down to eat. ²⁵ The king sat on his seat by the wall as usual and Jonathan sat opposite and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. ²⁶ Nevertheless Saul

20:16 *Yahweh will require it* – This affects the question of whether there will be a specific 'going through' of many (all?) our deeds at the day of judgment, or at least, all the sinful deeds of the condemned. Actions in this life will be "required" by God (Dt. 18:19; 23:21; Josh. 22:23; 2 Chron. 24:22; Ez. 3:20; 33:6,8) – at judgment day, when an explanation for our behaviour will be "required". The Hebrew word translated "require" in the above passages has the sense of to search / enquire – which suggests a process of discussion during the judgment process. Likewise God will "require" the flock at the hand of the pastors (Ez. 34:10; Heb. 13:17). There must be answerability before God for human actions; in this life and / or at the day of judgment when Christ returns. The apparent silence of God in this life can lead us to think that there are things we can 'get away with'; but ultimately there will be accountability before God.

didn't say anything that day, for he thought, Something has happened to him. He is not clean. Surely he is not clean. ²⁷ On the next day after the new moon, the second day, David's place was empty again. Saul said to Jonathan his son, Why didn't the son of Jesse come to eat, either yesterday or today? ²⁸ Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem. ²⁹ He said, 'Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city. My brother has commanded me to be there. Now, if I have found favour in your eyes, please let me go away and see my brothers'. That is why he has not come to the king's table.

Saul Turns against David Again

³⁰ Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, You son of a perverse rebellious woman, don't I know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the confusion of your mother's nakedness? ³¹ As long as

the son of Jesse lives on the earth you will not be established, nor your kingdom. Therefore now send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die! ³² Jonathan answered Saul his father, Why should he be put to death? What has he done? ³³ Saul cast his spear at him to strike him. By this Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. ³⁴ So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had treated him shamefully. ³⁵ In the morning Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little boy went with him. ³⁶ He said to his boy, Run, find now the arrows which I shoot. As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. ³⁷ When the boy had come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the boy, Isn't the arrow beyond you? ³⁸ Jonathan called after the boy, Go quickly! Hurry! Don't delay!

20:27 The Jews asked about Jesus "Where is he?" at a feast time (Jn. 7:11); just as Saul did about David.

20:30 *To the confusion of your mother's nakedness* – The Hebrew idiom is hard to interpret, but it could suggest that Saul was falsely accusing Jonathan of having a homosexual relationship with David. If you feel you have been slandered by gossip in the church, remember that almost every servant of God has been through this at the hands of those they counted as their brethren: Joseph, Moses, Job, David, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Paul, and above all Jesus Himself

20:31-34 Jonathan represents us all in our relationship with Christ (see on 18:3). He lived in an environment which was bitterly opposed to David; yet he stuck up for him, at the risk of embarrassment and opposition, and certain damage to his own prospects; as we should in this wicked world. As Saul cast a javelin at David, so he did at Jonathan; as we should fellowship the sufferings of David's greater son. Saul's hate of David resulted in Jonathan being "grieved for David, because his father had treated him shamefully". Is this not our response to our world in their ceaseless blasphemy of Christ?

Jonathan's boy gathered up the arrows and came to his master. ³⁹ But the boy didn't know anything. Only Jonathan and David knew the matter. ⁴⁰ Jonathan gave his weapons to his boy, and said to him, Go, take them to the city. ⁴¹ As soon as the boy had gone David got up from the south side of the stone, fell on his face to the ground and bowed himself three times. They kissed one another and wept one with another, and David wept the most. ⁴² Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, because we have both sworn in the name of Yahweh, saying, 'Yahweh shall be between me and you, and between my seed and your seed, forever'. David arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.

CHAPTER 21 Jul. 9

David and the Priest of Nob

Then David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech came to meet David trembling and said to him, Why are you alone and no-one with you? ² David said to Ahimelech the priest, The king has charged me with a task and has said to me 'Let no-one know anything about it or what I have commanded you'. I have told the young men to go to a meeting place. ³ Now therefore what do you have to hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever

there is here. ⁴ The priest answered David, There is no common bread here, but there is holy bread, if the young men have kept themselves from women. ⁵ David answered the priest, Truly, women have been kept from us for about three days. When I go on an expedition the bodies of the young men are holy; they are even for an ordinary journey; how much more so today? ⁶ So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there apart from the Bread of the Presence that had been taken from before Yahweh, to be replaced by fresh hot bread. ⁷ Now one of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before Yahweh; his name was Doeg the Edomite, the best of the herdsmen who belonged to Saul. ⁸ David said to Ahimelech, Don't you have here a spear or sword? I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me because the king's business required haste. ⁹ The priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine whom you killed in the valley of Elah is here, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take it; there is no other except that here. David said, There is none like that. Give it to me.

David Flees to Gath

¹⁰ David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish

21:9 David's eager taking of the sword of Goliath contrasts sadly with his earlier rejection of such weapons in order to slay Goliath (17:39). David later reflects how he knew that his faithless taking of that sword and the showbread would lead to the death of Abiathar's family (1 Sam. 22:22). But still he did it. David was ultimately a righteous man, but if we were to draw a graph of his level of faith, with time along the bottom and his level of faith on the side – it would be a jagged graph. Just like our lives.

the king of Gath. ¹¹ The servants of Achish said to him, Isn't this David the king of the land? Didn't they sing one to another about him in dances saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands?' ¹² David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. ¹³ He changed his behaviour before them and pretended to be mad, scabbled on the doors of the gate and let his saliva fall down onto his beard. ¹⁴ Then Achish said to his servants, Look, you see the man is mad. Why then have you brought him to me? ¹⁵ Do I lack madmen that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?

CHAPTER 22 Jul. 9

David Escapes to the Cave at

Adullam

David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of

Adullam. When his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. ² Everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt and everyone who was discontented gathered themselves to him and he became their captain. About four hundred men were with him. ³ David went from there to Mizpeh of Moab, and he said to the king of Moab, Please let my father and my mother come and stay with you, until I know what God will do for me. ⁴ He brought them before the king of Moab and they lived with him all the while that David was in the stronghold. ⁵ The prophet Gad said to David, Don't stay in the stronghold. Depart, and go into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and went into the forest of Hereth.

The Priests of Nob Killed by Saul

⁶ Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. Now Saul was

21:13, 15 Going down South to Achish of Gath and playing the mad man has sad connections with the patriarchs going down to Egypt in times of weak faith. This was a weak period of David's life; see on :9.

22:2 David at this time could be likened to Christ in our period of history, still awaiting being enthroned and given the Kingdom promised to Him. Those who followed David at this time would then represent us who follow Christ today, when society generally doesn't accept Him. Those who came to Him were initially spiritually weak, but they developed during their time in the wilderness with Him. It was those who were loyal to him in the wilderness who later became the rulers in his Kingdom, as we will in Christ's Kingdom when it is established on earth (Rev. 5:8). Those who came to David were initially driven to him by their hard experiences in this world, rather than attracted to him for purely spiritual motives; and so it is with many of those who come to Christ. Our motives for doing so change and mature over time.

22:5 *Go into the land of Judah* – David's whole experience with Saul was arranged by a loving Father. The sensible thing would have been for David to get out of Saul's way and lay quiet – and this is what he tried to do, by going to Moab. But then God tells him to go back into Judah. This was political suicide; it's similar to how Christ returned to Judea in a similar situation (Jn. 11:7,8). It made no human sense to expose himself to Saul again. And then God tells David to go and fight with the Philistines in

sitting in Gibeah under the tamarisk tree in Ramah with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him. ⁷ Saul said to them, Listen now, you Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse give each of you fields and vineyards? Will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds? ⁸ Is that why all of you have conspired against me so that there is no-one who tells me when my son makes a treaty with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you who is sorry for me or tells me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as he does today? ⁹ Then Doeg the Edomite, who stood by the servants of Saul, said: I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. ¹⁰ He inquired of Yahweh for him, gave him food, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. ¹¹ Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub and all his father's house, the priests who were in Nob; and they all came to the king. ¹² Saul said, Listen now, you son of Ahitub. He answered, Here I am, my lord. ¹³ Saul said to him, Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword, and have inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait,

as he does today? ¹⁴ Then Ahimelech answered the king, Who among all your servants is as faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and is taken into your council, and is honourable in your house? ¹⁵ Is this the first time I have inquired of God for him? Be it far from me! Don't let the king accuse his servant or any of the house of my father, for your servant knows nothing at all of all this. ¹⁶ The king said, You shall surely die Ahimelech, you and all your father's house. ¹⁷ The king said to the guards who stood around him, Turn and kill the priests of Yahweh because they have sided with David, and because they knew that he fled, and didn't tell me. But the servants of the king wouldn't put forth their hand to strike the priests of Yahweh. ¹⁸ The king said to Doeg, You turn and attack the priests! Doeg the Edomite turned and attacked the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five people who wore a linen ephod. ¹⁹ He struck Nob, the city of the priests, with the edge of the sword, men, women, children and nursing babies, and cattle, donkeys and sheep. ²⁰ One of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled to David. ²¹ Abiathar told David that Saul had killed Yahweh's priests. ²² David said to Abiathar, I knew on that day, when

order to rescue the people of Keilah (23:2). Yet the men of Keilah weren't allies worth having – even they were prepared to betray David to Saul, and by this action he made the Philistines hate him yet more, so refuge amongst them was no longer possible. Again and again, God led David into situations that were politically suicidal, that only made things worse for him... because He wanted David to trust in Him alone. And so it happens in our lives. Time and again.

22:22 David had great sensitivity and this led to an almost telepathic ability to enter

Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of all the people of your father's house. ²³ Stay with me, don't be afraid, for he who seeks my life seeks your life. With me you will be safe.

CHAPTER 23 Jul. 10

Keilah Saved by David

David was told, The Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors. ² Therefore David inquired of Yahweh, Shall I go and attack these Philistines? Yahweh said to David, Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah. ³ David's men said to him, Look, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then, if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? ⁴ Then David inquired of Yahweh yet again. Yahweh answered him, Get up and go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into your hand. ⁵ David and his men went to Keilah and fought against the Philistines and carried off their livestock and killed them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. ⁶ When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, he brought an ephod with him.

Saul Continues to Pursue David

⁷ Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah and he said, God has delivered him into my hand, for he is trapped by going into a town that has gates and bars. ⁸ Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. ⁹ David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him, so he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring the ephod here. ¹⁰ Then David said, O Yahweh the God of Israel, Your servant has definitely heard that Saul intends to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. ¹¹ Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? Yahweh, the God of Israel, I beg you, tell Your servant. Yahweh said, He will come down. ¹² Then David said, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? Yahweh said, They will deliver you. ¹³ Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and left Keilah, and went wherever they could go. Saul heard that David had escaped from Keilah so he gave up going there. ¹⁴ David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds and in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God didn't deliver him into his hand.

into other's problems; it became legendary throughout Israel, and this was one of the things which endeared him to his people (see too 2 Sam.14:17,20; 18:13) – and there is a powerful similarity here with Christ, whose sensitivity was greater than anyone's. His ability to know things may have been partly due to direct Divine guidance, but sometimes it may've been simply due to His acute sensitivity to people and human situations. We can take comfort that He is the same today as He was yesterday, and is highly sensitive to all our circumstances.

23:2 See on 22:5. This situation is typical of Christ's in Jn. 11:7,8.

¹⁵ David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life when he was in the wilderness of Ziph, in the forest. ¹⁶ Jonathan, Saul's son, went to David into the forests and strengthened his hand in God. ¹⁷ He said to him, Don't be afraid, for the hand of Saul my father will not find you; you will be king over Israel and I shall be next to you. Saul my father well knows that. ¹⁸ They both made a covenant before Yahweh, and David stayed in the forests but Jonathan went home. ¹⁹ Then the Ziphites came to Saul in Gibeah saying, Isn't David hiding among us in the strongholds in the forest, on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of the desert? ²⁰ Now therefore, O king, come down when you are ready; our part will be to de-

liver him into the king's hand. ²¹ Saul said, Yahweh bless you, for you have had compassion on me. ²² Please go and make sure and find out where his haunt is and who has seen him there, for they tell me that he is very crafty. ²³ So find out all the hiding places he uses and come back to me with definite information, and I will go with you. If he is in the area I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah. ²⁴ They set out and went to Ziph ahead of Saul, but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah on the south of the desert. ²⁵ Saul and his men went to seek him. When David was told, he went down to the rock and stayed in the wilderness of Maon. When Saul heard that, he pursued David

23:15 *To seek his life* – Psalm 54 was written when David received the news that the Ziphites had betrayed him. The reference to oppressors 'seeking after my soul / life' (Ps. 54:3) uses the same Hebrew words as here, where Saul seeks for David's life at Ziph. That Psalm gives an insight into the mind of David; how he perceived himself, how he understood God. He was obviously in a desperate situation – he'd been betrayed, and Saul appeared certain now to corner him and kill him. He asks God of course to save him; he doesn't just resign himself to what looked like an impossible situation. He had the vision to believe that God *can* do miracles. He asks God to 'judge' him, to 'plead my cause' (Ps. 54:1 Heb.). There he was, just having received the news... and he prays, and composes a Psalm, right there and then. Composing poetry in the heat of the moment was his way of calming down and focusing his faith. That's not to say, of course, that he didn't later refine Psalm 54 and 'write it up' as it were.

23:16, 17 Only occasionally could Jonathan and David meet, brief moments of intense fellowship away from the rest of the world, strengthening each other's hand in God, re-confirming their covenant together (18:3; 20:8,16; 23:18). No wonder their good-byes were so hard (20:41). Not surprisingly, they looked forward to the promised day of David's Kingdom. Our communion meetings with Christ (see on 18:3) during our wilderness journey must surely mirror those meetings.

23:21 *Yahweh bless you, for you have had compassion on me* – Saul made the common mistake of assuming that anyone on his side and against his perceived enemies was therefore also on God's side. But our enemies' enemy isn't therefore necessarily a good person or Godly. This logic leads to all manner of damaged relationships between individuals and groups.

into the wilderness of Maon. ²⁶ Saul went on one side of the mountain and David and his men on the other, and David hurried to get away for fear of Saul, for Saul and his men surrounded David and his men to take them. ²⁷ But a messenger came to Saul saying, Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid on the land! ²⁸ So Saul returned from pursuing David and went against the Philistines. Therefore they called that place Sela Hammahlekoth. ²⁹ David went from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.

CHAPTER 24 Jul. 11

Saul's Life Spared by David

When Saul had returned from pursuing the Philistines he

was told, David is in the wilderness of En Gedi. ² Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men on the rocks of the wild goats. ³ He came to the sheep pens by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were hiding in the innermost parts of the cave. ⁴ The men of David said to him, Look, the day of which Yahweh said to you, 'I will deliver your enemy into your hand and you can do to him whatever you wish'. Then David got up and cut off a corner of Saul's robe secretly. ⁵ Afterwards David's conscience smote him, because he had cut off a piece of Saul's robe. ⁶ He said to his men, Yahweh forbid that I should do such

23:26 *Saul went on one side of the mountain and David and his men on the other* – David was going up one side of the cone shaped mountain, getting higher and higher, whilst Saul was chasing him, never catching up with him, but going around the other side. The dust from David's group would've been visible to Saul's army. It was clear that soon David would reach the summit – and there would be no way out, apart from upwards to Heaven. He was in a no way out situation, just as God sometimes puts us into. But amazingly, God stopped Saul in his tracks, just as He sometimes saves us from such humanly hopeless situations, so that we will walk humbly and gratefully before Him the rest of our days. See on 29:4.

23:27 The way Saul returns from pursuing David because of a rumour of invasion is so similar to Rabshakeh's retreat from Jerusalem after rumours of incursions (Is. 37:9,10). There is much repetition within the Biblical narratives. Individuals tend to go through very similar experiences, and often the same words are used in the descriptions of the experience or their response to it. Some of these similarities are so specific and humanly unlikely to be replicated that one can only conclude that there was a higher power over-ruling their situations. It may be that the Angels work in human lives according to some kind of Divine pattern, and this accounts for the sense of repetition and *déjà vu*. But it may also be because it is God's intention that we meditate upon the lives of previous servants to the point where we see their experiences coming through, in principle, in our own lives; and we are urged on to a like victory as they attained.

24:4, 5 David saw Saul for who he was, the anointed of God. Christ too taught *His* men to have respect for the Pharisees, who 'sat in Moses' seat', and therefore ought to be given reverence on that account (Mt. 23:2). David's extreme respect for Saul

a thing to my lord, Yahweh's anointed, to lift my hand against him, since he is Yahweh's anointed. ⁷ So David restrained his men with these words, and didn't allow them to attack Saul. Saul got up out of the cave and went on his way. ⁸ David also got up afterwards and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, My lord the king! When Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and showed respect. ⁹ David said to Saul, Why do you listen when men say 'David is trying to harm you'? ¹⁰ Look, today your eyes have seen how Yahweh had delivered you into my hand in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, I will not lift up my hand against my lord, for he is Yahweh's anointed. ¹¹ Moreover, my father, look, here is a piece of your robe in my hand;

by the fact that I cut it off and didn't kill you, you can know and see that I have no desire to hurt you and have not sinned against you, though you hunt me to take my life. ¹² May Yahweh judge between me and you, and may Yahweh avenge the wrong you have done me; but my hand shall not be against you. ¹³ As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness, but my hand shall not be against you'. ¹⁴ Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea? ¹⁵ May Yahweh therefore be the judge and give sentence between me and you; may He plead my cause and deliver me out of your hand. ¹⁶ When David had finished saying this to Saul, Saul said, Is this your voice, my son David? Saul wept aloud. ¹⁷ He said

is shown in the fact that Yahweh had explicitly told him that he would deliver Saul into David's hand, and David was free to do as he wished to him; but because of his genuine respect for Saul, David didn't take the liberty of killing him; he chose a higher level on which to relate to Saul. Indeed, he even felt guilty at cutting off the blue ribbon from Saul's coat, such was David's *respect* for Saul. All those baptized into Christ have been "anointed" in that we are "in Christ", 'the anointed one' (2 Cor. 1:21). We must truly respect others on account of their being in the body of Christ / God's people, as Saul was. Paul deeply loved Corinth and respected them for their status as men and women in Christ, in receipt of the Father's love and grace, even though they abused him. Therefore he like David could love his enemies within the ecclesia; for Saul was in the ecclesia of Israel as much as David was.

24:15 *Yahweh therefore be the judge and give sentence between me and you; may He plead my cause* – It's not as if God isn't watching what's going on now, and will only open the books and judge human behaviour when Christ returns. His judgment is in a sense ongoing; we live out our lives before His judgment presence, and the final day of judgment will be a public declaration of the verdicts which have already been announced; it will largely be for our benefit rather than God's. David mixes metaphors here – God is for him both the ultimate judge, and also his counsel for the defence. Paul does the same in Romans 8, concluding in awe that if God in Christ is both our judge and our personal advocate, the one on our side in the case, then nobody and nothing can be against us; our salvation is assured.

to David, You are more righteous than I, for you have been good to me, whereas I have done evil to you. ¹⁸ You have declared this day how you have been good to me, because when Yahweh had delivered me into your hand, you didn't kill me. ¹⁹ For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away unharmed? Therefore may Yahweh reward you with good for what you have done to me today. ²⁰ Now I know that you will surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. ²¹ Swear now therefore to me by Yahweh, that you will not cut off my seed after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house. ²² David gave his oath to Saul. Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

CHAPTER 25 Jul. 12

Nabal Refuses to Help David

Samuel died, and all Israel gathered together and mourned for him, and they buried him at his home in Ramah. David went down to the wilderness of Paran. ² There was a man in Maon who had property in Carmel, and the man was very wealthy. He had three thousand

sheep and a thousand goats, and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. ³ His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but the man was harsh and mean; he belonged to the family of Caleb. ⁴ David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep. ⁵ David sent ten young men and said to them, Go up to Carmel and go to Nabal and greet him in my name. ⁶ Say to him, 'Long life to you! Peace to you and to your house and to all that you have. ⁷ I have heard that you are shearing your sheep. Your shepherds have been with us, and we didn't hurt them, nothing of theirs was missing all the while they were in Carmel. ⁸ Ask your young men and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find grace in your eyes, for we come at a good time. Please give whatever you can to your servants and to your son David'. ⁹ When David's young men came they said this to Nabal in the name of David, and waited. ¹⁰ Nabal answered David's servants, Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants who break away from their masters these days. ¹¹ Shall I then take my bread, my water and my meat that I have

24:18 It seems God later gave Saul into David's hand when "a deep sleep from the Lord" fell upon Saul at the very time David intended to kill him (26:12). Saul himself realized that the Lord had delivered him into David's hand to kill him. God thus gave David the possibility to get revenge and freedom from persecution – and yet at the last minute, it seems, David chose an even higher level; of love and deep respect for this spiritually sick man.

25:3 *He belonged to the family of Caleb* – A reminder that a faithful believer doesn't always have faithful descendants. We each stand independently before God, and yet nurture can play a significant part in the final algorithm determining why some end up faithful and some don't.

killed for my shearers, and give it to men who come from I don't know where?

David Prepares to Punish Nabal

¹² So David's young men turned and went back and told him all this.

¹³ David said to his men, Every man put on his sword! Every man put on his sword and David also put on his. About four hundred men followed David and two hundred stayed by the baggage. ¹⁴ But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, Look, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he railed at them. ¹⁵ But the men were very good to us and we were not hurt, nothing was missing as long as we were with them in the fields.

¹⁶ They were a wall to us night and day all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. ¹⁷ Now therefore consider what you should do, for evil is determined against our master and against all his household; he is such a worthless fellow that one can't even speak to him. ¹⁸ Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred loaves of bread, two bottles of wine, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched grain, one hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded them on donkeys.

¹⁹ She said to her young men, Go on before me; I am following you. But she didn't tell her husband, Nabal.

²⁰ As she rode on her donkey and came down in a valley, and there were David and his men coming down towards her, and she met them.

²¹ Now David had said, Surely for nothing I have kept all this fellow's possessions in the wilderness, so that nothing was missing. He has returned me evil for good. ²² God deal with David severely, if I leave alive one man of his by the morning.

Abigail Intervenes

²³ When Abigail saw David she hurried and alighted from her donkey; she bowed down before David with her face to the ground. ²⁴ She fell at his feet and said, On me, my lord, on me be the blame, and please let your handmaid speak in your ears. Hear the words of your handmaid.

²⁵ Please pay no attention, my lord, to this worthless fellow Nabal. As his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is his nature; but I, your handmaid, didn't see your young men whom you sent. ²⁶ Now therefore my lord, as Yahweh lives and as your soul lives, since Yahweh has withheld you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your

25:19 *Go on before me; I am following you* – Abigail was learning from Biblical precedent, just as we should; in this case, the example of Jacob trying to appease the approaching Esau and his men (cp. :20) by sending extravagant presents and then following behind them (Gen. 32:13–22). The similarity presents David as unspiritual Esau, and indeed this was a low point in David's spiritual life; see on :33. Her bowing with her face to the earth was exactly what Jacob did to Esau (:23 = Gen. 33:3). Her mind was clearly in that record, and she succeeded as we should in translating Biblical history into a practical template for our daily crises.

own hand, now therefore let your enemies and those who seek evil to my lord be like Nabal. ²⁷ Let this gift which your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. ²⁸ Please forgive the sin of your handmaid, for Yahweh will certainly make for my lord a sure house, because my lord fights the battles of Yahweh. Let evil not be found in you all your days. ²⁹ Though men may rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, yet the life of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life with Yahweh your God. He will hurl out the lives of your enemies as though from the pocket of a sling. ³⁰ When Yahweh has done to my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you prince over

Israel, ³¹ then this will not be on your conscience, either that you have shed blood without cause, or that my lord has avenged himself. When Yahweh has dealt well with my lord, then remember your handmaid. ³² David said to Abigail, Blessed is Yahweh, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! ³³ Blessed is your discretion, and blessed are you for keeping me this day from the guilt of bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand. ³⁴ For indeed, as Yahweh the God of Israel lives who has withheld me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, surely there wouldn't have been left to Nabal by the morning light so much as a single male. ³⁵ So David accepted from her what she had brought him and he said to

25:33 David thanks Abigail for persuading him not to ‘shed blood’ and “avenging myself with my own hand” – the very things he elsewhere condemns in his Psalms (e.g. Ps. 44:3). Often in the Psalms, David uses that Hebrew word translated “avenging myself” about how God and not man will revenge / save him against his enemies, for God saves / avenges the humble in spirit not by their strength and troops but by His. But in the anger of hot blood, David let go of all those fine ideas. In the heat of the moment we too can let go of all the far higher principles we know and love, and do the very things we detest when we see in others.

25:34 David sent messengers to Nabal meaning well to him but they were rudely rebuffed, resulting in his anger which only Abigail's grace and wisdom saved him from. And yet the same situation repeated in its essence when David sent messengers to Hanun who were likewise misinterpreted and rebuffed (2 Sam. 10:3). Again, David got angry – but there was no Abigail to restrain him, and he did get into an impossible fight... from which by grace God delivered him. David failed to learn from his previous experience. David had just been tested by God in the matter of sparing the life of his enemy Saul – and he came through the test with flying colours (1 Sam. 24). But now, soon afterwards, he was tested again in the same area in the matter of Nabal – and he initially failed, intent as he was on taking the life of his enemy Nabal. Thus a circumstance can repeat over a matter in which we were previously successful – and we can still fail that test. God is ever seeking to teach us by repeating circumstances in our lives.

25:35 It seems that the thief on the cross had a deep Bible knowledge. It could be that when he asks to be remembered for good when the Lord Jesus returned in His

her, Go up in peace to your house. I have listened to your words and have granted your request. ³⁶ Abigail came to Nabal while he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. Nabal's heart was merry, for he was very drunk. Therefore she told him nothing until the morning. ³⁷ In the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him what had happened; and his heart failed and he became like a stone. ³⁸ About ten days after that, Yahweh struck Nabal so that he died.

Abigail Becomes David's Wife

³⁹ When David heard that Nabal was dead he said, Blessed is Yahweh, who has upheld my cause against Nabal, and has kept back His servant from doing wrong. Yahweh has returned the wrongdoing of Nabal on his own head. David sent and asked Abigail to become his wife. ⁴⁰ When his servants had come to Abigail to Carmel they said, David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife. ⁴¹ She arose, bowed herself with her face to the earth and said, Your handmaid is ready to be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of

my lord. ⁴² Abigail hurried and got onto a donkey, with five of her maids who followed her, and she went with the messengers of David and became his wife. ⁴³ David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they both became his wives. ⁴⁴ Now Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was of Gallim.

CHAPTER 26 Jul. 13

David Spares Saul's Life Again

The Ziphites came to Saul to Gibeah saying, Isn't David hiding in the hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert? ² Then Saul went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. ³ Saul encamped by the road on the hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert, but David stayed in the wilderness. When he saw that Saul had come after him into the wilderness, ⁴ David sent out spies and found that Saul had certainly come to that place. ⁵ David set out and came to the place where Saul had encamped. He saw the place where Saul and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his army were ly-

Kingdom, he had in mind Abigail's words: that when David returned in glory in his Kingdom, "my Lord, then remember your handmaid" (:31). This was prefaced by her asking: "Forgive the sin of your handmaid" (:28). David's response was very similar to that of Jesus to the thief: "Go up in peace to your house. I have listened to your words and have granted your request". It would seem that the thief saw in David a type of Christ, and saw in Abigail's words exactly the attitude he had. And Christ accepted this. The faithful didn't just read the Bible as history but proactively saw the similarities with their situations and spoke and acted accordingly.

25:39 *Has kept back His servant from doing wrong* – God is able to work in our lives to stop us sinning over and above our own will; and we should ask Him to do so. We should also seek to be like Abigail, using wisdom and humility to stop others falling into sin.

ing; Saul lay among the wagons and the people were encamped around him. ⁶ Then David said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? Abishai said, I will go down with you. ⁷ So David and Abishai came to the army by night and Saul lay sleeping among the wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner and the soldiers lay around him. ⁸ Then Abishai said to David, God has delivered your enemy into your hand today. Now therefore please let me strike him to the ground with one stroke of my spear; I will not strike him a second time. ⁹ David said to Abishai, Don't destroy him, for who can put forth his hand against Yahweh's anointed and be guiltless? ¹⁰ David said, As Yahweh lives, Yahweh will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go into battle and perish. ¹¹ Yahweh forbid that I should put forth my hand against Yahweh's anointed; but now please get the spear that is at his head and the jar of water, and let us go. ¹² So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul's head

and they went away; and no-one saw it or knew about it, neither did anyone awake, for they were all asleep because a deep sleep from Yahweh had fallen on them. ¹³ Then David went over to the other side and stood on the top of the hill far off, a great space being between them, ¹⁴ and David called to the army and to Abner the son of Ner, Don't you answer, Abner? Then Abner answered, Who are you who calls to the king? ¹⁵ David said to Abner, Aren't you a man? Who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept watch over your lord, the king? Someone came to destroy the king your lord. ¹⁶ What you have done is not good. As Yahweh lives, you are worthy to die because you have not kept watch over your lord, Yahweh's anointed. Where are the king's spear and the jar of water that was at his head? ¹⁷ Saul knew David's voice and said, Is that your voice, my son David? David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king. ¹⁸ Why does my lord pursue his servant? What have I done? What evil am I guilty of? ¹⁹ Now therefore, please let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If Yah-

26:12 See on 24:4,5,18.

26:19 So many of the Psalms contain references to the smear campaign against David (Ps. 27:12; 31:13; 109:23 all seem to have reference to this verse). This frequency of reference in itself indicates the weight with which this tragedy rested upon David's mind.

They have said 'Go and serve other gods!' – Whether or not they said these very words, to exclude someone from the worshipping community [which can be done by anything from being too lazy to give them a ride to a meeting to formal excommunication] effectively invites people to go to “other gods”. Many fail this test; others like David learn that in fact God is far wider than what they had previously thought (see on :20).

weh has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering. But if it is men who have done it, may they be cursed by Yahweh, for they have driven me out so that I can't have a part in Yahweh's inheritance; they have said 'Go and serve other gods!'.²⁰ Now therefore, don't let my blood fall to the earth far from the presence of Yahweh, for the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains.

Saul's Repentance

²¹ Then Saul said, I have sinned. Return, my son David, for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your eyes today. I have played the fool, and have erred very seriously.²² David answered, Here is the spear, O king! Let one of the young men come over and get it.²³ Yahweh will reward every man

for his righteousness and his faithfulness, because Yahweh delivered you into my hand today and I wouldn't put forth my hand against Yahweh's anointed.²⁴ As your life was respected this day in my eyes, so let my life be respected in the eyes of Yahweh and let Him deliver me out of all oppression.²⁵ Then Saul said to David, May you be blessed, my son David. You will do great things and will surely triumph. So David went on his way, and Saul returned home.

CHAPTER 27 Jul. 13

David Goes to the Philistines

David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines, then Saul will give up looking for me any more in Israel and I will escape from him.

26:20 *Far from the presence of Yahweh* – David still held the wrong idea that a national god, in this case Yahweh of Israel, could only be served on his own territory and not outside of it. This explains why David so bitterly regretted that Saul had made it practically impossible for him to remain within the territory of Israel (:19). Yet David's later Psalms reflect his realization that Yahweh is the one and only God of all the planet, His presence is everywhere and He can therefore be worshipped anywhere on earth. Although David had a wrong understanding of God on this point, this didn't mean that he couldn't have faith in God nor please Him; and through reflection on the circumstances God sent him, David came to the truth about this matter.

26:21 *I have sinned* – The very words of Judas (Mt.27:4), again confirming David as a type of Christ and Saul as representative of the opposition to Christ.

26:24 Here we see established the principle that the grace we show others is related to the grace God will show us. David could have killed Saul, indeed God gave him the legitimate opportunity to do so, but he chose the higher level – of grace and forgiveness, despite Saul's lack of repentance at the time. Someone doesn't have to be groveling in repentance before we show grace to them.

27:1 *I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul* is surely a collapse of faith, given that God had anointed him as king. And it led to the way in which David deceived Achish by pretending he was attacking Israelite towns, when in fact he was going out and attacking the Amalekite settlements, killing all men, women and children in them so that nobody was left alive to tell that it was David who had attacked them (:8-10).

² David and the six hundred men who were with him left and went to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. ³ David lived with Achish at Gath with his men, each one with his household, and David had with him his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife. ⁴ When Saul was told that David had fled to Gath he stopped searching for him. ⁵ David said to Achish, If I have found favour in your eyes, let me be given a place in one of the cities in the country to live in. Why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you? ⁶ Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day, therefore Ziklag belongs to the kings of Judah to this day. ⁷ David lived in the country of the Philistines for a full year and four months. ⁸ David and his men went and made a raid on the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites; those were the inhabitants of the land from ancient times as far as Shur and Egypt. ⁹ David attacked the land and saved neither man nor woman alive; he took away the sheep, cattle, donkeys and camels and the clothing, then he returned to Achish. ¹⁰ When Achish said, Against whom have you made a raid today? David would say, Against the South of Judah, or against the South of the Jerahmeelites, or against the South of the Kenites. ¹¹ David saved

Innocent people were slain by David's sword for the 'political' reason that he had to keep Achish 'in the dark' about what he was really up to. And so in case a five year old says something incriminating later, David simply killed the little boy. Indeed, when Achish later says that David would be best not to go with him to fight Saul, David hypocritically insists that he has been a loyal and upright servant of Achish (29:8). This was hardly an example of the "integrity" and "uprightness" which David glorifies in his Psalms, and which he insisted he was full of (Ps. 25:21). Indeed he claims that his integrity is the basis of his acceptance by God (Ps. 26:1). It's recorded that in this ethnic cleansing which David performed, he took the spoil of those settlements for himself (:9). Indeed when he destroyed Ziklag, he took away their herds "and said, This is David's spoil" (30:20). The pressure of circumstance can so easily lead us to slip into periods of life where we betray the principles we enthusiastically proclaim in worship, as David at this time lived quite contrary to the spirit of his own Psalms.

27:4 Searching – It's emphasized that Saul "sought" David in order to kill Him (19:10; 23; 14,15,25; 24:2; 25:26,29; 26:2,20; 27:1,4; 2 Sam. 4:8), and likewise the Gospels stress that the Jews "sought" to kill Christ (Mt. 21:46; Mk. 11:18; 12:12; 14:1,11,55; Lk. 19:47; 20:19; 22:2,6; Jn.5:16,18; 7:1,11,25,30; 8:37,40; 10:39; 11:8,56; 18:4,7,8).

27:8 From ancient times – The Hebrew word *olahm*, often translated 'for ever', clearly doesn't always mean literal future infinity – although in *some* places it can have that sense. It's actually used in places to describe *the past*; events of a long time ago, but not events that happened an 'infinitely long time' ago. It describes up to the time of the Exodus (also in Is. 51:9; 63:9); and elsewhere the time of a previous generation (Dt. 32:7; Job 22:15); to the time just before the exile of Judah (Is. 58:12; 61:4; Mic. 7:14; Mal. 3:4); to the time just before the flood (Gen. 6:4). Descriptions of the Law of Moses and other things as being *olahm*, eternal, must be understood in this more limited sense of a long time, an age, but not necessarily literal eternity.

neither man nor woman alive to bring them to Gath, thinking, They might inform about us, saying, ‘David has done this. This was what he did all the time he lived in the country of the Philistines’.¹² Achish believed David, saying, He has made his people Israel abhor him so much that he will be my servant forever.

CHAPTER 28 Jul. 14

The Philistines Fight against Israel

In those days the Philistines gathered their armies together to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, You must certainly go out with me in the army, you and your men.² David said to Achish, Then you will know what your servant can do. Achish said to David, Therefore I will make you my bodyguard for life.³ Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. Saul had put away out of the land those who had familiar spirits and the wizards.⁴ The Philistines gathered together and encamped in Shunem, and Saul gathered all Israel and they encamped in Gilboa.⁵ When Saul saw the army of

the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly.⁶ When Saul inquired of Yahweh, Yahweh didn’t answer him, neither by dreams nor by Urim nor by prophets.

The Witch of Endor

⁷ Then Saul said to his servants, Find me a woman who has a familiar spirit so that I can go to inquire of her. His servants said to him, There is a woman who has a familiar spirit at Endor.⁸ Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothing, and went with two men to the woman by night. He said, Please consult a familiar spirit for me and bring me up the one I name.⁹ The woman said to him, Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off those who have familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land. Why then have you set a trap for me, to cause me to die?¹⁰ Saul swore to her by Yahweh, As Yahweh lives, you will not be punished for this.¹¹ Then the woman said, Whom shall I bring up to you? He said, Bring Samuel up for me.¹² When the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice, and said to

28:6 *When Saul inquired of Yahweh, Yahweh didn’t answer him* – But in God’s final analysis of Saul, He says that He killed Saul because Saul sinned against God’s word by *not* enquiring of God, but of a witch (1 Chron. 10:13,14). But Saul *did* enquire of God (see too the same Hebrew word in 14:27), but God didn’t answer him. Although Saul prayed to God and enquired of His word on the surface, in his heart, he did nothing of the sort; and therefore his prayer and enquiry was reckoned never to have happened. And we must ask how much of our prayer and Bible study is seen by God as being only spoken and read on a surface level. This was exactly the problem of natural Israel (Hos. 7:14; 11:7).

28:11, 12 Death is total unconsciousness (Job 3:17; Ecc. 9:5,10). Notice that Samuel came “up” out of the earth as in a resurrection, not down from heaven, where we would expect him to be if common ideas are correct (:14,15). Samuel appeared as an old man, not a “soul” (:14). The woman surely guessed she was talking to Saul – he

Saul, Why have you deceived me? You are Saul! ¹³ The king said to her, Don't be afraid. What do you see? The woman said to Saul, I see a god coming up out of the earth. ¹⁴ He said to her, What does he look like? She said, An old man is coming up. He is wearing a mantle. Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and showed respect. ¹⁵ Samuel said to Saul, Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up? Saul answered, I am very distressed, for the Philistines make war against me and God has departed from me, and answers me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you so that you can tell me what I should do. ¹⁶ Samuel said, Why do you ask me, since Yahweh has departed from you and has become your adversary? ¹⁷ Yahweh has done to you as He spoke by me. Yahweh has torn the

kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbour, to David. ¹⁸ Because you didn't obey Yahweh and didn't execute His fierce wrath on Amalek, therefore Yahweh has done this to you today. ¹⁹ Yahweh will deliver Israel and you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. Yahweh will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines. ²⁰ Then Saul fell immediately his full length on the earth and was terrified because of the words of Samuel. There was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all that day and all that night. ²¹ The woman came to Saul, and seeing that he was very troubled she said to him, Look, your handmaid has obeyed you and I have put my life in my hands and have done what you told me. ²² Now please listen to your handmaid and let me give you some food so that

was the tallest of the Israelites (10:23), and was well known to everyone as the king; hence she could accept his assurance of immunity from prosecution (:10). She was used to running fake séances (because nobody truly communicates with the dead), and so she pretends she has some insight to know she's talking to Saul even though it was obvious (:12), and then describes Samuel in the kind of terms Saul would've expected – an old man wearing a prophets' mantle (:14), just as Saul would've last remembered Samuel. However, Samuel then appears for real, temporarily resurrected by God according to the principle of Prov. 26:5, that God answers fools according to their foolish requests. Perhaps her scream of :12 was in genuine shock at seeing Samuel appear for real. This would explain why the woman stops speaking to Saul and Samuel talks directly to Saul – not through the woman as a medium between them, as was usual for such a séance.

28:19 Saul, Jonathan and Samuel all went to the same place at death. Righteous Abraham was “gathered to his people” (or ancestors), on death; they were idolaters (Gen. 25:8; Josh. 24:2). The division between sheep and goats will be when Christ returns, at the resurrection and judgment seat (Mt. 13:48; 25:33) – not at the moment of death. At death we return to dust like the animals, good and bad all go to the same place – but the difference is that those responsible to God will be resurrected and judged, and the faithful will then live eternally in God's Kingdom on earth.

you may eat and have the strength to go on your way. ²³ But he refused and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, urged him, so he listened to them. He got up from the earth and sat on the bed. ²⁴ The woman had a fattened calf in the house. She hurried and killed it, and she took flour, kneaded it and baked unleavened bread with it. ²⁵ She brought it before Saul and his servants and they ate. Then they got up, and went away that night.

CHAPTER 29 Jul. 15

David Sent Back to Ziklag by Achish

The Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by the spring in Jezreel. ² The lords of the Philistines marched on in units of hundreds and thousands, and David and his men marched in the rear with Achish. ³ Then the lords of the Philistines said, What about these Hebrews? Achish said, Isn't this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or rather these years, and I have so far found no fault in him? ⁴ But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him and said to him, Send the man back to the place you have

appointed for him. He must not go down with us to battle, in case he turns against us during the fighting. How better could this fellow reconcile himself to his lord than with the heads of these men? ⁵ Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, 'Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands?'. ⁶ So Achish called David and said to him, As Yahweh lives, you have been upright and your conduct with me in the army has been good in my sight; I have not found evil in you since the day you came to me till this day. But the lords don't approve of you. ⁷ Therefore now return and go in peace; do not displease the lords of the Philistines. ⁸ David said to Achish, But what have I done? What have you found against your servant all the time I have been with you to this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king? ⁹ Achish answered David, I know that you have been pleasing to me, as an angel of God, nevertheless the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He must not go up with us to the battle'. ¹⁰ Now get up early in the morning with the servants of your lord who have come with you, and depart as soon as it is light. ¹¹ So David got up early, he and his men,

29:4 David was in an impossible situation; he had not been attacking Israelites as he had previously claimed to the Philistines; he had a strong conscience against killing Saul; yet he had given the impression he was willing to zealously fight against and kill his own Israelite people; it seemed there was no way out. And then, God's gracious hand acted. Some of the Philistine army leaders objected to David's presence on the battlefield – at the very last minute! God leads us into apparently dead end, no way out situations – and then delivers us out of them by His grace, in ways we had never considered. See on 23:26.

to depart in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines, and the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

CHAPTER 30 Jul. 15

The Amalekites Destroyed by David

When David and his men had come to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid on the South and on Ziklag, and had attacked Ziklag and burned it,² and had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both young and old. They didn't kill any, but carried them off and went their way.³ When David and his men came to the city they found it had been burned, and their wives, their sons and their daughters taken captive.⁴ Then David and his men wept aloud until they had no more power to weep.⁵ David's two wives were taken captive: Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail who had been the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.⁶ David was greatly distressed, for the men spoke of stoning him because they were grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But

David strengthened himself in Yahweh his God.⁷ David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, Please bring me here the ephod. Abiathar brought the ephod to David⁸ and David inquired of Yahweh saying, Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them? He answered, Pursue, for you will certainly overtake them and recover all.⁹ So David and the six hundred men who were with him went to the brook Besor, where those who were left behind had stayed.¹⁰ But David pursued the Amalekites with four hundred men; two hundred had stayed behind because they were so exhausted that they couldn't go over the brook Besor.¹¹ They found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David, and gave him food and he ate, and they gave him water to drink.¹² They gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. When he had eaten, he revived, for he had eaten no food nor drunk any water for three days and three nights.¹³ David asked him, To whom do you belong?

30:6 Yet David was innocent. Grief leads to a strong desire to blame someone for the loss, and that desire can lead to friends and brethren turning upon each other. Indeed, much harmful behaviour arises from the basic human need to find a scapegoat, someone or something upon which to place guilt. One implication of our seriously accepting that Christ on the cross was a guilt offering, the fulfilment of the Mosaic scapegoat ritual, is that we will no longer experience such a need to scapegoat and lay guilt. For all guilt, however perceived and from whatever cause, has finally been carried away into the wilderness by His unique and far reaching sacrifice there.

30:7 There are several references to the ephod and to "Urim" and "Thummim" in the historical records. The ephod was the priest's waistcoat upon which the breastplate was hung. It seems that Urim and Thummim were the names of two stones kept within the ephod. From the questions answered by them, it would seem they were capable of giving binary answers to questions, presumably through flashing in a certain sequence – if God chose to work through them in response to prayers for answers about yes / no choices.

Where are you from? He said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite, and my master left me because three days ago I fell sick. ¹⁴ We made a raid on the South of the Cherethites and on the territory which belongs to Judah and on the South of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag with fire. ¹⁵ David said to him, Will you lead me down to this raiding party? He said, Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me nor deliver me up into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to them. ¹⁶ When he had led him down, there they were, spread around over all the ground, eating, drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines and out of the land of Judah. ¹⁷ David fought them from twilight to the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. ¹⁸ David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and David rescued his two wives. ¹⁹ There was nothing missing, small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that they had taken. David brought back every-

thing. ²⁰ He took all the flocks and herds, which they drove before the other livestock, and he said, This is David's spoil. ²¹ David came to the two hundred men who had been so exhausted that they could not follow David, who had been left behind at the brook Besor, and they went out to meet David and the people who were with him. When David came near them he greeted them. ²² But all the wicked men and troublemakers among David's followers said, Because they didn't go with us we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, just each man's wife and children; then he can take them away and depart. ²³ David said, You must not do that, my brothers, with what Yahweh has given us. He has preserved us and delivered the forces that came against us into our hand. ²⁴ Who will listen to what you say? The share of the one who goes down to the battle shall be the same as the share of the one who stays with the baggage; they shall share alike. ²⁵ From that day forward he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day. ²⁶ When David came to Ziklag he sent some of

30:22 Paul considered that Mark *had not gone with them* to the work (Acts 15:38). This is quoting the Septuagint of 1 Sam. 30:22, where "all the wicked men and troublemakers among David's followers said, Because they *didn't go with us* we will not give them any of the spoil". *Why* does the Spirit make this connection? Is it not suggesting that Paul, zealous soldier of David / Jesus as he was, was in those early days in some sense a sinful man, bent on achieving his own glory in preaching, and unwilling to share it with anyone who wasn't spiritually or physically strong enough to do it as he was (cp. the weaker followers of David)? If this is the case, then this is a far, far cry from the Paul who wrote his letters some years later, begging Timothy to come to encourage him. Paul like David developed spiritually over the course of his spiritual journey.

the spoil to the elders of Judah, his friends, saying, Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of Yahweh. ²⁷ He sent it to those who were in Bethel, Ramoth of the South, Jattir, ²⁸ Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa, ²⁹ Racal, the cities of the Jerahmeelites, the cities of the Kenites, ³⁰ Hormah, Borashan, Athach, ³¹ Hebron and to those in all the places where David himself and his men used to stay.

CHAPTER 31 Jul. 16

Saul's Suicide

Now the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell down slain on Mount Gilboa. ² The Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons, and they killed Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. ³ The battle went badly against Saul, the archers overtook him and wounded him badly. ⁴ Then Saul said to his armour bearer, Draw

your sword and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through and abuse me! But his armour bearer would not, for he was respectful. Therefore Saul took his sword and fell on it. ⁵ When his armour bearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell on his sword and died with him. ⁶ So Saul died, and his three sons and his armour bearer and all his men, that same day together. ⁷ When the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, and those who were beyond the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled, and the Philistines came and lived in them. ⁸ The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. ⁹ They cut off his head, stripped off his armour and sent into the land of the Philistines all around to carry the news to the house of their idols

30:31 We wonder why God arranged for David to have the experiences of this chapter just before the death of Saul. The moment of Saul's death was of huge significance to David psychologically – it was the end of an era of persecution, the end of a love-hate relationship which must have emotionally and spiritually drained him, and the beginning of his own kingship. God is very sensitive to us, and He obviously knew that David needed these humbling experiences in order to prepare him for the news of Saul's death – e.g. he had to go through the experience of having his supporters turn against him to the point of almost literally killing him, falsely blaming him for a disaster (:6), in order to prepare him for widespread acclaim and desire to crown him king just days later.

31:4 *His armour bearer would not, for he was respectful* – David had been known throughout Israel for teaching by example that he would not harm the Lord's anointed, and that anybody who did so would have to give account (24:6; 26:9-11). Although Saul's armour bearer was likely one of his most loyal supporters in the campaign against David, David's spiritual reasoning and example had influenced him, so that in the heat of battle he acted accordingly. We learn from this that our examples are far more powerful than we may realize.

and to the people. ¹⁰ They put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan. ¹¹ When the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, ¹² all the valiant men arose and travelled all night and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan, and they went to Jabesh and burnt them there. ¹³ They took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

CHAPTER 1 Jul. 17

David Told about Saul's Death

It happened after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had stayed two days in Ziklag; ² it happened on the third day, that behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes torn and dust upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and showed respect. ³ David said to him, Where do you come from? He said to him, I have escaped out of the camp of Israel. ⁴ David said to him, How did it go? Please tell me. He answered, The people have fled from the battle, and many of the people also have fallen and are dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also. ⁵ David said to the young man who told him, How do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead? ⁶ The young man who told him said, As I happened by chance on Mount Gilboa, behold, Saul was leaning on his spear; and behold, the chariots and the horsemen followed hard after him. ⁷ When he looked behind him, he saw me, and called to me. I answered, 'Here I am'. ⁸ He said to me, 'Who are you?'. I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite'. ⁹ He said to me, 'Please stand beside

me, and kill me; for anguish has taken hold of me, because my life is yet whole in me'. ¹⁰ So I stood beside him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he had fallen. I took the crown that was on his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them here to my lord.

David Mourns the Death of Saul and Jonathan

¹¹ Then David took hold on his clothes, and tore them; and likewise all the men who were with him. ¹² They mourned, wept and fasted until evening, for Saul and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of Yahweh, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword. ¹³ David said to the young man who told him, Where are you from? He answered, I am the son of a foreigner, an Amalekite. ¹⁴ David said to him, How were you not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy Yahweh's anointed? ¹⁵ David called one of the young men and said, Go near, and fall on him. He struck him, so that he died. ¹⁶ David said to him, Your blood be on your head; for your mouth has testified against you saying, 'I have slain Yahweh's anointed'.

1:16 *Your mouth has testified against you* – From their own mouth and words men will be judged (Mt. 12:37; Lk. 19:22). And yet perhaps even now, men are justified by their words before the court of Heaven – for 'justify' means to pronounce righteous, and this pronouncement / justification is therefore given even now. As the judgment seat of God is in a sense ongoing, our words are as it were our testimony at our own court case before God. At the last day, it could even be that the Lord cites the condem-

David's Lament

¹⁷ David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son ¹⁸ (and he commanded them to teach the children of Judah the song of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jashar): ¹⁹ Your glory, Israel, is slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen! ²⁰ Don't tell it in Gath. Don't publish it in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. ²¹ You

mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew nor rain on you, neither fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty was shamefully cast away, The shield of Saul was not anointed with oil. ²² From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, Jonathan's bow didn't turn back. Saul's sword didn't return empty. ²³ Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives. In their death they were not divided. They were swifter than eagles. They were

natory words of the rejected uttered during their lifetimes and leaves these as their condemnation (cp. 1 Kings 20:40).

1:17 We can all too easily pray for what we will later ask to be changed. David prayed for deliverance from “the evil man”, Saul; he asked that Saul be slain and punished (Ps. 140:1,9,10). But when this prayer was answered, David wept with the amazing lamentation over Saul which we have here. It's a lesson to think carefully about what we're praying for, and imagine our response and situation if actually the prayer is answered. We need to pray as if every prayer *will* be answered, not just expressing our feelings and immediate desires, as it seems David did in his prayers against Saul.

1:18 David's lament over Saul was taught to the children of Judah; and the early chapters of 2 Samuel are full of examples of David's expression of love for Saul in every way he knew how. David's love for Saul was truly amazing. Saul was his enemy, he drove David to absolute despair, his senseless persecution of David was articulated in every way he could. In all this we see the prototype of the hatred of the Jews for Jesus. Yet when Saul was slain for his sins, David's love for him was overflowing, to the point that his people saw that this was no political theatricism (3:36,37). But it was not only at Saul's death that David had these feelings; after all, it's a lot easier to love someone when they're dead. Psalm 35 is David's commentary on his feelings for Saul: “They laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul (spiritually). But as for me, when they (Saul and his family, in the context) were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into my heart. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother (i.e. Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1:26): I bowed down heavily, as one that mourns for his mother” (Ps. 35:11-15). Bowing down heavily as a man weeps at his mother's graveside is a powerful image. A man's grief for his mother must surely be the finest picture David could have chosen. That sense of infinite regret that he didn't appreciate her more. David realized that he had reached the point where he knew that he really did truly love his enemies. He wept for Saul as a man weeps at his dear mother's graveside. And he did this for a man who was utterly worthless. And this is a poor, poor shadow of the Christ's love for Israel. And how much more does He love us, who at least try to make up for Israel's cruel indifference?

stronger than lions. ²⁴ You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet delicately, who put ornaments of gold on your clothing. ²⁵ How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places. ²⁶ I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan. You have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. ²⁷ How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

CHAPTER 2 Jul. 18

David Inquires of God

It happened after this, that David inquired of Yahweh saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? Yahweh said to him, Go up. David said, Where shall I go up? He said, To Hebron. ² So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. ³ David brought up his men who were with him, every man with his household. They lived in the cities of Hebron. ⁴ The men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. They told David saying, The men of Jabesh Gilead were those who buried Saul. ⁵ David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead and said to them, Blessed are you by Yahweh, that you have shown this kindness to your lord, even to Saul, and have buried him. ⁶ Now may Yahweh show grace and

truth to you. I also will reward you for this kindness, because you have done this thing. ⁷ Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

Ishbosheth Made King of Israel

⁸ Now Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's army, had taken Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; ⁹ and he made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, over Benjamin and over all Israel. ¹⁰ Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David. ¹¹ The time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. ¹² Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. ¹³ Joab the son of Zeruah, and the servants of David, went out, and met them by the pool of Gibeon; and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. ¹⁴ Abner said to Joab, Please let the young men arise and play before us! Joab said, Let them arise! ¹⁵ Then they arose and went over by number: twelve for Benjamin, and for Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. ¹⁶ They each caught his op-

2:5 The way of grace is sometimes counter instinctive and can be seen as political suicide.

2:16 This incident was surely to show the tragic wastage and pointless destruction

ponent by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: therefore that place was called Helkath Hazzurim, which is in Gibeon. ¹⁷ The battle was very severe that day: and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.

Death of Asahel

¹⁸ The three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, Abishai and Asahel: and Asahel was as swift of foot as a wild gazelle. ¹⁹ Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he didn't turn to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. ²⁰ Then Abner looked behind him and said, Is it you, Asahel? He answered, It is I. ²¹ Abner said to him, Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and grab one of the young men, and take his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. ²² Abner said again to Asahel, Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then should I hold up my face to Joab your brother? ²³ However he refused to turn aside. Therefore Abner with the back end of the spear struck him in the body,

so that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place. It happened, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still. ²⁴ But Joab and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they had come to the hill of Ammah, that lies before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon. ²⁵ The children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner and became one band, and stood on the top of a hill. ²⁶ Then Abner called to Joab and said, Shall the sword devour forever? Don't you know that it will be bitterness in the latter end? How long shall it be then, before you ask the people to return from following their brothers? ²⁷ Joab said, As God lives, if you had not spoken, surely then in the morning the people would have gone away, rather than each following after his brother. ²⁸ So Joab blew the trumpet; and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more. ²⁹ Abner and his men went all that night through the Arabah; and they passed over the Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and

caused by conflict between brethren. Perhaps both sides were being prompted by this incident to call off the entire armed conflict with each other, but they failed to respond to the providential hint.

2:19 *He didn't turn to the right hand nor to the left* – This phrase is typically used in the Bible to describe our faithful following of God in this way; he didn't turn aside to the right nor the left in following his brother (:21), another phrase usually used about faithful following after Yahweh. Asahel justified his persecution of his brother as a faithful following of God – and died because of it. The same mistake is often repeated in the church.

2:26, 27 Both sides in this conflict between brethren sensed it was wrong, and yet they still did it. Reconciliation between brethren should seek to appeal to this conscience which there often is – that conflict and division is wrong.

came to Mahanaim. ³⁰ Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. ³¹ But the servants of David had struck of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, so that three hundred and sixty men died. ³² They took up Asahel, and buried him in the tomb of his father, which was in Bethlehem. Joab and his men went all night, and the day broke on them at Hebron.

CHAPTER 3 Jul. 19

The House of David Grows Stronger

Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: and David grew stronger and stronger, but the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker. ² To David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; ³ his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; ⁴ the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; ⁵ the sixth, Ithream, of Eglah, David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

Abner Makes Peace with David

⁶ It happened that while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner made himself strong on behalf of the house of Saul. ⁷ Now Saul had a concu-

bine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ishbosheth said to Abner, Why have you gone in to my father's concubine? ⁸ Then was Abner very angry for the words of Ishbosheth, and said, Am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah? Today I show kindness to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hand of David; and yet you charge me this day with a fault concerning this woman! ⁹ God do so to Abner, and more also, if, as Yahweh has sworn to David, I don't do even so to him; ¹⁰ to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba. ¹¹ He could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him. ¹² Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf saying, Whose is the land? Make your alliance with me, and behold, my hand shall be with you, to bring all Israel around to you. ¹³ He said, Good; I will make a treaty with you; but one thing I require of you. That is, you shall not see my face, unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face. ¹⁴ David sent messengers to Ishbosheth, Saul's son, saying, Deliver me my wife Michal, whom I pledged to be married to me for one hundred foreskins of the Philistines. ¹⁵ Ishbosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from Paltiel the son of Laish. ¹⁶ Her husband went with her, weeping as he went, and

3:16 David's breaking up of this marriage for reasons of personal politics and pride seems totally wrong. This was not only a breach of Mosaic law, but displayed a sad

followed her to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, Go! Return! And he returned. ¹⁷ Abner had communication with the elders of Israel saying, In times past, you wished for David to be king over you. ¹⁸ Now then do it; for Yahweh has spoken of David saying, ‘By the hand of My servant David, I will save My people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies’. ¹⁹ Abner also spoke in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and to the whole house of Benjamin. ²⁰ So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. David made Abner and the men who were with him a feast. ²¹ Abner said to David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may reign over all that your soul desires. David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

Joab Kills Abner

²² Behold, the servants of David and Joab came from an engagement, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner was not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace. ²³ When Joab and all the army who was with him had come, they told Joab saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he has sent him away, and he is gone in peace. ²⁴ Then Joab came to the king and said, What have

you done? Behold, Abner came to you. Why is it that you have sent him away, and he is quite gone? ²⁵ You know Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive you, and to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you do. ²⁶ When Joab had come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the well of Sirah; but David didn’t know it. ²⁷ When Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him quietly, and struck him there in the body, so that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother. ²⁸ Afterwards, when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before Yahweh forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner. ²⁹ Let it fall on the head of Joab, and on all his father’s house. Let there not fail from the house of Joab one who has an issue, or who is a leper, or who leans on a staff, or who falls by the sword, or who lacks bread. ³⁰ So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle. ³¹ David said to Joab, and to all the people who were with him, Tear your clothes, and clothe yourselves with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. King David followed the bier. ³² They buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept. ³³ The king lamented for Abner and said, Should Abner

elevation of politics above others’ relationships and marriages. It may be significant that her renewed marriage with David wasn’t blessed with any children (6:23).

have died as a fool dies? ³⁴ Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put into fetters. As a man falls before the children of iniquity, so you fell. All the people wept again over him. ³⁵ All the people came to cause David to eat bread while it was yet day. David swore saying, God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or anything else, until the sun goes down. ³⁶ All the people took notice of it, and it pleased them; as whatever the king did pleased all the people. ³⁷ So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to kill Abner the son of Ner. ³⁸ The king said to his servants, Don't you know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel? ³⁹ I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me.

May Yahweh reward the evildoer according to his wickedness.

CHAPTER 4 Jul. 20

Ishbosheth Killed

When Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands became feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled. ² Saul's son had two men who were captains of bands: the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin (for Beeroth also is reckoned to Benjamin: ³ and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and have lived as foreigners there until this day). ⁴ Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son who was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the news came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel; and

3:35 David is at great pains to demonstrate that he is against the pointless shedding of blood. But his earlier life had featured much pointless shedding of blood – e.g. he killed 200 Philistines when only 100 were required (1 Sam. 18:25,27), and thought nothing of killing the man who informed him of Saul's death (1:15; see too 4:12). He said that he was disallowed from building the temple because of how much blood he had shed (1 Chron. 22:8). His Psalms often call for the death of his enemies. We are left to reflect that perhaps now he was maturing, as we should over the course of our lives, to perceive the value and meaning of the human person. Or it could be that he was simply emphasizing that he really didn't seek the blood of Saul's family because he had truly forgiven him; or perhaps as a highly emotional person, he demonstrated both great sensitivity to the death of people and also great insensitivity; a very soft side and a very hard one, all within the same personality. Human nature is capable of very contradictory behaviour.

3:36,37 See on 1:18.

4:4 *His nurse took him up, and fled* – She failed to believe in David's grace; she assumed that he and his men would come and kill Jonathan's son, despite David's grace to Saul and demonstration of his loyalty to Jonathan. We too find it so hard to believe in grace, even when it is demonstrated by the cross. Grace is the hardest thing to believe in because it is so contrary to all we have experienced at the hands of people and all we see around us; it is Divine in origin and doesn't come naturally, so we struggle to believe it – and, as in this case, catastrophes happen because of refusing to believe it which damage others permanently.

his nurse took him up, and fled: and it happened, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. His name was Mephibosheth. ⁵ The sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, as he took his rest at noon. ⁶ They came there into the middle of the house, as if they would have fetched wheat; and they struck him in the body: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. ⁷ Now when they came into the house, as he lay on his bed in his bedroom, they struck him, and killed him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and went by the way of the Arabah all night. ⁸ They brought the head of Ishbosheth to David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold, the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life! Yahweh has avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.

Rechab and Baanah Put to Death

⁹ David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of

Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, As Yahweh lives, who has redeemed my soul out of all adversity, ¹⁰ when someone told me, 'Behold, Saul is dead', thinking to have brought good news, I took hold of him, and killed him in Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news. ¹¹ How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house on his bed, shall I not now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth? ¹² David commanded his young men, and they killed them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up beside the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth, and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron.

CHAPTER 5 Jul. 20

David Anointed King of Israel

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David to Hebron, and spoke saying, Behold, we are your bone and your flesh. ² In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. Yahweh

4:8 *Yahweh has avenged* – This was true, but they were wrong to have taken the work of His vengeance and judgment into their own hands. Vengeance is God's, and by taking it for Him we are as it were playing God; we aren't to take vengeance exactly because vengeance is God's, not ours; and this is written in Scripture, Paul says (Rom. 12:19). Whilst Paul's allusion may be to Dt. 32:35, he may also be drawing his Old Testament teaching from this incident. If we would forbid ourselves to even think of taking vengeance, we and others would be saved so much hurt and trouble.

4:12 See on 3:35.

5:1 *We are your bone and your flesh* – This idiom is quoted in Eph. 5:30 about how we who are baptized into the body of Christ are as it were His bone and flesh. David again represents Christ, and his people represent we who are following Christ.

5:2 *You shall be shepherd of My people* – Yahweh was David's shepherd (Ps. 23:1), and David was to shepherd Israel. There is a wonderful mutuality in God's relationship with people.

said to you, ‘You shall be shepherd of My people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel’.³ So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Yahweh; and they anointed David king over Israel.⁴ David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.⁵ In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.⁶ The king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David saying, Unless you take away the blind and the lame, you shall not come in here; thinking, David can’t come in here.⁷ Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David.⁸ David said on that day, Whoever strikes the Jebusites, let him get up to the watercourse, and strike the lame and the

blind, who are hated by David’s soul. Therefore they say, The blind and the lame can’t come into the house.⁹ David lived in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. David built around from Millo and inward.¹⁰ David grew greater and greater; for Yahweh, the God of Armies, was with him.

David Builds His House

¹¹ Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, carpenters and masons; and they built David a house.¹² David perceived that Yahweh had established him king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for His people Israel’s sake.¹³ David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron; and there were more sons and daughters born to David.¹⁴ These are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua,

5:6 *Unless you take away the blind and the lame* – The idea was that the blind and lame amongst the Jebusites would be enough to hold off David’s men.

5:8 *The blind and the lame can’t come into the house* – The lame and blind were not allowed to serve God under the law (Lev. 21:18), nor be offered as sacrifices (Dt. 15:21), nor come within the temple. Christ purposefully healed multitudes of lame and blind (Mt. 15:30), and allowed them to come to Him in the temple (Mt. 21:14). His acted out message was clearly that those who were despised as unfit for God’s service were now being welcomed by Him into that service. The lame and blind were despised because they couldn’t work. They had to rely on the grace of others. Here is a crucial teaching: those called are those who can’t do the works, but depend upon grace. We are the lame and blind who have been invited to the Messianic banquet; and we are to reflect God’s calling of us, the desperate, in our calling of others – we too are to invite the lame and blind into our homes and thus into God’s Kingdom (Lk. 14:13,21). A person who feels they are somehow a nice guy and worthy of invitation will be the one who tends to consider others as unworthy of invitation to the Kingdom. He or she who perceives their own desperation and the sheer grace of our having been called into the Kingdom will eagerly invite even those they consider to be in the very pits of human society.

Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ¹⁵ Ibhah, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ¹⁶ Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet. ¹⁷ When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the stronghold. ¹⁸ Now the Philistines had come and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁹ David inquired of Yahweh saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand? Yahweh said to David, Go up; for I will certainly deliver the Philistines into your hand.

Victory against the Philistines

²⁰ David came to Baal Perazim, and David struck them there; and he said, Yahweh has broken my enemies before me, like the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim. ²¹ They left their images there; and David and his men took them away. ²² The Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. ²³ When David inquired of Yahweh,

He said, You shall not go up. Circle around behind them, and attack them opposite the mulberry trees. ²⁴ It shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then you shall stir yourself up; for then Yahweh has gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines. ²⁵ David did so, as Yahweh commanded him, and struck the Philistines from Geba until you come to Gezer.

CHAPTER 6 Jul. 21

Uzzah and the Ark of God

David again gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. ² David arose, and went with all the people who were with him, from Baale Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name, even the name of Yahweh of Armies who sits above the cherubim. ³ They set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in the hill: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. ⁴ They brought it out of the house of

5:23, 24 David didn't get victory by the mulberry trees the same way each time. God changed the method; just as we too can't assume God will deliver us just because He has in the past.

5:24 *The sound of marching* – David was being taught that he on earth must follow the movement of the Angel cherubim marching above him; in Ezekiel's terms, we as the wheels of the cherubim on earth are to faithfully follow wherever they move above us.

6:2 The blood of atonement was always present on the top of the ark (the "mercy seat"), where the very presence of God was. This foretold the intense association of God Himself with the future sacrifice of His Son. In this sense, God was in Christ in His reconciliation of the world to Himself (2 Cor. 5:19). As the Angel cherubim overshadowed the top of the ark, so the Angels were intensely aware of Christ's death; He could have called upon them to rescue Him out of it (Mt. 26:53), but He didn't – in order to achieve maximum identity with us for whom He died.

Abinadab which was in the hill, with the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. ⁵ David and all the house of Israel played before Yahweh with all kinds of instruments made of fir wood, and with harps, stringed instruments, tambourines, castanets and cymbals. ⁶ When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached for the ark of God and took hold of it; for the cattle stumbled. ⁷ The anger of Yahweh was kindled against Uzzah; and God struck him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God. ⁸ David was displeased, because Yahweh had broken forth on Uzzah; and he called that place Perez Uzzah, to this day. ⁹ David was afraid of Yahweh that

day; and he said, How can the ark of Yahweh come to me? ¹⁰ So David would not move the ark of Yahweh to be with him in the city of David; but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. ¹¹ The ark of Yahweh remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months: and Yahweh blessed Obed-Edom, and all his house. ¹² It was told king David saying, Yahweh has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that pertains to him, because of the ark of God.

The Ark Brought to the City of David

David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom

6:5 The lesson is that all the fine worship in the world is meaningless unless it is underpinned by careful awareness of and obedience to God's word. The great worship procession ended very abruptly – to drive home this point. See commentary on 1 Chron. 13 for more about David's mistake and Uzzah's sin.

6:9 Elizabeth's words: "Who am I, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Lk. 1:43) are remarkably similar to the Septuagint of 2 Sam. 6:9, where David asks "How can the ark of Yahweh come to me?". As a result of this question of David's, the ark remained three months in the house of Obed-Edom (:11). And was this why Mary, seeing herself as the ark bearing the special Name and glory of Yahweh in Christ, remained for three months in the house of Elisabeth straight after hearing this same question asked (Lk. 1:56)? There are further links, between the gladness of Lk. 1:44 and the joy of :12; and the loud cry of Lk. 1:42 and that of :15. If one combines Lk. 1:31 and Jn. 1:14 we have the word of God becoming flesh and "tabernacling" among us in the womb and faith of Mary. The Angel's description of Holy Spirit 'overshadowing' Mary (Lk. 1:35) could have sent her mind back to how the Spirit-Cherubim and the cloud of Spirit glory overshadowed the ark (Ex. 25:20; 1 Chron. 28:18). The Septuagint uses the word for "overshadow" about the cloud of glory overshadowing the ark in the wilderness (Ex. 40:35; Num. 9:18,22). If these connections are valid, then Mary would have felt that within her, as the ark of God, was He who would be the covenant of the Lord, the stones of the word of God made flesh in a little boy. This was perception indeed, all achieved within the spiritual mind of an illiterate teenage country girl from a dumb village in Palestine. Depending how deeply we meditate upon God's word and perceive the relevance for us, such connections are easily possible in our minds too, and can guide us in our decisions and actions, just as they did in teaching Mary she should remain three months with Elizabeth.

into the city of David with joy. ¹³ It was so, that when those who bore the ark of Yahweh had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened calf. ¹⁴ David danced before Yahweh with all his might; and David was clothed in a linen ephod. ¹⁵ So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Yahweh with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. ¹⁶ It was so, as the ark of Yahweh came into the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out at the window and saw king David leaping and dancing before Yahweh; and she despised him in her heart. ¹⁷ They brought in the ark of Yahweh, and set it in its place, in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before Yahweh. ¹⁸ When David had made an end of offering the burnt offering and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of Yahweh of Armies. ¹⁹ He distributed

to all the people, even throughout the whole multitude of Israel, both to men and women, to each one a portion of bread, dates and raisins. So all the people departed each one to his house. ²⁰ Then David returned to bless his household.

Michal Goes to Meet David

Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious the king of Israel was today, who uncovered himself today in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovers himself! ²¹ David said to Michal, It was in the eyes of Yahweh, who chose me before your father and before all his house, to appoint me prince over the people of Yahweh, over Israel. Therefore will I celebrate in the eyes of Yahweh. ²² I will be yet more vile than this, and will be base in my own eyes. But of the handmaids of whom you have spoken, they shall honour me.

6:17-19 One of the most obvious similarities between the peace offering and the breaking of bread is that they both feature bread and wine, associated with a slain animal in the midst (see too Num. 15:9,10). Both require the eating of the sacrifice by the offerer. The peace offering and Passover (also typical of the memorial meeting) featured the offerer eating the sacrifice “before Yahweh”. This phrase “before Yahweh” is continually emphasized in the records of the peace offerings. At our memorial meetings we really are “before Yahweh” as we sit there. God came unto men when they offered acceptable peace offerings (Ex. 20:24), as Christ is made known to us through the breaking of bread (Lk. 24:35).

6:21 *Before your father* – This is a good example of “before” meaning ‘before’ in importance rather than time. God chose Saul well before He chose David. But God chose David before or *above* Saul in terms of importance and honour. This explains how in Jn. 8:58 Jesus was “before” Abraham in the sense that he was “before” him in terms of importance – but not in time, because He didn’t literally pre-exist.

6:20-22 *In the eyes of the handmaids... in the eyes of Yahweh... in my own eyes* – David is highly perceptive here. He’s saying that if this is how he feels in his *own* eyes, then this is how he is before the eyes of God, and therefore this is how he will

23 Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

CHAPTER 7 Jul. 22

God's Promise to David

It happened, when the king lived in his house, and Yahweh had given him rest from all his enemies all around, ² that the king said to Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within curtains. ³ Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in your heart; for Yahweh is with you. ⁴ It happened the same night, that the word of Yahweh came to Nathan saying, ⁵ Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says Yahweh, Shall you build Me a house for Me to dwell in? ⁶ For I have not lived in a house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have moved around in a tent and in a tabernacle. ⁷ In all places

in which I have walked with all the children of Israel, did I say a word to any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to be shepherd of My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'" ⁸ Now therefore you shall tell My servant David this, 'Thus says Yahweh of Armies, I took you from the sheep pen, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over My people, over Israel. ⁹ I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you. I will make you a great name, like the name of the great ones who are in the earth. ¹⁰ I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as at the first, ¹¹ and as from the day that I commanded judges to be over

be before the eyes of Israel and the general public. David is saying: 'Who I am, my real self, is the one God sees, and I'm not going to hide it from the world; let them see me how I see myself and how God sees me'. In this incident, there was no gap between the 'real self' of David and the image he projected to the world. There was complete congruence between how he felt about himself, how God saw him, and how the watching world saw him. And this incident ought to be programmatic for our entire lives. This will ever keep us from worrying too much what others think of us, doing what is smart and acceptable and right in the eyes of men... rather we will think only of what is right in God's eyes.

7:3 *Do all that is in your heart* – As in 1 Kings 22:14-17, the prophet was tempted to assume that he knew God's word and therefore spoke too quickly, according to what they sensed a person wished to hear. We too should learn the lesson of needing to be sensitive to what is actually written in God's word.

7:5 It was God's clearly expressed wish that He should *not* live in a physical house (see too Acts 7:48; 17:24). Yet He accommodated Himself to human weakness in wanting a physical house in which to worship Him; He came and lived (in a sense) in just such a house. He makes concessions to human weakness because He so thirsts for relationship with us; but by making free use of those concessions we in fact make relationship with Him more difficult.

My people Israel. I will cause you to rest from all your enemies. Moreover Yahweh tells you that Yahweh will make you a house. ¹² When your days are fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who shall proceed out of your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I

will be his father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; ¹⁵ but My loving kindness shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever'. ¹⁷ According to all these

7:12 *I will set up your seed* – “Set up” in the Septuagint is the same word as “resurrect”, as if in some way the promise would be realized through Christ’s resurrection.

7:14 The “seed” or descendant is ultimately Jesus, the Son of God (Rev. 22:16; Rom. 1:3; Acts 13:23; Lk. 1:32,33). Jesus, the descendant, was to be a literal, bodily descendant of David, and yet have God as his Father. This could only be achieved by the virgin birth as described in the New Testament; Jesus’ mother was Mary, a descendant of David (Lk. 1:32), but he had no human father. God acted miraculously upon Mary’s womb by the Holy Spirit in order to make her conceive Jesus (Lk. 1:35). The “virgin birth” was the only way in which this promise to David could be properly fulfilled. The genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 frames Him as the product of 42 generations, divided into three groups of 14. The numerical value of ‘David’ is 14 [D = 4; w = 6; d = 4]. The emphasis is therefore on the fact that Jesus was so very intrinsically a descendant of David – and not, therefore, a pre-existent being. 2 Sam.7:14 and Ps. 89:27 predicted that a literal descendant of David would *become* God’s firstborn. He was clearly not in existence at the time those passages were written, and therefore not at the time of the Genesis creation either. Jesus became “the Son of God with power” by His resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4). The “house” He would build is the spiritual dwelling of God in people (Is. 66:1,2). He is the foundation stone of God’s temple (1 Pet. 2:4-8), believers are like the temple stones (1 Pet. 2:5).

If he commits iniquity – This speaks of Christ’s possibility of sinning. This had to be true if His temptations were to be of any real meaning (Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15,16); and clearly therefore Jesus is not God Himself (James 1:13-15). Punishment with rod and stripes was to be given if Messiah sinned; yet Christ was chastened with the rod of men “and with the stripes of the children of men”, i.e. Israel (Is. 53:5; 1 Pet. 2:24; Mic. 5:1), in His death on the cross. Although He didn’t sin, Christ received this punishment because of His deep and willing association with us there. We must confirm that connection He made between Him and us by confessing our sins and being baptized into His death (Rom. 6:3-5) so that He becomes our representative before God.

7:16 “I will establish the throne of his (Christ’s) kingdom forever... your (David’s) house and your kingdom... your throne shall be established forever” (:13,16 cf. Is. 9:6,7) shows that Christ’s kingdom will therefore be based on David’s kingdom of Israel; this means that the coming kingdom of God will be a re-establishment of the kingdom of Israel (Ez. 21:25-27; Acts 1:11). To fulfil this promise, Christ must reign on David’s “throne”, or place of rulership. This was literally in Jerusalem. Thus the

words, and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

David's Prayer to God

¹⁸ Then David the king went in and sat before Yahweh; and he said, Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and what is my house, that You have brought me thus far? ¹⁹ This was yet a small thing in Your eyes, Lord Yahweh; but You have spoken also of Your servant's house for a great while to come; this is not the way of men, Lord Yahweh! ²⁰ What more can David say to You? For You know Your servant, Lord Yahweh. ²¹ For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have worked all this greatness, to make Your servant know it. ²² Therefore You are great, Yahweh God. For there is none like You, neither is there any God besides

You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. ²³ What one nation in the earth is like Your people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem to Himself for a people, and to make Himself a name, and to do great things for You, and awesome things for Your land, before Your people, whom You redeemed to yourself out of Egypt, from the nations and their gods? ²⁴ You established for Yourself Your people Israel to be a people to You for ever; and You, Yahweh, became their God. ²⁵ Now, Yahweh God, the word that You have spoken concerning Your servant, and concerning his house, confirm it for ever, and do as You have spoken. ²⁶ Let Your name be magnified for ever, saying, 'Yahweh of Armies is God over Israel; and the house of Your servant David shall be

kingdom must be established here on earth at Christ's return in order to fulfil these promises.

Established for ever before you – "Before you" suggests that David would witness the establishment of Christ's eternal kingdom. This was therefore an indirect promise that he would be resurrected at Christ's return so that he could see with his own eyes the kingdom being set up world-wide, with Jesus reigning from Jerusalem.

7:18 David was humbled when he received the promises, just as we should be by realizing that we too really are in covenant relationship with God. "Who am I...?" was his response (2 Sam. 7:18). Like Jacob, he felt himself unworthy of all the "mercy and truth" shown him in the promises (Gen. 32:10).

7:18-20 The promises to David are described as the mercy of God (Is. 55:3; Ps. 89:33,34). God having a son is the sign of His love for us, and this must elicit a response in us. David himself marvelled that such mercy had been shown to him. Soon afterwards, we read of how David made a renewed attempt to show mercy to the house of Saul. Mephibosheth says that he is "your servant... what is your servant, that you should look upon such... as I am?" (9:8). Mephibosheth is using the very words which David used to God; David is showing mercy to Mephibosheth in the very way in which the promises of God to him were the "mercies" shown to David. Appreciating that the promises concern us personally, and that they reveal such loving grace from the Father, can only lead to a similar response in showing love and grace through entering into the lives and destinies of others.

established before You'. ²⁷ For You, Yahweh of Armies, the God of Israel, have revealed to Your servant saying, 'I will build you a house'. Therefore Your servant has found in his heart to pray this prayer to You. ²⁸ Now, O Lord Yahweh, You are God, and Your words are truth, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant. ²⁹ Now therefore let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue for ever before You; for You, Lord Yahweh, have spoken it. Let the house of Your servant be blessed for ever with Your blessing.

CHAPTER 8 Jul. 23

God Gives David Many Victories

After this it happened that David struck the Philistines and subdued them: and David took the bridle of the mother city out of the hand of the Philistines. ² He struck Moab, and measured them with the line, making them to lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive. The Moabites became servants to David, and brought tribute. ³ David struck

also Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his dominion at the River. ⁴ David took from him one thousand seven hundred horsemen and twenty thousand footmen: and David hamstrung all the chariot horses, but reserved of them for one hundred chariots. ⁵ When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck of the Syrians twenty two thousand men. ⁶ Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought tribute. Yahweh gave victory to David wherever he went. ⁷ David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. ⁸ From Betah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass. ⁹ When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had struck all the army of Hadadezer, ¹⁰ then Toi sent Joram his son to king David, to greet him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and struck him: for Hadadezer had wars with Toi. Joram brought with him

8:4 *But reserved of them for one hundred chariots* – The king of Israel was not to have chariot horses (Dt. 17:16). David destroyed most of them, but kept a few for himself. This weakness which he allowed himself led to his son Solomon becoming obsessed with horses and chariots, trading with Egypt in order to get them, and turning away from God completely. Weaknesses which we may allow ourselves can lead to others taking them much further and losing their faith. David seems to have tried to 'get around' God's intention that the king of Israel trust in the heavenly cherubim horses and chariots of Angels rather than human ones; for he hamstrung the horses, so that they could only breed and not be used for work. But of course the next generation of horses were his. If we have a heart for God we won't seek to get around His laws or have a little of both – obedience to Him and also the ways of this world. Yet despite David's weakness in this matter, God still gave him victory and blessing (:5,6). We shouldn't turn away from other believers because we perceive in them some weakness; for God doesn't treat us nor any of His children like that.

vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass:

Spoils of War Dedicated to God

¹¹ King David also dedicated these to Yahweh, with the silver and gold that he dedicated of all the nations which he subdued; ¹² of Syria, Moab, the children of Ammon, the Philistines and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah. ¹³ David made himself a name when he returned from smiting the Syrians in the Valley of Salt, even eighteen thousand men. ¹⁴ He put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David. Yahweh gave victory to David wherever he went. ¹⁵ David reigned over all Israel; and David executed justice and righteousness to all his people. ¹⁶ Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; ¹⁷ and Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, were priests; and Seraiah was scribe; ¹⁸ and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief ministers.

CHAPTER 9 Jul. 23

Jonathan's Son

David said, Is there yet any who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? ² There was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David; and the king said to him, Are you Ziba? He said, Your servant is he. ³ The king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him? Ziba said to the king, Jonathan has yet a son, who is lame of his feet. ⁴ The king said to him, Where is he? Ziba said to the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo Debar. ⁵ Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar. ⁶ Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, and fell on his face, and showed respect. David said, Mephibosheth. He answered, Behold, your servant! ⁷ David said to him, Don't be afraid; for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your father. You shall

8:13 *David made himself a name* – A name in Hebrew thought isn't merely a personal identification tag, it speaks of a person's achievements and character – hence the significance of God's Name (Ex. 34:4-6) being His character and personality. By baptism into the Name, all God's righteousness is counted to us.

8:17 Those who had faithfully followed David in his wilderness years, when he seemed a hopeless cause, were the ones who later became the rulers in his kingdom. We who follow Jesus now will be the rulers in His Kingdom (Rev. 5:10).

9:1 We too should consciously seek out opportunities to show grace, even to the relatives of our enemies. We have been shown kindness or grace from God (:3) and we should respond to this by reflecting it to others, thinking up ways to do so as God has done to us. The challenge is to ask ourselves when was the last time we thought up a way of showing grace to others.

eat bread at my table continually.
 8 He bowed down, and said, What is your servant, that you should look on such a dead dog as I am?

David Shows Grace to Mephibosheth

9 Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, All that pertained to Saul and to all his house have I given to your master's son.
 10 You shall till the land for him, you, and your sons, and your servants; and you shall bring in the harvest, that your master's son may have bread to eat: but Mephibosheth your master's son shall eat bread always at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.
 11 Then Ziba said to the king, According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so your shall servant do. So Mephibosheth ate at the king's table, like

one of the king's sons.
 12 Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. All that lived in the house of Ziba were servants to Mephibosheth.
 13 So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem; for he ate continually at the king's table. He was lame in both his feet.

CHAPTER 10 Jul. 24

The Ammonites Spurn David's Friendship

It happened after this, that the King of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place.
 2 David said, I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nashash, as his father showed kindness to me. So David sent by his servants to comfort him concerning his father. David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.
 3 But the princes of the children of Ammon

9:8 See on 7:18-20. To be invited to eat bread at someone's table was a sign of their grace and acceptance of you. We who are in Christ are openly and warmly invited to eat bread at the table of the King of the cosmos; and yet so many can't be bothered to accept the invitation, or feel unworthy to do so. We should note too that it's not for us to control which of His people Christ invites to His table; we are there as grateful guests, not as the host.

9:13 *He was lame* – Christ taught that He has invited the lame to *His* table and we should also invite them to the table of the Messianic banquet in His future Kingdom on earth (Lk. 14:13,21).

10:3 David had earlier sent messengers to Nabal meaning well to him, and they were rudely rebuffed, resulting in his anger which only Abigail's grace and wisdom saved him from (1 Sam. 25). And yet here the same situation repeated in its essence when he sent messengers to Hanun who were likewise misinterpreted and rebuffed. Again, David got angry – but there was no Abigail to restrain him, and he got into an impossible fight... from which by grace God delivered him. David failed to learn from his previous experience; and God repeats situations in our lives too, that we might learn from them and develop. Note how suspicious people were in the societies of those days when they encountered David's grace (see too 3:24,25); and today too, we tend to disbelieve God's grace because we haven't encountered it very often from people.

said to Hanun their lord, Do you think that David honours your father, in that he has sent comforters to you? Hasn't David sent his servants to you to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it? ⁴ So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away. ⁵ When they told it to David, he sent to meet them; for the men were greatly ashamed. The king said, Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return. ⁶ When the children of Ammon saw that they were become odious to David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, twenty thousand footmen, and the king of Maacah with one thousand men, and the men of Tob with twelve thousand men. ⁷ When David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the army of the mighty men. ⁸ The children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entrance of the gate: and the Syrians of Zobah and of Rehob, and the men of Tob and Maacah, were by themselves in the field.

The Syrians and Ammonites Defeated

⁹ Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians. ¹⁰ The rest of the people he committed into the hand of Abishai his brother; and he put them in array against the chil-

dren of Ammon. ¹¹ He said, If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the children of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. ¹² Be courageous, and let us be strong for our people, and for the cities of our God; and Yahweh do that which seems good to Him. ¹³ So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him. ¹⁴ When the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians had fled, they likewise fled before Abishai, and entered into the city. Then Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem. ¹⁵ When the Syrians saw that they were defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together. ¹⁶ Hadadezer sent, and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the River: and they came to Helam, with Shobach the captain of the army of Hadadezer at their head. ¹⁷ It was told David; and he gathered all Israel together, and passed over the Jordan, and came to Helam. The Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him. ¹⁸ The Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed of the Syrians seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen, and struck Shobach the captain of their army, so that he died there. ¹⁹ When all the kings who were servants to Hadadezer saw that they were defeated before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

CHAPTER 11 Jul. 25***David and Bathsheba***

It happened, at the return of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. ² It happened at evening, that David arose

from off his bed, and walked on the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful to look on. ³ David sent and inquired after the woman. One said, Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? ⁴ David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in to him, and he lay with

11:1 *But David stayed at Jerusalem* – When it was the season for a king like himself to be out in battle. The lesson is that when we are doing nothing and not doing what we are intended to, then we are more prone to fall into sin. He appears to recognize his attitude problem in Ps. 30:6: “In my prosperity I said, I shall never be (spiritually) moved”. In the lead up to the sin, God had given him victory after victory – leading him to think that he must therefore be spiritually OK because of his many physical blessings (1 Chron. 18:6). His conscience had been blunted by the easy life.

11:2 *He saw a woman* – Christ had His eye on this passage when He spoke about him that “looks on a woman to lust after her” has committed adultery with her already (Mt. 5:28). James 1:14,15 speaks of the process of temptation and sin, in any matter, as looking lustfully upon a woman, with the inevitable result of actually committing the sin. In this he may be interpreting David's sin as an epitome of all failure. David is our example. Likewise the Lord's list of the 12 evil things that come out of the heart (Mk 7:15-23): fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness, evil thoughts... all seem to describe the completeness of David's sin with Bathsheba. It incorporated all these things, and was not just a one time, lustful failure of the moment.

11:3 *Daughter of Eliam* – David and Uriah knew each other well; they had spent David's long wilderness years together, and lived next door to each other in Jerusalem (:13; 12:1). Bathsheba had been brought up by Uriah (12:3). She was the daughter of Eliam, who had been another of David's mighty men (23:34). Presumably he had been killed and Uriah adopted her, bringing her up from babyhood, mothering her by feeding her from his bowl and letting her sleep in his bosom. This may imply that his own wife died early, and that he brought her and his own children up alone, and then married her when she was older. A very special spiritual and emotional bond must have been forged between those who stuck with David as a down and out, and who later on shared in the glory of his kingdom. That Uriah had such easy access to David would have been unthinkable for an ordinary soldier whom David hardly knew. Nathan criticizes David for having “no pity” on Uriah, implying that David well knew the relationship between Uriah and Bathsheba. Moreover, David would have been a larger than life figure for his followers, and Bathsheba would have grown up with this image of David as the saving hero.

11:4 *David sent messengers* – The use of messengers is emphasized throughout the account (3,4,5,6,19,23,27); what David had done would soon become very public knowledge, and it would seem that Uriah himself understood.

her (for she was purified from her uncleanness); and she returned to her house. ⁵ The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, I am with child. ⁶ David sent to Joab, Send me Uriah the Hittite. Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷ When Uriah had come to him, David asked of him how Joab did, and how the people fared, and how the war prospered. ⁸ David said to Uriah, Go down to your house, and wash your feet. Uriah departed out of the king's house, and a gift from the king was sent after him. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and didn't go down to his house. ¹⁰ When they had told David, saying, Uriah didn't go down to his house, David said to Uriah, Haven't you come from a journey? Why didn't you go down to your house? ¹¹ Uriah said to David, The ark, Israel, and Judah, are staying in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open field. Shall I then go into my house to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing!

Death of Uriah the Hittite

¹² David said to Uriah, Stay here to-

day also, and tomorrow I will let you depart. So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day, and the next day. ¹³ When David had called him, he ate and drink before him; and he made him drunk. At evening, he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but didn't go down to his house. ¹⁴ It happened in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. ¹⁵ He wrote in the letter saying, Send Uriah to the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck, and die. ¹⁶ It happened, when Joab kept watch on the city, that he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew that valiant men were. ¹⁷ The men of the city went out, and fought with Joab. Some of the people fell, even of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also. ¹⁸ Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war; ¹⁹ and he commanded the messenger saying, When you have finished telling all the things concerning the war to the king, ²⁰ it shall be that, if the king's wrath arise, and he asks you, 'Why did you go so near to the city to fight? Didn't you know that they would shoot from the wall?' ²¹ who struck Abimelech the son of Jerub-

For she was purified from her uncleanness – Bathsheba's evening washing of herself which exposed her nakedness would have been in response to the principles of the Law. However, the Law didn't actually state that the woman must wash herself after menstrual uncleanness; but the man who touched her must. So it could be that she had gone beyond the Law in washing herself; such was her spiritual perception, which was a factor in David's attraction to her. Sexuality and spirituality are related, hence sexual temptation is especially strong for people who on one level respect spiritual principle.

11:21 *Who struck Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth?* – Joab warned the messenger to quickly explain to David why the soldiers approached so near the wall of Rabbah,

besheth? Didn't a woman cast an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?' then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also'.²² So the messenger went, and came and showed David all that Joab had sent him for.²³ The messenger said to David, The men prevailed against us, and came out to us into the field, and we were on them even to the entrance of the gate.²⁴ The shooters shot at your servants from off the wall; and some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.²⁵ Then David said to the messenger, Thus you shall tell Joab, 'Don't let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Make your battle stronger against the city, and overthrow it'. Encourage him.²⁶ When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she made lamentation for her husband.²⁷ When the mourning was past, David sent and took her home to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased Yahweh.

CHAPTER 12 Jul. 26

Nathan Confronts David

Yahweh sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.² The rich man had very many flocks and herds,³ but the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and raised. It grew up together with him, and with his children. It ate of his own food, drank of his own cup, lay in his bosom, and was to him like a daughter.⁴ A traveller came to the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the way-faring man who had come to him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man who had come to him.⁵ David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, As Yahweh lives, the man who has done this is worthy to die!⁶ He shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity!⁷ Nathan said to David, You are the man. This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul.

because he knew that David would *immediately* quote an example from the history of Israel, to prove that such an approach was unwise. David's familiarity with the spiritual records of Israel's history and use of them to guide behaviour was therefore well known, and it presumably did not depart from him during the months between his sin and repentance of it; we can retain God's word in our minds and act upon it whilst at the same time in other areas being deeply displeasing to God.

11:25 *Don't let this thing displease you* – But those very Hebrew words are used again in :27: "But the thing that David had done displeased Yahweh". No matter how we or others may rationalize and cover up sin, God notices and judges in due time.

12:4 Nathan's parable about David's sin with Bathsheba blamed the act on a traveller 'coming to' David asking to be satisfied. The traveller of the parable represented

⁸ I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that would have been too little, I would have added to you many more such things. ⁹ Why have you despised the word of Yahweh, to do that which is evil in His sight? | You have struck Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. ¹⁰ Now therefore the sword will never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hit-

David's lusts which led to adultery and murder, although this was not his usual state of mind – they were as a traveller to him.

12:8 There will be anomalies in the lives of our brethren – just as there are in the lives of us all (if only we would examine ourselves ruthlessly enough to see them). And in some ways at some times, God goes along with them. Thus He gave Saul's wives to David, which would've involved David being married to both a mother and daughter – for he had married Saul's daughters. And this giving of Saul's wives to David may not have occurred simply after Saul's death. For David's eldest son, Amnon, was borne by Ahinoam (3:2), who was initially Saul's wife (1 Sam. 14:50). Now this is not to justify sin. Adultery, taking another's wife or husband, is all wrong. Let there be no mistake. But God at times sees the bigger, or longer, perspective, and tolerates things which we may quite rightly find intolerable. And if He loves us despite of our sin and failure – are we surprised that we are invited to show love to others in the face of their sin and failure toward us? A black and white insistence upon God's standards being upheld in the lives of others, demanding their repentance for having hurt us, is what has caused so much division between believers. Whilst God alone will apportion the guilt for this, in the final algorithm of Divine judgment, it's worth observing that the fault for division isn't always with the sinners, the wider thinkers, the freewheelers; but with the inflexible intolerance of those in power.

If that would have been too little, I would have added to you – This seems to be saying that God would have made concessions to David's sexual weakness, even further than the ones He had already made. It is as if God had prepared those concessions on different levels. If David had felt that he needed yet more sexual fulfilment, God had a way prepared to meet this. Yet David took it into his own hands to decide what God would concede to him. However, God's concessions to David cannot necessarily be extrapolated to our lives today. "Too little" recalls 7:19, where the promises to David are described as a "little thing"; the promises were so wonderful that David should not have allowed himself to fall into such sin. And we likewise. Such is the wonder of God's promise to us that we really have no excuse to sin. Every sin is a denial of His promises.

12:9 David murdered, committed adultery and even the deadly sin of presumption (cp. Num. 15:31). All of which required his death; and yet he is held up in Rom. 4:7 as representative of every sinner. Only if we appreciate the seriousness of our position before God will we be able to feel true joy, peace and commitment after realizing our forgiveness. Note how God reads our motives; He saw David as if *he* had killed Uriah with *his* sword; even though David's command to Joab to retire from Uriah and let the Ammonites kill him was carefully calculated not to break the letter of the law.

tite to be your wife'. ¹¹ This is what Yahweh says: 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbour, and he will lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. ¹² For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun'.

David Acknowledges His Sin

¹³ David said to Nathan, I have sinned against Yahweh. Nathan said

to David, Yahweh also has put away your sin. You will not die. ¹⁴ However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to Yahweh's enemies to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die. ¹⁵ Nathan departed to his house. Yahweh struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it was very sick. ¹⁶ David therefore begged God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night on the earth. ¹⁷ The elders of his house arose beside him, to raise him up

12:9, 10 David "despised the word of Yahweh... you despised Me". His attitude to God's word was his attitude to God – for the word of God, in that sense, was and is God.

12:13 David's "I have sinned" is word for word what Saul said at his condemnation (1 Sam. 15:24). David then lies all night upon the earth, refuses to eat, people try to raise him up from the ground, and then they succeed in setting bread before him and he eats it (:16,17,20). David was consciously doing exactly what Saul did in 1 Sam. 28:20-25, the night before his death / condemnation. David was recognizing, of his own volition, that he was no better than Saul. And by doing this, he was saved. Unlike Saul, he altered the verdict of condemnation by meaningful repentance. Paul makes the point that if we condemn ourselves, we will not be condemned (1 Cor. 11:31). The terms of the judgment pronounced against him are framed to echo the rejection and condemnation of Saul: He despised the commandment of Yahweh (:9) as did Saul (1 Sam. 15:29). Evil was raised up against David out of his own house (:11) – what happened to Saul (1 Sam. 20:30). David's wives were given to his neighbour (:11), as Saul's wives were (12:8; 1 Sam. 15:28; 28:17).

You will not die – David at that moment represents us all, today. The Spirit changes David's personal reflections upon this forgiveness in Ps. 32:1 ("Blessed is *he*") to "blessed are *they*" (Rom. 4:7) to make this point. "Blessed is the man (e.g. David, or any sinner – David is our example) unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity" (Ps. 32:2) is alluded to in 2 Cor. 5:19: "God was in Christ... not imputing (the world's) trespasses unto them". Through being justified, any repentant sinner will then have the characteristics of Christ, in God's sight. In Christ there was no guile (1 Pet. 2:22), as there was not in David (or any other believer) after the justification of forgiveness (Ps. 32:2). "Blessed is the man... in whose spirit is no guile" (Ps. 32:2) is picked up in Rev.14:5: "In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God". The picture of forgiven David in Ps. 32 is what we will each be like after acceptance "before the throne of God". Yet David's experience can also be ours here and now; in those moments of true contrition, we surely are experiencing salvation in prospect.

12:16 David prayed and fasted for his child by Bathsheba not to die – even though

from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. ¹⁸ It happened on the seventh day, that the child died. The servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he didn't listen to our voice. How will he then harm himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? ¹⁹ But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; and David said to his servants, Is the child dead? They said, He is dead. ²⁰ Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his clothing; and he came into the house of Yahweh, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he ate. ²¹ Then his servants said to him, What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the

child while he was alive; but when the child was dead, you rose up and ate bread. ²² He said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows whether Yahweh will not be gracious to me, that the child may live?'. ²³ But now he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.

Birth of Solomon

²⁴ David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her, and lay with her. She bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Yahweh loved him; ²⁵ and He sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he named him Jedidiah, for Yahweh's sake. ²⁶ Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city. ²⁷ Joab sent messengers to David and said, I have fought against Rabbah. Yes, I have taken the city of waters. ²⁸ Now therefore gather the

God had said that it would. He clearly believed that God was a God who was open to changing in response to prayer. Prayer and repentance can change God's stated purpose. Prayer changes things. It really does. What would otherwise have happened can be changed by prayer. We, little and tiny humans, can change the mind of Almighty God. This is the extent of His sensitivity to us. Moses, Samuel and Jeremiah had the power to *within limits* change God's mind towards His people (Jer. 15:1).

12:23 This verse is sure proof that David didn't believe that dead children go to live in Heaven; there is no immortal soul taught in the Bible.

12:28 Whatever carried the name of a person was seen as his property. If a city was conquered, it bore the name of the conqueror, as here; the names of owners were on their property (Ps. 49:12); and in this context, God's Name is over His people (Dt. 28:10). So to bear God's Name is to recognize His complete ownership and even conquest of us. By baptism into His Name we become totally His. And yet there's a significant twist to all this in Is. 43:1: "I have called you by *your* name, because you are Mine". It seems like a slip – we expect God to say that He has called us by *His* Name, because we are His. But no – He wishes us to bear both His Name and our own name, He doesn't wish to subsume us beneath His ownership and manifestation to the point that we are not significant as persons.

rest of the people together, and encamp against the city and take it; lest I take the city, and it be called after my name. ²⁹ David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it and took it. ³⁰ He took the crown of their king from off his head; and its weight was a talent of gold, and in it were precious stones; and it was set on David's head. He brought out the spoil of the city, exceeding much. ³¹ He brought out the people who were therein, and put them under saws, and under iron picks, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick kiln: and he did so to all the cities of the children of Ammon. David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 13 Jul. 27

Amnon and Tamar

It happened after this, that Absalom the son of David had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. ² Amnon was so troubled that he fell sick because of his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and it seemed hard to Amnon to do anything to her. ³ But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; and Jonadab was a very subtle man. ⁴ He said to him, Why, son of the king, are you so sad from day to day? Won't you tell me? Amnon said to him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister. ⁵ Jonadab said to him, Lie down on your bed, and pretend to be sick. When your father comes to see you, tell him, 'Please let my sister Tamar

come and give me bread to eat, and dress the food in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it from her hand'. ⁶ So Amnon lay down and faked being sick. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, Please let my sister Tamar come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand. ⁷ Then David sent home to Tamar saying, Go now to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him. ⁸ So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. She took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. ⁹ She took the pan, and poured them out before him; but he refused to eat. Amnon said, Have all men leave me. Every man went out from him. ¹⁰ Amnon said to Tamar, Bring the food into the inner room, that I may eat from your hand. Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the inner room to Amnon her brother. ¹¹ When she had brought them near to him to eat, he took hold of her, and said to her, Come, lie with me, my sister! ¹² She answered him, No, my brother, do not force me! For no such thing ought to be done in Israel. Don't you do this folly. ¹³ I, to where would I carry my shame? And as for you, you will be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you. ¹⁴ However he would not listen to her voice; but being stronger than she, he forced her, and lay with her. ¹⁵ Then Amnon hated her with exceeding great hatred; for

the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. Amnon said to her, Arise, be gone! ¹⁶ She said to him, Not so, because this great wrong in sending me away is worse than the other that you did to me!

Tamar Sent Away

But he would not listen to her. ¹⁷ Then he called his servant who ministered to him and said, Put now this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her. ¹⁸ She had a garment of various colours on her; for with such robes were the king's daughters who were virgins dressed. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her. ¹⁹ Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore her garment of various colours that was on her; and she laid her hand on her head, and went her way, crying aloud as she went. ²⁰ Absalom her brother said to her, Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house. ²¹ But when king David heard of all these things, he was very

angry. ²² Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

Amnon Killed

²³ It happened after two full years, that Absalom had sheep shearers in Baal Hazor, which is beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons. ²⁴ Absalom came to the king and said, See now, your servant has sheep shearers. Please let the king and his servants go with your servant. ²⁵ The king said to Absalom, No, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome to you. He pressed him; however he would not go, but blessed him. ²⁶ Then Absalom said, If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us. The king said to him, Why should he go with you? ²⁷ But Absalom pressed him, and he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. ²⁸ Absalom commanded his servants saying, Mark now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine; and when I tell you, 'Strike Amnon', then kill him. Don't be afraid. Haven't I commanded you? Be courageous, and be valiant! ²⁹ The servants of Absalom

13:15 Any giving in to the lust of the flesh, especially sexually, can never bring happiness but rather yet more anguish. This incident teaches clearly that sexual desire and love aren't always the same thing.

13:20 There are Biblical examples of refusing to take guilt when others feel that it should be taken. Recall how the Lord's own parents blamed Him for 'making them anxious' by 'irresponsibly' remaining behind in the temple. The Lord refused to take any guilt, didn't apologize, and even gently rebuked them (Lk. 2:42-51). In similar vein, Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Even if I made you sorry with a letter, I do not regret it" (2 Cor. 7:8). He would not take guilt for their being upset with him. Likewise Absalom comforted his raped sister not to 'take it to heart', not to feel guilty about it, as it seems she was feeling that way, taking false guilt upon her. We should take true guilt before God for our actual sins, and not allow others to put guilt on us.

did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man got up on his mule, and fled. ³⁰ It happened, while they were in the way, that the news came to David, saying, Absalom has slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left!

Absalom Flees

³¹ Then the king arose, and tore his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn. ³² Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, answered, Don't let my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead; for by the appointment of Absalom this has been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar. ³³ Now therefore don't let my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead; for Amnon only is dead. ³⁴ But Absalom fled. The young man who kept the watch lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, many people were coming by the way of the hillside behind him. ³⁵ Jonadab said to the king, Behold, the king's sons are coming! It is as your servant said. ³⁶ It happened, as soon as he had finished speaking, that behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice, and wept. The king also and all his servants wept bitterly. ³⁷ But Absalom fled, and went to Talmi the son of Ammihur, king of Geshur. David mourned for his son every

day. ³⁸ So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years. ³⁹ King David longed to go forth to Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, since he was dead.

CHAPTER 14 Jul. 28

Plea for Absalom

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was towards Absalom. ² Joab sent to Tekoa and fetched there a wise woman and said to her, Please act like a mourner, and please put on mourning clothing and don't anoint yourself with oil, but be as a woman who has mourned a long time for the dead. ³ Go in to the king, and speak like this to him. So Joab put the words in her mouth. ⁴ When the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, showed respect and said, Help, O king! ⁵ The king said to her, What ails you? She answered, Truly I am a widow, and my husband is dead. ⁶ Your handmaid had two sons, and they both fought together in the field, and there was no one to part them, but the one struck the other and murdered him. ⁷ Behold, the whole family has risen against your handmaid and they say, 'Deliver him who struck his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he murdered, and so destroy the heir also'. Thus they would quench my coal which is left, and would leave to my husband neither name nor remainder on the surface of the earth. ⁸ The king said to

14:8-10 The slayer of innocent blood was to be slain without pity, and this would in fact bring some kind of blessing "that it may go well with you" (Dt. 19:13). But

the woman, Go to your house, and I will give a command concerning you. ⁹ The woman of Tekoa said to the king, My lord O king, the iniquity be on me, and on my father's house; and the king and his throne be guiltless. ¹⁰ The king said, Whoever says anything to you, bring him to me, and he shall not touch you any more. ¹¹ Then she said, Please let the king remember Yahweh your God so that the avenger of blood destroy not any more, lest they destroy my son. He said, As Yahweh lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the earth. ¹² Then the woman said, Please let your handmaid speak a word to

my lord the king. He said, Say on. ¹³ The woman said, Why then have you devised such a thing against the people of God? For in speaking this word the king is as one who is guilty, in that the king does not bring home again his banished one. ¹⁴ For we must die, and are as water split on the ground, which can't be gathered up again; neither does God take away life, but devises means that he who is banished not be an outcast from him. ¹⁵ Now therefore seeing that I have come to speak this word to my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid: and your handmaid said, 'I will now

David seems to have stepped up to a higher level when he told the woman of Tekoah that he would protect her son from revenge murder, after he had slain another man. The woman pointed out that if her son was slain, the inheritance would be lost in her husband's name. Here was a case where two principles seemed to be at variance: the need to slay the guilty, and the need to preserve the inheritance. The higher level was to forgive the slayer of innocent blood, even though the Law categorically stated that he should be slain.

14:11 The woman of Tekoah wanted David to show mercy, and so she says: "Let the king remember Yahweh your God". To be aware of who Yahweh is, of the characteristics outlined in Ex. 34:5-7 that comprise His Name... this must affect *our* behaviour, seeing we bear that Name. It is an understanding of the Name that inspires our faith in forgiveness and our ability to show grace.

14:13 The woman understood the implications of the promise in Eden when she tells David that God "devises means" to bring back the banished and expelled to Him. Whom did God banish? Adam, and all his children. But God 'devised means' through the promises of Gen. 3:15 so that this banishment was not permanent expulsion. The means devised was the death and resurrection of His Son, the seed of the woman. But the woman's point was that as God sought to restore His banished sons, through the pain and cost to Him of the blood of His Son, so we ought to likewise be inspired to win back the banished. And so we look to those banished from ecclesial life by disfellowship, church politics, personal animosities of past decades, or simply their own sins; or those marginalized by poverty, education, disability, health, geography... these are the banished whom we ought to be winning back.

14:14 Her point was that as God in some sense breaks His own laws, e.g. that sin leads to permanent death, so surely David likewise could have the same spirit of grace and bring about the salvation of someone rightly appointed to death. Legalism fails to understand grace.

speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his servant'. ¹⁶ For the king will hear, to deliver his servant out of the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God. ¹⁷ Then your handmaid said, 'Please let the word of my lord the king bring rest; for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad. May Yahweh your God be with you'. ¹⁸ Then the king answered the woman, Please don't hide anything from me that I ask you. The woman said, Let my lord the king now speak. ¹⁹ The king said, Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?

Absalom Brought Back to Jerusalem

The woman answered, As your soul lives, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken; for your servant Joab, he urged me, and he put all these words in the mouth of your handmaid; ²⁰ to change the face of the matter has your servant Joab done this thing. My lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are on the earth. ²¹ The king said to Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing. Go therefore, bring the young man Absalom back. ²² Joab fell to the ground on his face, showed respect, and blessed the king. Joab said, Today your servant knows

that I have found grace in your sight, my lord o king, in that the king has performed the request of his servant. ²³ So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. ²⁴ The king said, Let him return to his own house, but let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and didn't see the king's face. ²⁵ Now in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. ²⁶ When he cut the hair of his head (now it was at every year's end that he cut it; because it was heavy on him, therefore he cut it); he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels, after the king's weight. ²⁷ To Absalom there were born three sons and one daughter, whose name was Tamar: she was a woman of a beautiful appearance. ²⁸ Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem; and he didn't see the king's face. ²⁹ Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king; but he would not come to him: and he sent again a second time, but he would not come. ³⁰ Therefore he said to his servants, Behold, Joab's field is near mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire. Absalom's servants set the field on fire. ³¹ Then Joab arose and came to Absalom to his house and said to him, Why have your servants set my field on fire? ³² Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent to you saying, 'Come

14:20 The woman thought that Angels know everything and therefore David was like an Angel (2 Sam. 14:20). Angels don't know *everything* (Mt. 24:36). Yet the woman's immature concept isn't corrected, just as wrong understandings of demons weren't.

here, that I may send you to the king to say, Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still. Now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there is iniquity in me, let him kill me'.³³ So Joab came to the king and told him; and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.

CHAPTER 15 Jul. 29

Absalom Wins the Hearts of the People

It happened after this, that Absalom prepared him a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him.² Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate. It was so, that whenever any man had a suit which should come to the king for judgement, then Absalom called to him and said, What city are you from? He said, Your servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.³ Absalom said to him, Behold, your matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed by the king to hear you.⁴ Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that each man who has any suit or cause might come to me, and I would do

him justice!⁵ It was so, that when any man came near to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand and took hold of him and kissed him.⁶ Absalom did this sort of thing to all Israel who came to the king for judgement. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.⁷ It happened at the end of forty years that Absalom said to the king, Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to Yahweh, in Hebron.⁸ For your servant vowed a vow while I stayed at Geshur in Syria saying, 'If Yahweh shall indeed bring me again to Jerusalem, then I will serve Yahweh'.⁹ The king said to him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.¹⁰ But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel saying, As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron!'.¹¹ Two hundred men went with Absalom out of Jerusalem, who were invited and went in their innocence; and they didn't know anything.¹² Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he was offering the sacrifices. The conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.¹³ A messenger came to David say-

15:8 *If Yahweh shall indeed bring me again to Jerusalem, then I will serve Yahweh* – Absalom was quoting the words of Jacob in Gen. 28:20,21. But a little reflection ought to have shown that these were the words of Jacob in a very weak part of his life. Both Jacob and Absalom should've wanted to serve God anyway, whether or not He gave them blessing in this life. Absalom thought that all would be good for him just by quoting the words of the Bible and thus identifying himself with a righteous man (even though he paid no attention to the context of his quotation). This kind of surface level Biblicism and spirituality can easily happen today as a cover for simply doing what the flesh naturally wants to do.

ing, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. ¹⁴ David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for else none of us shall escape from Absalom. Make speed to depart, lest he overtake us quickly and bring evil down upon us and strike the city with the edge of the sword. ¹⁵ The king's servants said to the king, Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king chooses.

David Flees Jerusalem

¹⁶ The king went forth, and all his household after him. The king left ten women, who were concubines, to keep the house. ¹⁷ The king went forth, and all the people after him; and they stayed in Beth Merhak. ¹⁸ All his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, the Pelethites and all the Gittites, six hundred men who came after him from Gath, passed on before the king. ¹⁹ Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, Why do you also go with us? Return, and stay with the king; for you are a foreigner, and also an exile. Return to your own place. ²⁰ Whereas

you came but yesterday, should I this day make you go up and down with us, since I go where I may? Return, and take back your brothers. Mercy and truth be with you. ²¹ Ittai answered the king and said, As Yahweh lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, even there also will your servant be. ²² David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones who were with him. ²³ All the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over towards the way of the wilderness. ²⁴ Behold, Zadok also came, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God; and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people finished passing out of the city. ²⁵ The king said to Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city. If I find grace in the eyes of Yahweh, He will bring me again, and show me both it, and His dwelling place; ²⁶ but if He say

15:13 *The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom* – The record of the various rebellions against David show how fickle are the hearts of men; they changed loyalty so easily according to whatever seemed to offer them the most immediate advantage; just as a study of the theme of “the crowds” in the Gospels shows the same. For all their apparent culture, sophistication and education, people’s hearts today are the same, and we can never trust in human loyalty generally; although our experience with God’s people can be amazingly better.

15:23 *The brook Kidron* – David’s exit from Jerusalem has many similarities with Christ’s crossing the brook Kidron and the mount of Olives (:30) and going to His death, surrounded by a few faithful followers who had promised to follow Him to the death (:21 = Mt. 26:35). The support which David had within the Jerusalem leadership points forward to that of Joseph and Nicodemus for Christ at the time of His betrayal and final rejection.

thus, ‘I have no delight in you;’ behold, here am I. Let Him do to me as seems good to Him.

Zadok Sent Back to Jerusalem

²⁷ The king said also to Zadok the priest, Aren’t you a seer? Return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. ²⁸ Behold, I will stay at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me. ²⁹ Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem; and they stayed there. ³⁰ David went up by the ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered, and went barefoot: and all the people who were with him covered each man his head; so they went up, weeping as they went up. ³¹ Someone told David saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. David said, Yahweh, please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. ³² It happened that when David had come to the top, where God was worshipped, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat torn, and earth on his head. ³³ David said to him, If you pass on with me, then you will be a burden to me; ³⁴ but if you return to the city and tell Absalom, ‘I will be your servant, O king. As I have been your father’s servant in time past, so will I now be your servant; then

you will defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel’. ³⁵ Don’t you have Zadok and Abiathar the priests there with you? Therefore it shall be, that whatever thing you shall hear out of the king’s house, you shall tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. ³⁶ Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok’s son, and Jonathan, Abiathar’s son; and by them you shall send to me everything that you shall hear. ³⁷ So Hushai, David’s friend, came into the city; and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 16 Jul. 30

Ziba Meets David

When David was a little past the top, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of donkeys saddled, and on them two hundred loaves of bread, one hundred clusters of raisins, one hundred summer fruits and a skin of wine. ² The king said to Ziba, What do you mean by these? Ziba said, The donkeys are for the king’s household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as are faint in the wilderness may drink. ³ The king said, Where is your master’s son? Ziba said to the king, Behold, he is staying in Jerusalem; for he said, ‘Today the house of Israel will restore me the kingdom of my father’. ⁴ Then the king said to Ziba, Behold,

16:2 This unexpected grace formed the basis of Ps. 23, where David marvels at God’s kindness in furnishing a feast for him in the wilderness at the very time that it seemed he was walking in the valley of the shadow of death. Sometimes God does things like this in our lives too – His grace bursts into the darkness of a situation.

all that pertains to Mephibosheth is yours. Ziba said, I do obeisance. Let me find grace in your sight, my lord, O king.

Shimei Curses David

⁵ When king David came to Bahurim, behold, a man of the family of the house of Saul came out, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera. He came out and cursed continually as he came. ⁶ He cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David; and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. ⁷ Shimei said when he cursed, Be gone, be gone, you man of blood, and base fellow! ⁸ Yahweh has returned on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned! Yahweh has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son! Behold, you are caught by your own sinfulness, because you are a man of blood! ⁹ Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please let me go over and take off his head. ¹⁰ The king said, What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? Because he curses, and because Yahweh has said to him, ‘Curse David’, who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’

¹¹ David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, who came forth from my bowels, seeks my life. How much more this Benjamite, now? Leave him alone, and let him curse; for Yahweh has invited him. ¹² It may be that Yahweh will look on the wrong done to me, and that Yahweh will repay me good for the cursing of me today. ¹³ So David and his men went by the way; and Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him, and cursed as he went, threw stones at him, and threw dust. ¹⁴ The king, and all the people who were with him, became weary; and he refreshed himself there.

Absalom and Ahithophel

¹⁵ Absalom, and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. ¹⁶ It happened, when Hushai the Archite, David’s friend, had come to Absalom, that Hushai said to Absalom, Long live the king! Long live the king! ¹⁷ Absalom said to Hushai, Is this your kindness to your friend? Why didn’t you go with your friend? ¹⁸ Hushai said to Absalom, No; but whoever Yahweh and this people, and all the men of Israel have chosen, his will I be, and with him I will stay. ¹⁹ Again, whom should I serve? Shouldn’t I

16:10 Shimei was a wicked man who hated God’s servant David. God told him to curse David. Afterwards, Shimei repents and acknowledges that by doing so he sinned (2 Sam. 19:20). And although David recognized that God had told Shimei to curse him, David tells Solomon not to hold Shimei “guiltless” for how he had cursed him (1 Kings 2:9). Thus a man is encouraged by God to do the sinful act on which he has set his heart.

16:18 This is one of several Biblical examples of untruth being told in vague, ambiguous terms in order to save others’ lives. See on 17:20.

serve in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence, so will I be in your presence. ²⁰ Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, Give your counsel what we shall do. ²¹ Ahithophel said to Absalom, Go in to your father's concubines, that he has left to keep the house. Then all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong. ²² So they spread Absalom a tent on the top of the house; and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. ²³ The counsel of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if a man inquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

CHAPTER 17 Jul. 31

Absalom Accepts Hushai's Counsel

Moreover Ahithophel said to Absalom, Let me now choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David tonight. ² I will come on him while he is weary and exhausted, and will make him afraid. All the people who are with

him shall flee. I will strike the king only; ³ and I will bring back all the people to you. The man whom you seek is as if all returned; and so all the people shall be in peace. ⁴ The saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel. ⁵ Then Absalom said, Now call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he says. ⁶ When Hushai had come to Absalom, Absalom spoke to him saying, Ahithophel has spoken like this. Shall we do what he says? If not, speak up. ⁷ Hushai said to Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel has given is not good at this time. ⁸ Hushai said moreover, You know your father and his men, that they are mighty men, and they are bitter in their minds, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field. Your father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people. ⁹ Behold, he is now hidden in some pit, or in some other place. It will happen, when some of them have fallen at the first, that whoever hears it will say, 'There is a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom!' ¹⁰ Even he who is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion,

16:21 Ahithophel was Bathsheba's grandfather (11:3 cp. 23:34); his inability to forgive David despite his evident repentance and the Divine blessing of the marriage led him to a bitterness which led him to death.

16:22 From this we could infer that David lay with Bathsheba in that same place on the roof top. This is significant insofar as it shows how exactly the thought leads to the action. David's thoughts in that spot were translated into that very action, in precisely the same physical location. The roof top is also the place of prayer, and in this we see the schizophrenic nature of David's spirituality; he went to pray, and then stood at the edge of the roof in order to view Bathsheba, with his hands on the railing around the roof which surely he would have erected, in obedience to the Law. And he realized that it was evening, and that in accordance with the spirit of the Law a menstruating woman ought to wash and be unclean until the evening. In this we see the mixing of flesh and spirit which is at the root of most of our failings. See on 11:4.

will utterly melt; for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and those who are with him are valiant men. ¹¹ But I advise that all Israel be gathered together to you, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that you go to battle in your own person. ¹² So shall we come on him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light on him as the dew falls on the ground; and of him and of all the men who are with him we will not leave so much as one. ¹³ Moreover, if he be gone into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there isn't one small stone found there. ¹⁴ Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For Yahweh had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that Yahweh might bring evil on Absalom. ¹⁵ Then Hushai said to Zadok and to Abiathar

the priests, Ahithophel counselled Absalom and the elders of Israel that way; and I have counselled this way. ¹⁶ Now therefore send quickly and tell David saying, 'Don't lodge this night at the fords of the wilderness, but by all means pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people who are with him'.

Warning Sent to David

¹⁷ Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying by En Rogel; and a female servant used to go and tell them; and they went and told king David. For they didn't want to be seen to come into the city. ¹⁸ But a boy saw them, and told Absalom. Then they both went away quickly, and came to the house of a man in Bahurim, who had a well in his court; and they went down there. ¹⁹ The woman took and spread the covering over the well's mouth, and spread out bruised grain on it; and nothing was known. ²⁰ Absalom's servants came to the

17:11 *As the sand that is by the sea for multitude* – Baptism means that we are *now* the seed of Abraham, and the promised blessings are right now being fulfilled in us (Acts 3:27-29). Israel were multiplied as the sand on the sea shore (1 Kings 4:20), they possessed the gates of their enemies (Dt. 17:2; 18:6) – all in antitype of how Abraham's future seed would also receive the promised blessings in their mortal experience, as well as in the eternal blessedness of the future Kingdom.

17:14 Ahithophel advised Absalom to attack and kill righteous king David without any more delay. Absalom refused this advice. The inspired record comments: "For Yahweh had ordained to defeat the *good counsel* of Ahithophel". Was it really *good* counsel? Not in God's eyes. It was only 'good' for Absalom from a fleshly viewpoint. And yet the record speaks from Absalom's perspective; it speaks of something definitely evil as being "good" within the context in which it was given. Thus the record here refers to men's bad thinking as if it is correct. This principle explains why the New Testament uses the language of demons to describe mental illness, even though demons don't exist and God is all powerful.

17:20 *They have gone over the brook of water* – The Hebrew is ambiguous; they were literally over the water in that they were hiding over a well (:18). See on 16:18.

woman to the house; and they said, Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan? The woman said to them, They have gone over the brook of water. When they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem. ²¹ It happened, after they had departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David; and they said to David, Arise and pass quickly over the water; for thus has Ahithophel counselled against you. ²² Then David arose, and all the people who were with him, and they passed over the Jordan. By the morning light there lacked not one of them who had not gone over the Jordan. ²³ When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey, and arose, and went home, to his city, and set his house in order, and hanged himself; and he died, and was buried in the tomb of his father. ²⁴ Then David came to Mahanaim. Absalom passed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. ²⁵ Absalom set Amasa over the army instead of Joab. Now Amasa was the son of a man, whose name was Ithra the Israelite, who went in to Abigail the daughter

of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah, Joab's mother. ²⁶ Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead. ²⁷ It happened, when David had come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, ²⁸ brought beds, basins, earthen vessels, wheat, barley, meal, parched grain, beans, lentils, roasted grain, ²⁹ honey, butter, sheep, and cheese of the herd, for David, and for the people who were with him, to eat: for they said, The people are hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

CHAPTER 18 Aug. 1

David's Plea for Absalom

David numbered the people who were with him, and set over them captains over thousands and captains over hundreds. ² David sent forth the people, a third part under the hand of Joab, a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. The king said to the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also. ³ But the

17:23 Ahithophel was like so many people – giving up his life, even if not everyone does it by suicide, because he felt he had failed, he ran out of highway and lost his political power to others. For those in Christ, life becomes valuable; we number our days with wisdom (Ps. 90:12). We no longer fear failure, for firstly we know there is forgiveness in Christ; and secondly, our realization will be that we're on a journey, living the real life of ultimate discovery and adventure, able to live with the fears which this presents to us. Failure is no longer a problem to us; for the aim of the Kingdom is ever before us. Our failures are nothing more than temporary setbacks, as the baby who stretches out her hands to the lamp on the ceiling and cries because she can't reach it. We take them all, even our sins, in the spirit of the cross – the supreme failure which became the supreme triumph of God and the spiritual person.

18:3 David was described as the chiefest among ten thousand, and yet this is how

people said, You shall not go forth; for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us. But you are worth ten thousand of us. Therefore now it's better that you are ready to help us from out of the city. ⁴ The king said to them, I will do what seems best to you. The king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. ⁵ The king commanded Joab, Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. All the people heard when the king commanded all the captains concerning Absalom. ⁶ So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the forest of Ephraim. ⁷ The people of Israel were struck there before the servants of David, and there was a great slaughter there that day of twenty thousand men. ⁸ For the battle was there spread over the surface of all the country; and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured. ⁹ Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, so that he was taken up between the sky and earth; and the mule that was under him went on. ¹⁰ A certain man saw it and informed Joab and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hang-

ing in an oak. ¹¹ Joab said to the man who told him, Behold, you saw it, and why didn't you strike him there to the ground? I would have given you ten pieces of silver, and a belt. ¹² The man said to Joab, Though I should receive a thousand pieces of silver in my hand, I still wouldn't put forth my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai saying, 'Beware that none touch the young man Absalom'. ¹³ Otherwise if I had dealt falsely against his life (and there is no matter hidden from the king), then you yourself would have set yourself against me.

Death of Absalom

¹⁴ Then Joab said, I'm not going to wait like this with you. He took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. ¹⁵ Ten young men who bore Joab's armour surrounded and struck Absalom, and killed him. ¹⁶ Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel; for Joab held back the people. ¹⁷ They took Absalom, and cast him into the great pit in the forest, and raised over him a very great heap of stones. Then all Israel fled everyone to his tent. ¹⁸ Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself the pillar, which is in the king's vale;

Solomon's illegal girlfriend describes him (Song 5:10). He had clearly told her all about his father David – and she evidently pleased Solomon by describing him as being like his father, even though she probably had never known David. He sought a wife who would be a surrogate parent rather than someone he could serve and assist towards God's Kingdom.

for he said, I have no son to keep my name in memory. He called the pillar after his own name; and it is called Absalom's monument, to this day. ¹⁹ Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, Let me now run and bear the king news, how that Yahweh has avenged him of his enemies. ²⁰ Joab said to him, You shall not be the bearer of news this day, but you shall bear news another day. But today you shall bear no news, because the king's son is dead. ²¹ Then Joab said to the Cushite, Go, tell the king what you have seen! The Cushite bowed himself to Joab, and ran. ²² Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said yet again to Joab, But come what may, please let me also run after the Cushite. Joab said, Why do you want to run, my son, since that you will have no reward for the news? ²³ But come

what may, he said, I will run. He said to him, Run! Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the Plain, and outran the Cushite.

David Mourns the Death of Absalom

²⁴ Now David was sitting between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate to the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, a man running alone. ²⁵ The watchman cried, and told the king. The king said, If he is alone, there is news in his mouth. He came closer and closer. ²⁶ The watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called to the porter, and said, Behold, a man running alone! The king said, He also brings news. ²⁷ The watchman said, I think the running of the first one is like

18:27 *He is a good man, and comes with good news* – This is the kind of comment which would be uttered by someone in David's position, and it has total psychological credibility. This kind of thing gives us every confidence that the Bible is indeed the inspired record of the actual words spoken by people thousands of years ago. What David says here is typical of our human tendency to associate the nature of the messenger with the message. The good news of the Gospel must be associated with the 'goodness' of the messenger. The Greek word *evangelion* translated 'Gospel' means, strictly, 'good news that is being passed on'; for example, the good news of a victory was passed on by runners to the capital city. It reflects the Hebrew association of carrying tidings, and good news which we see here. Once it had been spread around and everyone knew it, it ceased to be *evangelion*; it was no longer news that needed to be passed on. But in that time when there was a *special urgency* to pass it on, it was *evangelion*. This is to be the spirit of our spreading of the news about Christ; such heralding is not the same as lecturing or indifferently mentioning facts to someone. Such lecturing seeks no result; whereas the herald of God has an urgency and breathlessness about his message. There must be a passion and enthusiasm in us for the message of Christ and His Kingdom. More to be feared than over emotionalism is the dry, detached utterance of facts which has neither heart nor soul in it. Man's peril, Christ's salvation... these things cannot mean so little to us that we feel no warmth or passion rise within us as we speak about them. Remember how the early preachers were so enthusiastic in their witness that they were thought to be drunk. We are insistently pressing our good news upon others – evangelising.

the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. The king said, He is a good man, and comes with good news. 28 Ahimaaz called and said to the king, All is well. He bowed himself before the king with his face to the earth and said, Blessed is Yahweh your God, who has delivered up the men who lifted up their hand against my lord the king! 29 The king said, Is it well with the young man Absalom? Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, even me your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I don't know what it was. 30 The king said, Turn aside, and stand here. He turned aside, and stood still. 31 Behold, the Cushite came. The Cushite said, News for my lord the king; for Yahweh has avenged you this day of all those who rose up against you. 32 The king said to the Cushite, Is it well with the young man Absalom? The Cushite answered, May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up against you to do you harm, be as that young man is. 33 The king was much moved, and went up to the room over the gate, and wept. As he went, he said, My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! I wish I had died for you, Absalom, my son, my son!

CHAPTER 19 Aug. 2

Joab Remonstrates with David

It was told Joab, Behold, the king weeps and mourns for Absalom. 2 The victory that day was turned into mourning to all the people; for the people heard it said that day, The king grieves for his son. 3 The people sneaked into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. 4 The king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, My son Absalom, Absalom, my son, my son! 5 Joab came into the house to the king and said, You have shamed this day the faces of all your servants, who this day have saved your life, and the lives of your sons and of your daughters, and the lives of your wives, and the lives of your concubines; 6 in that you love those who hate you, and hate those who love you. For you have declared this day, that princes and servants are nothing to you. For today I perceive that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it would have pleased you well. 7 Now therefore arise, go out, and speak to the heart of your servants; for I swear by Yahweh, if you don't go out, not a man will stay with you this night. That would be worse for you than all the

19:6 Material relevant to David is applied directly to all believers in the New Testament, thus setting him up as our example and realistic pattern rather than merely a historical figure. Joab's comment about the way David loved his enemies was thus set up by Jesus as the example for each of us (Mt. 5:44). And yet David only came to be so kind and forgiving because of his experience of God's forgiveness to him over the Bathsheba incident. Just as God did not impute iniquity to David over this (Ps. 32:2), so David did not 'impute iniquity' to Shimei for cursing him, and did not carry out a rightful death sentence against that man (:19,21). Note how Shimei uses the very same wording which David used in *his* repentance: "I have sinned" (:20).

evil that has happened to you from your youth until now. ⁸ Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. They told all the people saying, Behold, the king is sitting in the gate. All the people came before the king. Now Israel had fled every man to his tent. ⁹ All the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king delivered us out of the hand of our enemies, and he saved us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he has fled out of the land from Absalom. ¹⁰ Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why don't you speak a word of bringing the king back? ¹¹ King David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests saying, Speak to the elders of Judah saying, 'Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house? Since the speech of all Israel has come to the king, to return him to his house. ¹² You are my brothers, you are my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?' ¹³ Say to Amasa, 'Aren't you my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if you aren't captain of the army before me continually in place of Joab'. ¹⁴ He bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as one man; so that they sent to the king, saying, Return, you and all your servants.

Shimei Pardoned

¹⁵ So the king returned, and came to the Jordan. Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to bring the king over the Jordan. ¹⁶ Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite, who was of Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David. ¹⁷ There were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went through the Jordan in the presence of the king. ¹⁸ A ferry boat went to bring over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, when he had come over the Jordan. ¹⁹ He said to the king, Don't let my lord impute iniquity to me, nor remember that which your servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart. ²⁰ For your servant knows that I have sinned. Therefore behold, I have come this day the first of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king. ²¹ But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered, Shall Shimei not be put to death for this, because he cursed Yahweh's anointed? ²² David said, What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you

19:11 "We are of (Christ's) bones and flesh" (Eph. 5:32) is a direct allusion back to the way David called the men of Judah *who were not enthusiastic for his return in glory* "my bones and my flesh". How much more intimate then can we feel to Christ, we who are baptized into His body and who look for His return eagerly?

19:14 *He bowed the heart of all the men of Judah* – See on 15:13.

19:22 This is an example of where we read of Israel's King having a human being who was an adversary [Heb. *Satan*, the Greek Septuagint version here uses *diabolos*].

should this day be adversaries to me? Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? For don't I know that I am this day king over Israel? ²³ The king said to Shimei, You shall not die. The king swore to him.

Mephibosheth Seeks Pardon

²⁴ Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king; and he had neither groomed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came home in peace. ²⁵ It happened, when he had come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth? ²⁶ He answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me. For your servant said, I will saddle me a donkey that I may ride thereon, and go with

the king; because your servant is lame. ²⁷ He has slandered your servant to my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God. Do therefore what is good in your eyes. ²⁸ For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king; yet you set your servant among those who ate at your own table. What right therefore have I yet that I should cry any more to the king? ²⁹ The king said to him, Why do you speak any more of your matters? I say, you and Ziba divide the land. ³⁰ Mephibosheth said to the king, Yes, let him take all, because my lord the king has come in peace to his own house. ³¹ Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim; and he went over the Jordan with the king, to conduct him over the Jordan. ³² Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even eighty years

There are other such examples in 1 Sam. 29:4; 1 Kings 5:4; 11:14,23,25. We face a simple choice – if we believe that every reference to ‘Satan’ or ‘Devil’ refers to an evil cosmic being, then we have to assume that these people weren't people at all, and that even good men like David were evil. The far more natural reading of these passages is surely that ‘Satan’ is simply a word meaning ‘adversary’, and can be applied to people [good and bad], and even God Himself – it carries no pejorative, sinister meaning as a word. The idea is sometimes used to describe our greatest adversary, i.e. our own sin, and at times for whole systems or empires which stand opposed to the people of God and personify sinfulness and evil. But it seems obvious that it is a bizarre approach to Bible reading to insist that whenever we meet these words ‘Satan’ and ‘Devil’, we are to understand them as references to a personal, supernatural being. See on 24:1.

19:23 David graciously overlooked Shimei's cursing, promising him that he would not die because of it (16:10,11). But he didn't keep up that level of grace to the end: he later asked Solomon to ensure that Shimei was killed for that incident (1 Kings 2:8,9). Perhaps it was Shimei's words which so broke David's heart that he later wrote: “Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man... as he loved cursing, so let it come unto him; as he delighted not in blessing, so may it be far from him. He clothed himself also with cursing as with a garment...” (Ps. 109:16-18).

19:28 To be invited to sit at the King's table is an honour indeed; we have this invitation to break bread with Jesus the King.

old: and he had provided the king with sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man. ³³ The king said to Barzillai, Come over with me, and I will sustain you with me in Jerusalem. ³⁴ Barzillai said to the king, How many are the days of the years of my life, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? ³⁵ I am this day eighty years old. Can I discern between good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be yet a burden to my lord the king? ³⁶ Your servant would but just go over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king repay me with such a reward? ³⁷ Please let your servant turn back again, that I may die in my own city, by the grave of my father and my mother. But behold, your servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good to you. ³⁸ The king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good to you. Whatever you require of me, that I will do for you. ³⁹ All the people went over the Jordan, and the king went over. Then the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned to his own place.

⁴⁰ So the king went over to Gilgal, and Chimham went over with him. All the people of Judah brought the king over, and also half the people of Israel. ⁴¹ Behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said to the king, Why have our brothers the men of Judah stolen you away, and brought the king and his household, over the Jordan, and all David's men with him? ⁴² All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is a close relative to us. Why then are you angry about this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king's cost? Or has he given us any gift? ⁴³ The men of Israel answered the men of Judah and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more claim to David than you. Why then did you despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? The words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

CHAPTER 20 Aug. 3

Sheba's Rebellion

There happened to be there a base fellow, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite; and he blew the trumpet and said, We have no portion in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his tents, Israel! ² So all the

19:35 Even in the cynicism of Ecclesiastes, written in Solomon's later life, he still uses words and phrases which have their root in his father David – e.g. his description of women as snares in Ecc. 7:26 goes back to how his father dealt with women who were a snare (1 Sam. 18:21); his whole description of old age in Ecc. 12 is based on his father's experience with Barzillai here. The simple point is that the influence we have upon our children will continue all their lives, even into their old age.

20:2 *All the men of Israel changed* – See on 15:13.

men of Israel changed from following David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri; but the men of Judah joined with their king, from the Jordan even to Jerusalem. ³ David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in custody, and provided them with sustenance, but didn't go in to them. So they were shut up to the day of their death, living in widowhood. ⁴ Then the king said to Amasa, Call me the men of Judah together within three days, and be here present. ⁵ So Amasa went to call the men of Judah together; but he stayed longer than the set time which he had appointed him. ⁶ David said to Abishai, Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom did. Take your lord's serv-

ants, and pursue after him, otherwise he will get himself fortified cities, and escape out of our sight.

Joab Kills Amasa

⁷ There went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, the Pelethites and all the mighty men; and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri. ⁸ When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Joab was clothed in his battle-dress that he had put on, and on it was a sash with a sword fastened on his waist in its sheath; and as he went forth it fell out. ⁹ Joab said to Amasa, Is it well with you, my brother? Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. ¹⁰ But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand. So he struck him with it

20:5 As Samuel tarried longer than Saul expected (1 Sam. 13:8), so Amasa "tarried longer than the set time which [David] had appointed him". Circumstances repeat within our lives and also between our experiences and those of characters in Biblical history. God through His Angels is working out a script for us, so that potentially we are enabled to see that God is teaching us through repetition and through re-framing circumstances in different contexts to see if we have really learnt the lesson intended. We learn from this that we are not in the hands of random fate, but rather there is meaning attached to every event, even if we can't immediately discern it – and perhaps in some cases we will only finally discern it in the Kingdom.

20:8 It *seemed* that the sword at Joab's side accidentally fell out of its scabbard as he went toward Amasa to greet him – but it was on purpose, of course. The Bible at times like this is recording situations according to how they appear to men, rather than how they are in ultimate reality. This helps us understand the apparently non-scientific parts of the Bible, e.g. the attribution of mental illness to 'demons' in the New Testament.

20:10 *Amasa took no heed to the sword* – Drivers can see a collision coming, but not swerve; there is a lack of cognition somewhere in the human psyche. Pilots take off at times knowing that their wings are frozen, and crash. Amasa saw the sword and must have seen the possibility of death, but didn't take cognisance of it. Samson must have known, on one level, what Delilah would do. Jesus too was human, and knew what Judas would do from the beginning; and yet felt and acted as if He hadn't taken cognisance of it. But mankind is in partial amnesia, somewhere, somehow, we fail

in the body, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and didn't strike him again; and he died. Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri. ¹¹ There stood by him one of Joab's young men and said, He who favours Joab, and he who is for David, let him follow Joab! ¹² Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the midst of the highway. When the man saw that all the people stood still, he carried Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a garment over him, when he saw that everybody who came by him stood still.

Sheba Killed

¹³ When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri. ¹⁴ He went through all the tribes of Israel to Abel, and to Beth Maacah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him. ¹⁵ They came and besieged him in Abel of Beth Maacah, and they cast up a mound against the city, and it stood against the rampart; and all the people who were with Joab battered at the wall, in order to throw it down. ¹⁶ Then a wise woman cried out of the city, Hear, hear! Please say to Joab, 'Come near here, that I may speak with you'. ¹⁷ He came near to her; and the woman said, Are you Joab? He answered, I am. Then she said to him, Hear the words of your

handmaid. He answered, I do hear. ¹⁸ Then she spoke saying, They used to say in old times, 'They shall surely ask counsel at Abel'; and so they resolved things. ¹⁹ I am among those who are peaceable and faithful in Israel. You seek to destroy a city and a mother in Israel. Why will you swallow up the inheritance of Yahweh? ²⁰ Joab answered, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. ²¹ The matter is not so. But a man of the hill country of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, has lifted up his hand against the king, even against David. Deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. The woman said to Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to you over the wall. ²² Then the woman went to all the people in her wisdom. They cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw it out to Joab. He blew the trumpet, and they were dispersed from the city, each man to his tent. Joab returned to Jerusalem to the king. ²³ Now Joab was over all the army of Israel; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites; ²⁴ and Adoram was over the men subject to forced labour; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was the recorder; ²⁵ and Sheva was scribe; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests; ²⁶ and also Ira the Jairite was chief minister to David.

to recognize the obvious. Likewise with the nearness of the Lord's return, with the urgency of our task in witness, with the evident need to follow God's word – this lack of cognisance so often comes into play. We really ought to pray, earnestly, for open hearts and eyes and obedient lives before our daily reading.

20:24 *The men subject to forced labour* – 1 Kings 12:4

CHAPTER 21 Aug. 3***David Atones for Saul's Bloodshed***

There was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David sought the face of Yahweh. Yahweh said, There is bloodguilt on Saul and on his house, because he put to death the Gibeonites. ² The king called the Gibeonites and said to them (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn to them: and Saul sought to kill them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah); ³ and David said to the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? And with what shall I make atonement, that you may bless the inheritance of Yahweh? ⁴ The Gibeonites said to him, It is no matter of silver or gold between us and Saul, or his house; neither is it for us to put any man to death in Israel. He said, Whatever you say, that will I do for you. ⁵ They said to the king, The man who consumed us, and who devised against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the borders of Israel, ⁶ let seven men of his sons be delivered to us, and we will hang them up to Yahweh in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of Yahweh. The king said, I will give them. ⁷ But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul,

because of Yahweh's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. ⁸ But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she bore to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite. ⁹ He delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the mountain before Yahweh, and all seven of them fell together. They were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, at the beginning of barley harvest. ¹⁰ Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water was poured on them from the sky. She allowed neither the birds of the sky to rest on them by day, nor the animals of the field by night. ¹¹ It was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. ¹² David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh Gilead, who had stolen them from the public square of Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, in the day that the Philistines killed Saul in Gilboa; ¹³ and he brought up from there the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son: and they gathered the bones of

21:1 *There was a famine* – Innocent people suffered because of others' sin. This is why babies die and why we all suffer as the result of Adam's sin. The sinfulness of sin is largely in the effect which it has upon others. God will not force people not to sin, because He has given humanity genuine freewill; and because of this, He will not shield others from the consequences of sin, because sin and its consequence cannot be divided; sin is the consequence of the sin.

those who were hanged. ¹⁴ They buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zela, in the tomb of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. After that God responded to the prayer for the land.

War against the Philistines

¹⁵ The Philistines had war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines. David grew faint; ¹⁶ and Ishbibenob, who was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear was three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being armed with a new sword, was about to have slain David. ¹⁷ But Abishai the son of Zeruiah helped him, and struck the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him saying, You shall go no more out with us to battle, that you don't quench the lamp of Israel. ¹⁸ It came to pass after this, that there was again war with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Saph, who was of the sons of the giant. ¹⁹ There was again war with the Philistines at Gob; and Elhanan

the son of Jaareoregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite's brother, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. ²⁰ There was again war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, who had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, twenty four in number; and he also was born to the giant. ²¹ When he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimei, David's brother, killed him. ²² These four were born to the giant in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

CHAPTER 22 Aug. 4

David's Song of Praise

David spoke to Yahweh the words of this song in the day that Yahweh delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul: ² and he said, Yahweh is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, even mine; ³ God, my rock, in Him I will take refuge; my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge. My saviour, You save me from violence. ⁴ I will call on Yahweh, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved

21:16, 18 The "mighty *men*" of Gen. 6:4 weren't anything other than ordinary men, even if they were very large in size; that text is no proof for misguided ideas about Angels sleeping with women on earth. Here and in Dt. 3:11, the same term is used about ordinary men who could be killed; the *Rephaim* had children like other human beings, inhabiting an area known as the valley of Rephaim (Josh. 15:8).

21:22 *These four were born to the giant in Gath* – David killed Goliath but took five stones to do the job, only one of which he used (1 Sam. 17:40). He was spiritually ambitious (as we should be), and so he had planned to kill Goliath's four giant sons too. Our notes on 1 Sam. 17 show that David's victory over Goliath was typical of Christ's conquest of sin on the cross; this should inspire us to rise up against the other giants of sin which we encounter, inspired by Christ's victory there. Hence we read that Goliath's sons died at the hand of David's men and in that sense also at David's hand.

from my enemies. ⁵ For the waves of death surrounded me. The floods of ungodliness made me afraid. ⁶ The cords of Sheol were around me, the snares of death caught me. ⁷ In my distress I called on Yahweh. Yes, I called to my God. He heard my voice out of His temple. My cry came into His ears. ⁸ Then the earth shook and trembled. The foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken, because He was angry. ⁹ Smoke went up out of His nostrils. Fire out of His mouth devoured. Coals were kindled by it. ¹⁰ He bowed the heavens also, and came down. Thick darkness was under His feet. ¹¹ He rode on a cherub, and flew. Yes, He was seen on the wings of the wind. ¹² He made darkness pavilions around Himself: gathering of waters, and thick clouds of the skies. ¹³ At the brightness be-

22:6 “The cords of Sheol” are paralleled in the poetry here with “the snares of death”. ‘Sheol’ is the Hebrew word often translated “grave” in many Bibles, and refers simply to the grave and death rather than any supposed place of fiery punishment for the wicked. Righteous David ‘went there’ in that he was close to death; Christ also died and was in the grave, so it clearly isn’t a place where only the wicked go.

22:7 *My cry came into His ears* – This is the wonder of prayer. Our actual words are personally heard by the God who is so far away; and He acts mightily on earth (:8) in response.

22:8 “The earth” is paralleled with “the foundations of heaven”. This (and also Job 26:11; 1 Sam. 2:8) speaks as if Heaven / the sky rests on the mountains, from where earth seems to touch the heavens (Is. 13:5), with the stars stretched out in the north (Job 26:7). Prov. 8:28 speaks of God establishing “the clouds *above*”, and the surrounding context seems to describe God as forming the sky around the earth and then putting a horizon in place – just the sort of scientifically incorrect geo-centric view held by people at the time. The point surely was that *however* people understood creation to be or to have happened, God had done it, and in wisdom. God adds no footnote to David’s words, pointing out his understanding to be incorrect. This is important to bear in mind in our days, as we who believe in God as creator encounter so many scientific theories about the origin of our world.

22:10 God Himself is spoken of as coming, descending etc. when He ‘preaches’ to humanity (see too Gen. 11:5; Ex. 19:20; Num. 11:25; in this sense Christ ‘went to’ people and preached without going Himself personally, 1 Pet. 3:19). We are therefore very intensely manifesting Him whenever we take His word to others, and our behaviour should reflect that.

22:11 The Old Testament describes Yahweh, the one true God, as riding through the heavens on chariots to the help of His people Israel (see too Dt. 33:26; Ps. 18:10; 104:3; Is. 19:1; Hab. 3:8). But Baal was known as ‘the one who rides upon the clouds’. Clearly the language of Baal is being appropriated to Yahweh, teaching Israel that there was no other God apart from God, no cosmic satan bringing evil, no gods of good bringing blessing – all was from Yahweh (Is. 45:5-7). Often the Bible alludes to contemporary language used about false beliefs and deconstructs them, and the passages which do this are often misunderstood because readers are unaware of the local language and ideas being deconstructed.

fore Him, coals of fire were kindled. ¹⁴ Yahweh thundered from heaven, the Most High uttered His voice. ¹⁵ He sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and confused them. ¹⁶ Then the channels of the sea were exposed, the foundations of the world were laid bare by the rebuke of Yahweh, by the blast of the breath of His nostrils. ¹⁷ He sent from on high and He took me, He drew me out of many waters. ¹⁸ He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. ¹⁹ They came on me in the day of my calamity, but Yahweh was my support. ²⁰ He also brought me out into a large place. He delivered me, because He delighted in me. ²¹ Yahweh rewarded me according to my righteousness. He rewarded me according to the cleanness of my hands. ²² For I have kept the ways of Yahweh, and have not wickedly departed from my God. ²³ For all His ordinances were

before me. As for His statutes, I did not depart from them. ²⁴ I was also perfect towards Him; I kept myself from my iniquity. ²⁵ Therefore Yahweh has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in His eyesight. ²⁶ With the merciful You will show Yourself to have bowed the neck; with the perfect man You will show Yourself perfect. ²⁷ With the purified You will show Yourself pure, with the crooked You will show Yourself tortuous.

God's Way Is Perfect

²⁸ You will save the afflicted people, but Your eyes are on the proud, that You may bring them down. ²⁹ For You are my lamp, Yahweh. Yahweh will light up my darkness. ³⁰ For by You, I run against a troop. By my God, I leap over a wall. ³¹ As for God, His way is perfect. The word of Yahweh is tested. He is a shield to all

22:21-25 David at the end of his life could say that he was upright and had kept himself from his iniquity – despite his sins concerning Bathsheba and Uriah. He could only say this by a clear understanding of the concept of imputed righteousness (Ps. 32:1-8), believing that he was totally “purified” from the past (:27). He really believed it and felt it, as we should. Paul’s claim to have always lived in a pure conscience must be seen in the same way (Acts 23:1; 2 Tim. 1:3) – when there were times when he kicked against the goads in his conscience (Acts 9:5).

22:26 *To have bowed the neck* – The Hebrew word only occurs elsewhere in Prov. 25:10 concerning ‘bowing the neck’ in shame or reverence. And this is what the Hebrew means: to bow the neck. This, David recognized in his time of spiritual maturity, was what God does in response to those who show a truly spiritual attitude to their brethren. David thus recognized the humility of God; all the characteristics we are asked to demonstrate are emulations of His characteristics, and humility is one of them.

22:31 David was very much involved in Israel his people. He saw himself as their representative. “God, *my* rock [is] *my* shield... he is a shield to *all* those who take refuge in Him” (:3,31). “*I* am in distress; let *us* fall now into the hand of Yahweh” (24:14) reflects this. When he sung Psalms, he invited Israel to come and sing along with him

those who take refuge in Him. ³² For who is God, besides Yahweh? Who is a rock, besides our God? ³³ God is my strong fortress. He makes my way perfect. ³⁴ He makes His feet like hinds' feet, and sets me on my high places. ³⁵ He teaches my hands to war, so that my arms bend a bow of brass. ³⁶ You have also given me the shield of your salvation. Your gentleness has made me great. ³⁷ You have enlarged my steps under me. My feet have not slipped. ³⁸ I have pursued my enemies and destroyed them. I didn't turn again until they were consumed. ³⁹ I have consumed them, and struck them through, so that they can't arise. Yes, they have fallen under my feet. ⁴⁰ For You have armed me with strength for the battle. You have subdued under me those who rose up against me. ⁴¹ You have also made my enemies turn their backs to me, so that I might cut off those who hate me. ⁴² They looked, but there was none to save; even to Yahweh, but He didn't answer them. ⁴³ Then I beat them as small as the dust of the earth. I crushed them as the mire of the streets, and spread them abroad. ⁴⁴ You also have delivered me from the strivings of my people. You have preserved me to be the head of the nations. A people whom I have not known will serve me. ⁴⁵ The foreigners will submit themselves to me. As

soon as they hear of me, they will obey me. ⁴⁶ The foreigners will fade away, and will come trembling out of their hiding places. ⁴⁷ Yahweh lives! Blessed be my rock! Exalted be God, the rock of my salvation, ⁴⁸ even the God who executes vengeance for me, who brings down peoples under me, ⁴⁹ who delivers from my enemies. Yes, You lift me up above those who rise up against me. You deliver me from the violent man. ⁵⁰ Therefore I will give thanks to You, Yahweh, among the nations. I will sing praises to your name. ⁵¹ He gives great deliverance to His king, and shows grace to His anointed, to David and to his seed, for evermore.

CHAPTER 23 Aug. 5

David's Last Words

Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse says, the man who was raised on high says, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel: ² The Spirit of Yahweh spoke by me. His word was on my tongue. ³ The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me, 'One who rules over men righteously, who rules in the fear of God, ⁴ shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, when the tender grass springs out of the earth, like the clear shining after rain'. ⁵ Most cer-

(Ps. 105:2; 107:22; 111:1). In this we see foreshadowed the representative nature of the work, being and sacrifice of Jesus.

23:2 The inspired writers of the Bible spoke their words because God's Spirit was moving them (1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21).

23:4 *Like the clear shining after rain* – David was talking about his promised descendant, Jesus, for he knew his own immediate family wasn't going to totally fulfil

tainly my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, for it is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He doesn't make it grow. ⁶ But all of the ungodly shall be as thorns to be thrust away, because they can't be taken with the hand; ⁷ but the man who touches them must be filled with iron and the staff of a spear. They shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.

David's Mighty Men

⁸ These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb Basshebeth a Tahchemonite, chief of the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite, who slew eight hundred at one time. ⁹ After him was Eleazar the son

of Dodai the son of an Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines who were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel had fled away. ¹⁰ He arose, and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand froze to the sword; and Yahweh worked a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to take spoil. ¹¹ After him was Shammah the son of Agee a Hararite. The Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where there was a plot of ground full of lentils; and the people fled from the Philistines. ¹² But he stood in the midst of the plot and defended it, and killed the Philistines; and Yahweh worked a great victory. ¹³ Three of the thirty chief men went

the promises to him about the Kingdom of God (:5). Christ's future Kingdom will be like the dawn of a new day in which He is like the sun (Mal. 4:2), after the rain of all this world's problems has finally ended.

23:5 Is. 26:8,9 parallels "the desire of my soul" with "my spirit"; it is the dominant desire of a man. For David, the salvation promised to him through Christ was "all my desire". The direction of his life was towards that end. 2 Chron. 15:12,15 parallels seeking God with having our whole desire for Him, giving all our heart and soul to Him. God judges a man's life with regard to where the essential, dominant desire of his heart is focused. And like David, our dominant desire should be for the coming of the Kingdom.

23:6, 7 *The ungodly shall be as thorns... the man who touches them must be filled with iron and the staff of a spear. They shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place* – Jesus had this in mind when He taught that only He could root up the weeds; we cannot do so (Mt. 13:24-30). The wicked will be destroyed in the same place (just outside Jerusalem) where Christ was "filled with iron" by the spear thrust. It isn't possible for us to uproot the tares because this can only possibly be done by the One who totally uprooted sin in Himself, dying to it on the cross. This association between Christ's unique right to judge and His victorious death is shown by the way the "thorns" will be burnt in the same area as He was crucified in. Literal Gehenna was in the same vicinity as Golgotha; and this in this sense His death was a foretaste of the future judgment. Phil. 2:9-11 reasons along the same lines; because Christ died for us, He *therefore* has the right to have every knee bowing to Him at the judgment. On account of being "the Son of man" and yet also being our perfect Messiah, He has the right *therefore* to be judge (Jn. 5:27 cp. Dan. 7:13,14).

down, and came to David in the harvest time to the cave of Adullam; and the troop of the Philistines was encamped in the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁴ David was then in the stronghold; and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. ¹⁵ David longed and said, Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! ¹⁶ The three mighty men broke through the army of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but he would not drink of it, but poured it out to Yahweh. ¹⁷ He said, Be it far from me, Yahweh, that I should do this! Isn't it the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives? Therefore he would not drink it. The three mighty men did these things. ¹⁸ Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of the three. He lifted up his spear against three hundred and killed them, and had a name among the three. ¹⁹ Wasn't he the most honourable of the three? Therefore he was made their captain: however, he didn't attain to the three. ²⁰ Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds, he killed the two sons of Ariel of Moab: he went down also and killed a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow. ²¹ He killed an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand,

and killed him with his own spear. ²² Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did these things, and had a name among the three mighty men. ²³ He was more honourable than the thirty, but he didn't attain to the three. David set him over his guard. ²⁴ Asahel the brother of Joab was one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, ²⁵ Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the Harodite, ²⁶ Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, ²⁷ Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, ²⁸ Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, ²⁹ Heleb the son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, ³⁰ Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash, ³¹ Abialbon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, ³² Elishaba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, ³³ Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Ararite, ³⁴ Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maacathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, ³⁵ Hezro the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, ³⁶ Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, ³⁷ Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armour bearers to Joab the son of Zeruiah, ³⁸ Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, ³⁹ Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all.

CHAPTER 24 Aug. 6

David Numbers Israel and Judah

Again the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel, and He

24:1 The books of Samuel and Chronicles are parallel accounts of the same incidents, as the four gospels are records of the same events but using different language. Here,

moved David against them saying, Go, number Israel and Judah. ² The king said to Joab the captain of the army, who was with him, Now go back and forth through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number the people, that I may know the sum of the people. ³ Joab said to the king, Now may Yahweh your God add to the people, however many they may be, one hundred times; and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king delight in this thing? ⁴ Notwithstanding, the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the army. Joab and the captains of the army went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel. ⁵ They passed over the Jordan, and encamped in Aroer, on the right side of the city that is in the middle of the valley of Gad, and to Jazer: ⁶ then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim Hodshi; and they came to Dan Jaan, and around to Sidon, ⁷ and came to the stronghold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites; and they went out to the south of Judah, at Beersheba. ⁸ So when they had gone back and forth through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months

and twenty days. ⁹ Joab delivered the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

David Begs God's Mercy

¹⁰ David's heart struck him after that he had numbered the people. David said to Yahweh, I have sinned greatly in that which I have done. But now, Yahweh, put away, I beg you, the iniquity of Your servant; for I have done very foolishly. ¹¹ When David rose up in the morning, the word of Yahweh came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, ¹² Go and speak to David, 'Thus says Yahweh, I offer you three things. Choose one of them, that I may do it to you'. ¹³ So Gad came to David, and told him, and said to him, Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days of plague in your land? Now answer, and consider what answer I shall return to Him who sent me. ¹⁴ David said to Gad, I am in distress; let us fall now into the hand of Yahweh; for His mercies are

Yahweh moved David against Israel in order to make him take a census of Israel. The parallel account in 1 Chron. 21:1 says that "Satan" moved David to take the census. In one passage God does the 'moving', in the other Satan does it. God acted as a 'Satan' or adversary to David. He did the same to Job by bringing trials into his life, so that Job said about God: "With the strength of Your hand You oppose me" (Job 30:21); 'You are acting as a Satan against me', was what Job was basically saying. The word 'satan' of itself carries no sinful or evil connotation; it simply means an adversary. See on 19:22.

24:14 It is written in the context of God's final condemnation that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31). But David said that he would

great. Let me not fall into the hand of man. ¹⁵ So Yahweh sent a plague on Israel from the morning even to the appointed time; and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men. ¹⁶ When the angel stretched out his hand towards Jerusalem to destroy it, Yahweh relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who destroyed the people, It is enough. Now stay your hand. The angel of Yahweh was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. ¹⁷ David had spoken to Yahweh when he saw the angel who struck the people, and had said, Behold, I have sinned, and I have done perversely; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me, and against my father's house.

The Plague Afflicting Israel Is Stopped

¹⁸ Gad came that day to David and said to him, Go up, build an altar to Yahweh on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. ¹⁹ David went up according to the saying of Gad, as Yahweh commanded. ²⁰ Araunah looked out, and saw the king and his servants coming on towards him. Then Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. ²¹ Araunah said, Why has my lord the king come to his servant? David said, To buy your threshing floor, to build an altar to Yahweh, that the plague may be stopped from afflicting the people. ²² Araunah said to David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him. Behold, the

prefer to fall into the hands of God rather than into the hands of man. To fall into the hands of God is thus a figure for judgment / condemnation by Him. Fearful as it is, it is actually far milder than the judgment of men. This is how cruel our judgment of others can be; this is how awful is human condemnation of each other. It is worse that God's. No wonder that the Lord established "Judge not..." as a foundation principle for His true people. God is kinder than men. It's better to be punished by Him than by men. This puts paid to the Catholic conception of God as a merciless torturer of wicked men. Clearly the doctrine of eternal torments was invented by men, not God.

24:16, 17 Thanks to David building an altar at his own expense and asking God to kill him and his family, God stopped the plague upon Israel; the stretched out hand of God in destruction was what David asked to be upon him and his family. Israel were suffering the effect of their own sin, in not paying the temple tax (Ex. 30:11-16); but in the spirit of Christ, David was willing to die for them. And his dominant desire was counted as if it had been done, and thanks to his self-sacrificial spirit, the people were saved when they personally were unworthy. The wrath of God can be turned away by the actions of those He is angry with (Num. 25:4; Dt. 13:15-17; Ezra 10:14; Jonah 3:7,10; 2 Chron. 12:7; Jer. 4:4; 21:12). And yet that wrath can also be turned away by the prayers of a third party (Ps. 106:23; Jer. 18:20; Job 42:7). This means that in some cases, our prayers for others can be counted as if they have repented. We can gain our brother for God's Kingdom (Mt. 18:15), as Noah saved his own house by his faithful preparation (Heb. 11:7).

cattle for the burnt offering, and the threshing instruments and the yokes of the oxen for the wood: ²³ all this, my king, does Araunah give to the king. Araunah said to the king, May Yahweh your God accept you. ²⁴ The king said to Araunah, No; but I will most certainly buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offer-

ings to Yahweh my God which cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. ²⁵ David built an altar to Yahweh there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So Yahweh heard the prayer for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

CHAPTER 1 Aug. 7

Adonijah's Rebellion

Now king David was old and advanced in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he couldn't keep warm. ² Therefore his servants said to him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin. Let her stand before the king, and cherish him; and let her lie on your chest, so that my lord the king may keep warm. ³ So they sought for a beautiful young lady throughout all the borders of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king. ⁴ The young lady was very beautiful; and she cherished the king, and ministered to him; but the king didn't know her intimately. ⁵ Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king. Then he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. ⁶ His father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why have you done so? And he was also a very handsome man; and he was born after Absalom. ⁷ He conferred with Joab son of Zeruah and with Abiathar the priest: they followed Adonijah and helped him. ⁸ But Zadok the priest,

Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei and the mighty men who belonged to David, were not with Adonijah. ⁹ Adonijah killed sheep and cattle and fatlings by the stone of Zohelath, which is beside En Rogel; and he called all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah, the king's servants: ¹⁰ but Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he didn't call.

Nathan and Bathsheba Persuade David to Pronounce Solomon as King

¹¹ Then Nathan spoke to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon saying, Haven't you heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith reigns, and David our lord doesn't know it? ¹² Now therefore come, please let me give you advice, that you may save your own life, and the life of your son Solomon. ¹³ Go in to king David and tell him, 'Didn't you, my lord, king, swear to your handmaid saying, Assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne? Why then does Adonijah reign?' ¹⁴ Whilst you are talking

1:2 This cure for hypothermia seems to leave somewhat to be desired in moral terms. Even if we want to do the best for someone, that genuine motivation shouldn't lead us to cross moral boundaries; for we may lead others into sin by doing so. There are many such incidents recorded in Biblical history which are left open-ended, as it were, for us to reflect upon as to whether they were sin or not. This is intentional; to provoke our thought and introspection.

1:6 David hadn't disciplined his son because he wanted to please him – and it resulted in this awful betrayal. The parental role isn't to please their children, but to raise them to be God's children.

there with the king, I also will come in after you, and confirm your words. ¹⁵ Bathsheba went in to the king into the room. The king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite was ministering to the king. ¹⁶ Bathsheba bowed, and showed respect to the king. The king said, What would you like? ¹⁷ She said to him, My lord, you swore by Yahweh your God to your handmaid, ‘Assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne’. ¹⁸ Now, look, Adonijah reigns; and you, my lord the king, don’t know it. ¹⁹ He has killed cattle, fatlings and sheep in abundance, and has called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the army; but he hasn’t called Solomon your servant. ²⁰ You, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, that you should tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. ²¹ Otherwise it will happen, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders. ²² Behold, while she still talked with the king, Nathan the prophet came in. ²³ They told the king, saying, Here is Nathan the prophet! When he had come in before the king, he bowed down before

the king with his face to the ground. ²⁴ Nathan said, My lord, king, have you said, ‘Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne?’ ²⁵ For he is gone down this day, and has killed cattle and fatlings and sheep in abundance, and has called all the king’s sons, and the captains of the army, and Abiathar the priest. Even now they are eating and drinking before him and saying, ‘Long live king Adonijah!’ ²⁶ But he hasn’t called me, even me your servant, nor Zadok the priest, nor Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, nor your servant Solomon. ²⁷ Is this thing done by my lord the king, and you haven’t shown to your servants who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him? ²⁸ Then king David answered, Call to me Bathsheba. She came into the king’s presence, and stood before the king. ²⁹ The king swore and said, As Yahweh lives, who has redeemed my soul out of all adversity, ³⁰ most certainly as I swore to you by Yahweh the God of Israel, saying, ‘Assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place;’ most certainly so will I do this day. ³¹ Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and showed respect to the king, and said,

1:15 There’s something very tragic in this scene; Bathsheba, the one time beautiful woman whom David had risked his salvation to sleep with, comes in and finds a younger woman sexually stimulating David. The sins of youth seem so far away from old men on their deathbeds, but then they like all of us suffer the consequence of our sins. David’s calling of Bathsheba to come to him (:28) recalls how he had called her to come sleep with him many years before.

1:31 *Let my lord king David live forever* – This is an example of using language without literally believing the truth of the words; for Bathsheba has just pointed out that David is going to die (:21). The language of demon possession in the New Testament

Let my lord king David live forever!
³² King David said, Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. They came before the king. ³³ The king said to them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. ³⁴ Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel. Blow the trumpet, and say, ‘Long live king Solomon!’. ³⁵ Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne; for he shall be king in my place. I have appointed him to be prince over Israel and over Judah. ³⁶ Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king and said, Amen. May Yahweh, the God of my lord the king, say so too. ³⁷ As Yahweh has been with my lord the king, even so may He be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

Solomon Is Proclaimed King

³⁸ So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, went down and caused Solomon to ride on king David’s mule, and brought him to Gihon. ³⁹ Zadok the priest took the horn of oil out of

the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. They blew the trumpet; and all the people said, Long live king Solomon! ⁴⁰ All the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth shook with their sound. ⁴¹ Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they finished eating. When Joab heard the sound of the trumpet he said, Why is this noise of the city being in an uproar? ⁴² While he yet spoke, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said, Come in; for you are a worthy man, and bring good news. ⁴³ Jonathan answered Adonijah, Most certainly our lord king David has made Solomon king. ⁴⁴ The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and they have caused him to ride on the king’s mule. ⁴⁵ Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon. They have come up from there rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that you have heard. ⁴⁶ Also, Solomon sits on the throne of the kingdom. ⁴⁷ Moreover the king’s servants came to bless our lord king David saying, ‘May your God make the name of

and other non-scientific usages of language in the Bible must be considered in this light.

1:42 *You are a worthy man, and bring good news* – We too can assume that the message carried by a person must be good and true because we perceive them to be a good person. Yet they are only ‘good’ in our eyes, in our experience and perception of them. The messages we receive from others must somehow be separated by us from our perception of them as a person, and in our context, compared against God’s revealed word before we accept them as true.

Solomon better than your name, and make his throne greater than your throne'; and the king bowed himself on the bed. ⁴⁸ Also thus said the king, 'Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who has given one to sit on my throne this day, my eyes even seeing it'. ⁴⁹ All the guests of Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and each man went his way. ⁵⁰ Adonijah feared because of Solomon; and he arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. ⁵¹ It was told Solomon saying, Behold, Adonijah fears king Solomon; for, behold, he has laid hold on the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let king Solomon swear to me first that he will not kill his servant with the sword'. ⁵² Solomon said, If he shows himself a worthy man, not a hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness be found in him, he shall die. ⁵³ So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. He came and bowed down to king Solomon; and Solomon said to him, Go to your house.

CHAPTER 2 Aug. 8

David Charges Solomon

Now the days of David drew near that he should die; and he com-

manded Solomon his son saying, ² I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong therefore, and show yourself a man; ³ and keep the instruction of Yahweh your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances and His testimonies, according to what is written in the law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do, and wherever you turn yourself. ⁴ This is so that Yahweh may establish His word which He spoke concerning me saying, 'If your children take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail you', He said, 'a man on the throne of Israel'. ⁵ Moreover you know also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me and what he did to the two captains of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner, and to Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war on his sash that was about his waist, and in his shoes that were on his feet. ⁶ Do therefore according to your wisdom, and don't let his gray head go down to Sheol in peace. ⁷ But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them

1:48 *My eyes even seeing it* – The promise of 2 Sam. 7:16 about David's great son being established on his throne referred to Christ reigning on David's throne at His return to earth, when David would be resurrected to see it. But in his old age, David seems to have lost focus upon Christ and become obsessed with the idea of having God's promises fulfilled in this life, and he came to see Solomon as the fulfilment of the promises more than Christ. No matter how long we have been in Christ, we must be aware that we can always let our focus upon Him slip, and seek for the fulfilment of the Kingdom promises in this life rather than their main, intended fulfilment in the future Kingdom.

2:2 *Show yourself a man* – David here redefines manliness as obedience to God's law; he entirely subverts the stereotype of 'manliness'.

be of those who eat at your table; for so they came to me when I fled from Absalom your brother. ⁸ Behold, there is with you Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite of Bahurim, who cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim; but he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I vowed to him by Yahweh saying, 'I will not put you to death with the sword'. ⁹ Now therefore don't hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man; and you will know what you ought to do to him, and you shall bring his gray head down to Sheol with blood. ¹⁰ David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. ¹¹ The days that David reigned over Israel were forty years; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and he reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

Solomon Destroys His Rivals

¹² Solomon sat on the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was firmly established. ¹³ Then Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. She said, Do you come peaceably? He said, Peaceably. ¹⁴ He said moreo-

ver, I have something to tell you. She said, Say on. ¹⁵ He said, You know that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign. However the kingdom is turned around, and has become my brother's; for it was his from Yahweh. ¹⁶ Now I ask one petition of you. Don't deny me. She said to him, Say on. ¹⁷ He said, Please speak to Solomon the king (for he will not tell you 'no'), that he give me Abishag the Shunammite as wife. ¹⁸ Bathsheba said, Alright. I will speak for you to the king. ¹⁹ Bathsheba therefore went to king Solomon, to speak to him for Adonijah. The king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself to her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a throne to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand. ²⁰ Then she said, I ask one small petition of you; don't deny me. The king said to her, Ask on, my mother; for I will not deny you. ²¹ She said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah your brother as wife. ²² King Solomon answered his mother, Why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also;

2:7 *Let them be of those who eat at your table* – To eat at the king's table was a sign of acceptance and special favour; and all believers are invited to eat at Christ's table at the breaking of bread. To refuse or ignore the invitation is to turn down a great honour.

2:8, 9 David graciously overlooked Shimei's cursing, promising him that he would not die because of it (2 Sam. 16:10,11; 19:23). But he didn't keep up that level of grace to the end: here he asks Solomon to ensure that Shimei was killed for that incident. And one wonders whether it was Shimei's words which so broke David's heart that he later wrote the words of Ps. 109:16-18 wishing cursing upon Shimei. We too must struggle to keep up the level of grace we may show to a person, to the end of our lives. Forgiveness in this sense isn't a one time act, but an ever continuing process we engage in.

for he is my elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah. ²³ Then king Solomon vowed by Yahweh saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life. ²⁴ Now therefore as Yahweh lives, who has established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who has made me a house, as He promised, surely Adonijah shall be put to death this day. ²⁵ King Solomon sent by Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell on him, so that he died. ²⁶ To Abiathar the priest the king said, Go to Anathoth, to your own fields; for you are worthy of death. But I will not at this time put you to death, because you carried the ark of the Lord Yahweh before David my father, and because you were afflicted in all in which my father was afflicted. ²⁷ So

Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest to Yahweh, that he might fulfil the word of Yahweh, which He spoke concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh. ²⁸ The news came to Joab; for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he didn't turn after Absalom. Joab fled to the tabernacle of Yahweh, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. ²⁹ It was told king Solomon, Joab has fled to the tabernacle of Yahweh, and behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada saying, Go, fall on him. ³⁰ Benaiah came to the tabernacle of Yahweh and said to him, Thus says the king, 'Come forth!'. He said, No; but I will die here. Benaiah brought the king word again saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. ³¹ The king said to him, Do as he has said, and fall on him, and bury him; that you may take away the blood

2:24 *Who has made me a house, as He promised* – The promise to David was that he would have a son who on account of his obedience would be given an eternal kingdom / house. The main fulfilment was to be in Messiah, the Son of God. But Solomon too quickly assumed the promise was to him and that his success in establishing his own kingdom was a fulfilment of that promise; and he overlooked the conditions. He does the same in :45 when he pronounces that “king Solomon shall be blessed”, again ignoring the conditions attached to the promised blessings. We too can do the same – overlooking, skimming over, the conditions of immortality, and assuming any present blessing is a sign we are ultimately acceptable with God.

2:28 The legal codes of the surrounding nations held that certain physical, sacred places could be entered and provide even murderers with freedom from judgment. The Torah allows this in some cases, but not in the case of deliberate murder. Thus when Joab grabs the horns of the altar, thinking he therefore couldn't be slain for his sin, he is dragged away and slain. This would've read strangely to many of the surrounding peoples. Hammurabi's laws had a sliding scale of punishment according to the social status of the person who had been harmed by misbehaviour – if a rich man struck out the eye of a 'commoner', he had to pay less compensation than if he did so to a person of higher status. The Torah reflects the immense value placed by God upon the human person; for such distinctions are totally absent in it. We are to likewise perceive the value and meaning of persons, and treat them accordingly.

which Joab shed without cause, from me and from my father's house. ³² Yahweh will return his blood on his own head, because he fell on two men more righteous and better than he, and killed them with the sword, and my father David didn't know it: Abner the son of Ner, captain of the army of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the army of Judah. ³³ So shall their blood return on the head of Joab, and on the head of his seed forever. But to David, and to his seed, and to his house, and to his throne, there shall be peace forever from Yahweh. ³⁴ Then Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up and fell on him, and killed him; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. ³⁵ The king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his place over the army; and the king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abiathar. ³⁶ The king sent and called for Shimei and said to him, Build yourself a house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and don't go out anywhere from there. ³⁷ For on the day you go out, and pass over the brook Kidron, know for certain that you shall surely die: your blood shall be on your own head. ³⁸ Shimei said to the king, The saying is good. As my lord the king has said, so will your servant do. Shimei lived in Jerusalem many days. ³⁹ It happened at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away to Achish, son of Maacah, king of Gath. They told Shimei saying, Behold, your servants are in Gath. ⁴⁰ Shimei arose, saddled his donkey,

and went to Gath to Achish, to seek his servants; and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. ⁴¹ It was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and had come again. ⁴² The king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, Didn't I adjure you by Yahweh and warn you, saying, 'Know for certain, that on the day you go out, and walk abroad any where, you shall surely die?'. You said to me, 'The saying that I have heard is good'. ⁴³ Why then have you not kept the oath of Yahweh, and the commandment that I have instructed you with? ⁴⁴ The king said moreover to Shimei, You know all the wickedness which your heart knows full well, what you did to David my father. Therefore Yahweh shall return your wickedness on your own head. ⁴⁵ But king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before Yahweh forever. ⁴⁶ So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he went out, and fell on him, so that he died. The kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

CHAPTER 3 Aug. 9

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of Yahweh, and the wall of Jerusalem all around. ² At that time the people sacrificed in the high places, because there was no

house built for the name of Yahweh. ³ Solomon loved Yahweh, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places. ⁴ The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place. Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵ In Gibeon Yahweh appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give you. ⁶ Solomon said, You have shown to Your servant David my father great grace, according as he walked before You in truth, righteousness and in uprightness of heart with You. You have kept for him this great grace, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. ⁷ Now, Yahweh my God, You have made Your servant king instead of David my father. I am but a little child. I don't know how to go out or come in. ⁸ Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people, that can't be numbered nor counted for multitude. ⁹ Give Your servant therefore an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this Your great people? ¹⁰ The speech pleased the Lord,

that Solomon had asked this thing. ¹¹ God said to him, Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked for yourself long life, neither have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice; ¹² therefore I have done according to your word. Behold, I have already given you a wise and an understanding heart; so that there has been none like you before you, neither after you shall any arise like you. ¹³ I have also given you that which you have not asked, both riches and honour, so that there shall not be any among the kings like you, all your days. ¹⁴ If you will walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days. ¹⁵ Solomon awoke; and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, and offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

The Two Prostitutes

¹⁶ Then two women who were prostitutes came to the king, and stood before him. ¹⁷ The one woman

3:3 It seems that Solomon loved God insofar as this was a living out of parental expectations; David is spoken of by both Solomon and the record as Solomon's "father" hundreds of times. Yet God will work in our lives so that our love of Him is purely of our own account, rather than the living out of parental or others' expectations.

3:12 *I have already given you* – God may have prepared great things potentially for us, which are only 'released' by our prayer for them. Solomon asked God for a wise heart – but he was told that God had already given him this. The process of educating Solomon in wisdom would have started long before; but it was released, as it were, by Solomon's specific prayer.

said, Oh my lord, I and this woman live in one house. I gave birth with her in the house. ¹⁸ It happened the third day after I gave birth, that this woman gave birth also. We were together. There was no stranger with us in the house, just us two in the house. ¹⁹ This woman's child died in the night, because she lay on it. ²⁰ She arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while your handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. ²¹ When I rose in the morning to nurse my child, behold, it was dead; but when I had looked at it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, whom I bore. ²² The other woman said, No; but the living is my son, and the dead is your son. The other said, No; but the dead is your son, and the living is my son. Thus they spoke before the king. ²³ Then the king said, The one says, 'This is my son who lives, and your son is the dead'; and the other says, 'No;

but your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one'. ²⁴ The king said, Get me a sword. They brought a sword before the king. ²⁵ The king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. ²⁶ Then the woman whose the living child was spoke to the king, for her heart yearned over her son, and she said, Oh my lord, give her the living child, and in no way kill it! But the other said, It shall be neither mine nor yours. Divide it. ²⁷ Then the king answered, Give her the living child, and in no way kill it. She is its mother. ²⁸ All Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do justice.

CHAPTER 4 Aug. 10

The Administration of Solomon's Kingdom

King Solomon was king over all Israel. ² These were the princes

3:26 Solomon immediately demonstrated his wisdom by the way he judged between the two prostitutes who came to him. They lived in the same house, and had given birth at the same time. The whole situation spoke of the kind of shameless prostitution which the Mosaic Law demanded should be punished by death. But the way of Divine wisdom in this case was not to automatically apply Divine law in condemning sinners. Instead, by cutting to the conscience within those women and appealing to it, they were led to at least the possibility of repentance, transformation and salvation. Solomon's wisdom was given him in order to know how to guide God's great people. The way of wisdom is therefore sometimes not to press a point when someone's in the wrong. We see this in all levels of relationships. There are weak points in relationships, fissure lines, which when pressed or brought under tension will cause earthquakes and destruction. It's best not to press on them; and yet if they are ignored, then the quality of relationship suffers and descends into interacting only over 'safe' matters. So what are we to do? By not raising the obvious issue – you're prostitutes and must be put to death – Solomon showed grace, but he showed it in such a way that those women surely couldn't have felt the same again; rather like the woman taken in adultery in Jn. 8:1-11. The very fact she was not condemned by the One who could condemn her – meant that she went away indeed vowing to "sin no more".

whom he had: Azariah the son of Zadok, the priest; ³ Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder; ⁴ Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the army; Zadok and Abiathar were priests; ⁵ Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers; Zabud the son of Nathan was chief officer, the king's friend; ⁶ Ahishar was over the household; and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the men subject to forced labour. ⁷ Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household: each man had to make provision for a month in the year. ⁸ These are their names: Ben Hur, in the hill country of Ephraim; ⁹ Ben Deker, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Beth Shemesh, and Elon Beth Hanan; ¹⁰ Ben Hessed, in Arubboth (to him belonged Socoh, and all the land of Hopher); ¹¹ Ben Abinadab, in all the height of Dor (he had Taphath the daughter of Solomon as wife); ¹² Baana the son of Ahilud, in Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth Shean which is beside Zarethan, beneath Jezreel, from Beth Shean to Abel Meholah, as far as beyond Jokmeam; ¹³ Ben Geber, in Ramoth Gilead (to him belonged the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead; to him belonged

the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty great cities with walls and bronze bars); ¹⁴ Ahinadab the son of Iddo, in Mahanaim; ¹⁵ Ahimaaz, in Naphtali (he also took Basemath the daughter of Solomon as wife); ¹⁶ Baana the son of Hushai, in Asher and Bealoth; ¹⁷ Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar; ¹⁸ Shimei the son of Ela, in Benjamin; ¹⁹ Geber the son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, the country of Sihon king of the Amorites and of Og king of Bashan; and he was the only officer who was in the land. ²⁰ Judah and Israel were many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making merry. ²¹ Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt: they brought tribute, and served Solomon all the days of his life. ²² Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and sixty measures of meal, ²³ ten head of fat cattle, twenty head of cattle out of the pastures, one hundred sheep, besides harts, gazelles, roebucks and fattened fowl. ²⁴ For he had dominion over all on this side of the River, from Tiphseh even to Gaza, over all the kings on this side of the River: and he had peace on all sides around him. ²⁵ Judah and Israel lived

4:20 The promises of the future Kingdom were fulfilled to a limited extent at this time; Israel were multiplied as the sand on the sea shore (2 Sam. 17:11), they possessed the gates of their enemies (Dt. 17:2; 18:6) – all in antitype of how we, Abraham's future seed would also receive the promised blessings in their mortal experience, as well as in the eternal blessedness of the future Kingdom.

4:25 Rabshakeh promised the Jews an Assyrian Kingdom where everyone sat under their own vine and fig tree – consciously parodying Micah's contemporary prophecies of God's future Kingdom (Is. 36:16 cp. Mic. 4:4). The Assyrian Kingdom was being

safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon. ²⁶ Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. ²⁷ Those officers provided food for king Solomon, and for all who came to king Solomon's table, every man in his month; they let nothing be lacking. ²⁸ Barley also and straw for the horses and swift steeds brought they to the place where the officers were, each man according to his duty.

The Wisdom of Solomon

²⁹ God gave Solomon great wisdom and understanding, and very great perception, according to the sand which is on the seashore. ³⁰ Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹ For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol, Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all the nations all around. ³² He

spoke three thousand proverbs; and his songs were one thousand and five. ³³ He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hysop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, birds, creeping things and fish. ³⁴ There came of all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.

CHAPTER 5 Aug. 10

Hiram Cooperates with Solomon to Build the Temple

Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the place of his father: for Hiram had always admired David. ² Solomon sent to Hiram saying, ³ You know how that David my father could not build a house for the name of Yahweh his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until Yahweh put his enemies under the soles of his feet. ⁴ But now Yahweh my God has given me rest

presented as a parody of Solomon's, which was the Kingdom of God (2 Chron. 9:8). Our surrounding world comprises "the kingdoms of this world" (Rev. 11:15); it is a fake kingdom of God. We have a choice between God's Kingdom and that of this world, although to unspiritual eyes, this world with its promises of a wonderful life here and now can appear a replica of *God's Kingdom*.

4:29 *According to the sand which is on the seashore* – The same term is used in :20 to describe the number of the Israelites. Solomon was given wisdom in order to assist them. We should search for wisdom in order to be of spiritual assistance to others, to God's glory. Bible study is of no value unless we harness it to the service of God's people. Our search for knowledge in every aspect of life must be because we seek to turn it into wisdom.

5:4 *Adversary* – Heb. 'satan'. The Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament uses the Greek word *diabolos* to translate the Hebrew 'satan'. Hence Devil and Satan are effectively parallel in meaning. Thus we read in the Septuagint of David being an adversary [Heb. *Satan*, Gk. *diabolos*] in 1 Sam. 29:4; the sons of Zeruiah (2 Sam. 19:22), Hadad, Rezon and other opponents to Solomon (1 Kings 5:4; 11:14,23,25). If

on every side. There is no adversary nor any evil occurrence. ⁵ Behold, I purpose to build a house for the name of Yahweh my God, as Yahweh spoke to David my father saying, ‘Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he shall build the house for My name’. ⁶ Now therefore command that they cut me cedar trees out of Lebanon. My servants shall be with your servants; and I will give you wages for your servants according to all that you shall say. For you know that there is not among us any who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians. ⁷ It happened, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he was very pleased and said, Blessed is Yahweh this day, who has given to David a wise son over this great people. ⁸ Hiram sent to Solomon saying, I have heard the message which you have sent to me. I will do all your desire concerning timber of cedar and concerning timber of fir. ⁹ My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon to the sea. I will make them into rafts to go by sea to the place that you shall appoint me, and will cause them to be broken up there, and you shall receive them. You shall accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household. ¹⁰ So

Hiram gave Solomon timber of cedar and timber of fir according to all his desire. ¹¹ Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food for his household, and twenty measures of pure oil. Solomon gave this to Hiram year by year. ¹² Yahweh had given Solomon wisdom, as He promised him; and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a treaty together. ¹³ King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men. ¹⁴ He sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses; a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home; and Adoniram was over the men subject to forced labour. ¹⁵ Solomon had seventy thousand who bore burdens, and eighty thousand who were stone cutters in the mountains; ¹⁶ besides Solomon’s chief officers who were over the work, three thousand three hundred, who bore rule over the people who laboured in the work. ¹⁷ The king commanded, and they cut out great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house with worked stone. ¹⁸ Solomon’s builders along with Hiram’s builders and the Gebalites cut them, and prepared the timber and the stones to build the house.

we believe that every reference to ‘Satan’ or ‘Devil’ refers to an evil cosmic being, then we have to assume that these people weren’t people at all, and that even good men like David were evil. The far more natural reading of these passages is surely that ‘satan’ is simply a word meaning ‘adversary’, and can be applied to people [good and bad], and even God Himself – it carries no pejorative, sinister meaning as a word. The idea is sometimes used to describe our greatest adversary, i.e. our own sin, and at times for whole systems or empires.

5:12 The practical result of wisdom was peace between persons, and this should be the practical outcome of translating all our knowledge of God into practical wisdom.

CHAPTER 6 Aug. 11*The Plan of the Temple*

It happened in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of Yahweh. ² The house which king Solomon built for Yahweh, its length was sixty cubits, and its breadth twenty, and its height thirty cubits. ³ The porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was its length, according to the breadth of the house. Ten cubits was its breadth before the house. ⁴ He made windows of fixed lattice work for the house. ⁵ Against the wall of the house he built storeys all around, against the walls of the house all around, both of the temple and of the oracle; and he made side rooms all around. ⁶ The lowest storey was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad; for on the outside he made offsets in the wall

of the house all around, so that the supporting beams should not should not be inserted into the walls of the house. ⁷ The house, when it was in building, was built of stone prepared at the quarry; and there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building. ⁸ The door for the middle side rooms was in the right side of the house: and they went up by winding stairs into the middle storey, and out of the middle into the third. ⁹ So he built the house, and finished it; and he covered the house with beams and planks of cedar. ¹⁰ He built the storeys against the whole house, each five cubits high: and they were attached to the house by cedar beams. ¹¹ The word of Yahweh came to Solomon saying, ¹² Concerning this house which you are building, if you will walk in My statutes, and execute My ordinances, and keep all My commandments to walk in them; then will I establish My word with you, which I spoke to David your father. ¹³ I will dwell among the chil-

6:7 We are represented by these stones of the temple (1 Pet. 2:5); we are being quarried and shaped now by the hand of God in our lives, and will be assembled into the temple at Christ's return. It will be too late then for corners to be knocked off; the shaping process is going on now. Stones need shaping so that they fit nicely with the other stones, in order to be a useful part of the entire house. Spiritual isolation isn't therefore what God intends; the shaping process involves us in inter-personal relationships and getting along with others, rather than walking away every time there is awkward conflict.

6:12 God saw the need to remind Solomon that he was still required to be obedient; the promises about him were always conditional upon this. Solomon was tempted to reason that because of his works and his outstanding effort in building the temple, he was thereby excused from practical obedience in other areas of his life. We too can face the same temptation; to serve God in one area of our lives and think that this excuses us from submitting our entire lives to His word.

6:13 Thanks to Solomon's prayer, and *if* he had been obedient, all Israel would have

dren of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel. ¹⁴ So Solomon built the house, and finished it. ¹⁵ He built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar: from the floor of the house to the walls of the ceiling, he covered them on the inside with wood; and he covered the floor of the house with boards of fir. ¹⁶ He built twenty cubits on the back part of the house with boards of cedar from the floor to the ceiling: he built them for it within, for an inner sanctuary, even for the most holy place. ¹⁷ In front of the temple sanctuary was forty cubits. ¹⁸ There was cedar on the house within, carved with buds and open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen.

The Inner Sanctuary

¹⁹ He prepared an inner sanctuary in the midst of the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of Yahweh. ²⁰ Within the inner sanctuary was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in its height; and he overlaid it with pure gold: and he covered the altar with cedar. ²¹ So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he drew chains of gold across before the inner sanctuary; and he overlaid it with gold. ²² The whole

house he overlaid with gold, until all the house was finished: also the whole altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary he overlaid with gold. ²³ In the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high. ²⁴ Five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing to the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits. ²⁵ The other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubim were of one measure and one form. ²⁶ The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub. ²⁷ He set the cherubim within the inner house; and the wings of the cherubim were stretched forth, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. ²⁸ He overlaid the cherubim with gold. ²⁹ He carved all the walls of the house around with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, inside and outside. ³⁰ The floor of the house he overlaid with gold, inside and outside. ³¹ For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood: the lintel and door posts were a fifth part of the wall. ³² So he

been blessed and experienced Yahweh dwelling amongst them. Our obedience or disobedience really can affect third parties.

6:19 *Inner sanctuary* – Translated in some Bibles as “oracle”, the Hebrew word thus translated also means ‘the word’, and can be interpreted as meaning ‘the speaking place’. God speaks to us today in His word; as we read His word and respond to it, we are in the most holy place, as God speaks to us and we respond – whether we read on the bus, hear it on our headphones or read in bed at night. Daily Bible reading is therefore so important in our personal relationship with God.

made two doors of olive wood; and he carved on them carvings of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold; and he spread the gold on the cherubim, and on the palm trees. ³³ In the same way he also made for the entrance of the temple door posts of olive wood, out of a fourth part of the wall; ³⁴ and two doors of fir wood: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. ³⁵ He carved cherubim and palm trees and open flowers; and he overlaid them with gold fitted on the engraved work. ³⁶ He built the inner court with three courses of cut stone, and a course of cedar beams. ³⁷ In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of Yahweh laid, in the month Ziv. ³⁸ In the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all its parts, and according to all its fashion. Thus he was seven years in building it.

CHAPTER 7 Aug. 12

Solomon's House

Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house. ² For he built the house of the forest of Lebanon; its length was one hundred cubits, and its breadth fifty cubits, and its height

thirty cubits, on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams on the pillars. ³ It was covered with cedar above over the forty-five beams, that were on the pillars; fifteen in a row. ⁴ There were window frames in three rows, and window was over against window in three ranks. ⁵ All the doors and posts had square frames: and window was opposite window in three tiers. ⁶ He made the porch of pillars; its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth thirty cubits; and a porch before them; and pillars and a threshold before them. ⁷ He made the hall of judgment for the throne where he was to judge, even the porch of judgment: and it was covered with cedar from floor to floor. ⁸ His house where he was to dwell had another court within the porch, which was of the same plan. He made also a house for Pharaoh's daughter (whom Solomon had taken as wife), like this porch. ⁹ All these were of costly stones, even of cut stone, according to measure, sawn with saws, inside and outside, even from the foundation to the coping, and so on the outside to the great court. ¹⁰ The foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits. ¹¹ Above were costly stones, cut stone, according to measure, and cedar wood. ¹² The great

6:38 *He was seven years in building it* – Perhaps prophetic of God's 7000 year plan to build a spiritual temple for Him to dwell in. Throughout the temple there was the theme of God's glory – the cherubim motif was throughout the building (:29). Our entire purpose both now and eternally is to give glory to God and not to ourselves.

7:1 Solomon spent nearly twice as long building his own house as he did God's house (6:38). He liked building (Ecc. 2:4); he served God in ways convenient to him, rather than taking up a cross and going against his own natural desires. See on 9:1.

court around had three courses of cut stone, and a course of cedar beams; like the inner court of the house of Yahweh, and the porch of the house.

The Two Pillars and Laver

¹³ King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. ¹⁴ He was the son of a widow of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass; and he was filled with wisdom and understanding and skill, to work all works in brass. He came to king Solomon, and performed all his work. ¹⁵ For he fashioned the two pillars of brass, each eighteen cubits high: and a line of twelve cubits encircled both of them around. ¹⁶ He made two capitals of molten brass, to set on the tops of the pillars: the height of the one capital was five cubits, and the height of the other capital was five cubits. ¹⁷ There were nets of chequer work, and wreaths of chain work, for the capitals which were on the top of

the pillars; seven for the one capital, and seven for the other capital. ¹⁸ So he made the pillars; and there were two rows around on the one network, to cover the capitals that were on the top of the pillars: and he did so for the other capital. ¹⁹ The capitals that were on the top of the pillars in the porch were of carved lilies, four cubits. ²⁰ There were capitals above also on the two pillars, close by the cushion which was beside the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred, in rows around on the other capital. ²¹ He set up the pillars at the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called its name Jachin; and he set up the left pillar, and called its name Boaz. ²² On the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished. ²³ He made the molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and its height was five cubits; and a line of thirty cubits encircled it. ²⁴ Under its brim around

7:12 *Like as the inner court of the house of Yahweh* – Solomon was maybe unconsciously playing God, creating a throne for himself in similar and more glorious style to God's throne room in the temple.

7:23 Sometimes the Bible is very vague. There are times when the Spirit uses approximate numbers rather than exact ("about the space of four hundred and fifty years", Acts 13:20 cp. 1 Kings 6:1). The reference to "seventy" in Judges 9:56 also doesn't seem exact. Seven and a half years (2 Sam. 2:11) becomes "seven years" (1 Kings 2:11); three months and ten days (2 Chron. 36:9) becomes "three months" (2 Kings 24:8). And here 1 Kings 7:23 gives the circumference of the laver as "thirty cubits", although it was ten cubits broad. Taking 'pi' to be 3.14, it is apparent that the circumference would have been 31.4 cubits; but the Spirit says, summing up, "thirty". Surely this is to show that God is God, not man, and as such He's not on the back foot, writing under the fear of criticism. His word is not contradictory, but on the other hand, God has more spiritual culture than to sink down to the level of a man who wanted to foresee all criticism in writing something which could stand all petty criticism. He has a spiritual culture much higher than this. And this is the answer to many of the petty objections about 'Bible contradictions' which are raised by cynics.

there were buds which encircled it, for ten cubits, encircling the sea: the buds were in two rows, cast when it was cast. ²⁵ It stood on twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south and three looking toward the east; and the sea was set on them above, and all their hinder parts were inward. ²⁶ It was a handbreadth thick: and its brim was worked like the brim of a cup, like the flower of a lily: it held two thousand baths. ²⁷ He made the ten bases of brass; four cubits was the length of one base, and four cubits its breadth, and three cubits its height. ²⁸ The work of the bases was like this: they had panels; and there were panels between the ledges; ²⁹ and on the panels that were between the ledges were lions, oxen, and cherubim; and on the ledges there was a pedestal above; and beneath the lions and oxen were wreaths of hanging work. ³⁰ Every base had four bronze wheels, and axles of brass; and the four feet of it had supports: beneath the basin were the supports molten, with wreaths at the side of each. ³¹ The mouth of it within the capital and above was a cubit: and its mouth was round after the work of a pedestal, a cubit and a half; and also on its mouth were engravings, and their panels were foursquare, not round. ³² The four

wheels were underneath the panels; and the axles of the wheels were in the base: and the height of a wheel was a cubit and half a cubit. ³³ The work of the wheels was like the work of a chariot wheel: their axles, and their rims, and their spokes, and their naves, were all molten. ³⁴ There were four supports at the four corners of each base: its supports were of the base itself. ³⁵ In the top of the base was there a round compass half a cubit high; and on the top of the base its stays and its panels were of the same. ³⁶ On the plates of its stays, and on its panels, he engraved cherubim, lions, and palm trees, according to the space of each, with wreaths all around. ³⁷ In this way, he made the ten bases: all of them had one casting, one measure, and one form. ³⁸ He made ten basins of brass: one basin contained forty baths; and every basin was four cubits; and on every one of the ten bases one basin. ³⁹ He set the bases, five on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house: and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward, toward the south. ⁴⁰ Hiram made the basins, and the shovels, and the basins. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he worked for king Solomon in the house of Yahweh: ⁴¹ the two pillars, and the two bowls of the capitals that were

7:25 The sea or laver was a washing place in which the priests and sacrifices had to be washed before approaching God. It speaks of baptism under the new covenant, and is alluded to in Tit. 3:5, which speaks of our being saved by faith through the laver or bath of regeneration. Water baptism is part of the process of regeneration, the required expression of our faith in God's salvation, and is therefore vital for all who would come to God in this age.

on the top of the pillars; and the two networks to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were on the top of the pillars; ⁴² and the four hundred pomegranates for the two networks; two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were on the pillars; ⁴³ and the ten bases, and the ten basins on the bases; ⁴⁴ and the one sea, and the twelve oxen under the sea; ⁴⁵ and the pots, and the shovels, and the basins: even all these vessels, which Hiram made for king Solomon, in the house of Yahweh, were of burnished brass. ⁴⁶ The king cast them in the plain of the Jordan, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarethan. ⁴⁷ Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many: the weight of the brass could not be found out.

The Utensils for the Temple

⁴⁸ Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of Yahweh: the golden altar, and the table whereupon the show bread was, of gold; ⁴⁹ and the lampstands, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, of pure gold; and the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs, of gold; ⁵⁰ and the cups, and the snuffers, and the basins, and the spoons, and the fire

pans, of pure gold; and the hinges, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, of the temple, of gold. ⁵¹ Thus all the work that king Solomon worked in the house of Yahweh was finished. Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated, the silver, the gold and the vessels, and put them in the treasures of the house of Yahweh.

CHAPTER 8 Aug. 13

The Temple Is Dedicated

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the princes of the families of the people of Israel, to king Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of Yahweh out of the city of David, which is Zion. ² All the men of Israel assembled themselves to king Solomon at the feast, in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. ³ All the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. ⁴ They brought up the ark of Yahweh, and the Tent of Meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent; all these the priests and the Levites brought up. ⁵ King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled to him, were with him before the ark, sac-

7:50 *The hinges... of gold* – Gold wasn't the most suitable material for many of the utensils. But it represents faith (1 Pet. 1:7). The life of faith means that we may do things which appear to have a very weak human basis, and yet this is how God loves to work – through the human weakness of decisions taken and work done in faith.

8:5 *Sacrificing sheep and cattle, that could not be counted nor numbered* – Solomon hadn't learnt the lesson his father David did after his sin with Bathsheba – that God doesn't really want multitudes of animal sacrifices, but rather the sacrifice of a broken heart and true internal spirituality (Ps. 50:8-15; 51:16,17; Is. 1:11; Jer. 7:22; Am.

rificing sheep and cattle, that could not be counted nor numbered for multitude. ⁶ The priests brought in the ark of the covenant of Yahweh to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the house, the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim. ⁷ For the cherubim spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and its poles above. ⁸ The poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place before the inner sanctuary; but they were not seen outside: and there they are to this day. ⁹ There was nothing in the ark except the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when Yahweh made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁰ When the priests had come out of the holy place, the cloud filled the house of Yahweh, ¹¹ so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the

cloud; for the glory of Yahweh filled the house of Yahweh.

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

¹² Then Solomon said, Yahweh has said that He would dwell in the thick darkness. ¹³ I have surely built You a house, a place for You to dwell in forever. ¹⁴ The king turned his face about, and blessed all the assembly of Israel: and all the assembly of Israel stood. ¹⁵ He said, Blessed is Yahweh, the God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to David my father, and has with His hand fulfilled it, saying, ¹⁶ 'Since the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build a house that My name might be there; but I chose David to be over My people Israel'. ¹⁷ Now it was with the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel. ¹⁸ But Yahweh said to David

5:25). We must be aware that organized religion so easily leads us to think that the externalities of religious devotion are all important; whereas it is internal spirituality which God seeks above all, and any organized religious system we are part of should be merely an assistance towards that, rather than an end in itself.

8:17 *It was with the heart of David* – In the Hebrew Bible, the idea of being “with” someone means to “be in one’s consciousness, whether of knowledge, memory or purpose”. Thus Job speaks of how what God plans to do to him is “with God”, i.e. in His purpose (Job 23:14); David is spoken of as having the idea about building a temple “with” him (here and 2 Chron. 6:7) – and see too Num. 14:24; 1 Kings 11:11; 1 Chron. 28:12; Job 10:13; 15:9; 23:10; 27:11; Ps. 50:11; 73:23. When we read of Jesus being “with” God from the beginning (Jn. 1:1-3), the Western mind can assume this means sitting literally together with Him. But Jesus didn’t physically pre-exist His birth. It is this refusal to read the Bible within its own Hebraic context which has led to so much misunderstanding, and adopting of doctrines and positions which simply don’t stand up to closer Biblical scrutiny.

8:18 Whether God did in fact say exactly this to David is open to question, because it would contradict God’s own reasoning about why He didn’t want a temple, and the fact the promises to David were mainly about the spiritual temple to be built by God’s

my father, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. ¹⁹ Nevertheless, you shall not build the house; but your son who shall come forth out of your body, he shall build the house for My name'. ²⁰ Yahweh has established His word that He spoke; for I have risen up in the place of David my father, and I sit on the throne of Israel, as Yahweh promised, and have built the house for the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel. ²¹ There I have set a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of Yahweh which He made with our fathers when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. ²² Solomon stood before the altar of Yahweh in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven; ²³ and he said, Yahweh, the God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above nor on earth beneath; who keeps covenant and grace with Your servants who walk before You with all their heart; ²⁴ who has kept with Your servant David my father that which You promised him. Yes, You spoke with Your mouth, and have fulfilled it with Your hand, as it is this day. ²⁵ Now therefore, may Yahweh, the God of Israel, keep with

Your servant David my father that which You have promised him saying, 'There shall not fail you a man in My sight to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your children take heed to their way, to walk before Me as you have walked before Me'. ²⁶ Now therefore, God of Israel, please let Your word be verified, which You spoke to Your servant David my father. ²⁷ But will God in very deed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens can't contain You; how much less this house that I have built! ²⁸ Yet have respect for the prayer of Your servant, and for his supplication, Yahweh my God, to listen to the cry and to the prayer which Your servant prays before You this day; ²⁹ that Your eyes may be open toward this house night and day toward the place of which You have said, 'My name shall be there;' to listen to the prayer which Your servant shall pray toward this place. ³⁰ Listen to the supplication of Your servant, and of Your people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place. Yes, hear in heaven, Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive. ³¹ If a man sins against his neighbour, and an oath is laid on him to cause him to swear, and he comes

Son Jesus (Lk. 1:31-35). David assumed this is what God meant; and Solomon now repeats it as if it is the very word of God. This kind of error so often occurs.

8:22 Such public, ostentatious prayer is surely not in the spirit of Christ, who commanded us to pray secretly (Mt. 6:6).

8:29, 30 *Listen to the prayer which Your servant shall pray toward this place* – Solomon had the wrong idea that the existence of the temple somehow made prayer more noticeable by God. One of the reasons for the destruction of the temple was to bring God's people into direct, prayerful contact with Him in their exile in the Gentile world. God likewise takes away the props of our religion in order to bring us directly to Him.

and swears before Your altar in this house; ³² then hear in heaven, and do, and judge Your servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his own head, and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness. ³³ When Your people Israel are struck down before the enemy, because they have sinned against You; if they turn again to You, and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in this house: ³⁴ then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them again to the land which You gave to their fathers. ³⁵ When the sky is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against You; if they pray toward this place, and confess Your name, and turn from their sin, when You afflict them: ³⁶ then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, and of Your people Israel, when You teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land, which You have given to Your people for an inheritance. ³⁷ If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence, if there is blight, mildew, locust or caterpillar; if their enemy besieges them in their cities; whatever plague, whatever sickness there is; ³⁸ whatever prayer and supplication is made by any man, or by all Your people Israel, who shall each know

the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: ³⁹ then hear in heaven, Your dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and render to every man according to all his ways, whose heart You know; (for You, even You only, know the hearts of all the children of men;) ⁴⁰ that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which You gave to our fathers. ⁴¹ Moreover concerning the foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, when he shall come out of a far country for Your name's sake ⁴² (for they shall hear of Your great name, and of Your mighty hand, and of Your outstretched arm); when he shall come and pray toward this house; ⁴³ hear in heaven, Your dwelling place, and do according to all that the foreigner calls to You for; that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name, to fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by Your name. ⁴⁴ If Your people go out to battle against their enemy, by whatever way You shall send them, and they pray to Yahweh toward the city which You have chosen, and toward the house which I have built for Your name; ⁴⁵ then hear in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. ⁴⁶ If they sin against You (for there is no man who doesn't

8:39 *Hear in heaven Your dwelling place* – We are invited to see God as having a “throne” (2 Chron. 9:8; Ps. 11:4; Is. 6:1; 66:1). Such language is hard to apply to an undefined essence which exists somewhere in heavenly realms, but is rather appropriate to a personal God having a specific location. We can better understand the idea of ‘God manifestation’ in personal human beings if we understand Him as being Himself personal. It also provides focus to our prayers, as it did for Solomon here.

sin), and You are angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near; ⁴⁷ yet if they shall repent in the land where they are carried captive, and turn again, and make supplication to You in the land of those who carried them captive, saying, ‘We have sinned, and have done perversely; we have dealt wickedly;’ ⁴⁸ if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray to You towards their land, which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and the house which I have built for Your name: ⁴⁹ then hear their prayer and their supplication in heaven, your dwelling place, and maintain their cause; ⁵⁰ and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions in which they have transgressed against You; and give them compassion before those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them ⁵¹ (for they are Your people, and Your inheritance, which You brought out of Egypt, from the midst of the fur-

nace of iron); ⁵² that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant, and to the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to them whenever they cry to You. ⁵³ For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You spoke by Moses Your servant, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, Lord Yahweh.

A Final Dedication

⁵⁴ It was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication to Yahweh, he arose from before the altar of Yahweh, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread forth toward heaven. ⁵⁵ He stood, and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice saying, ⁵⁶ Blessed be Yahweh, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised by Moses His servant. ⁵⁷ May Yahweh our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. Let Him not leave us, nor forsake us; ⁵⁸ that He may incline our hearts to Him, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His

8:49 *Hear their prayer and their supplication in heaven... and maintain their cause* – This is legal language, implying that our situations on earth are acted out within the Heavenly throne room, where God is both judge and the one who advocates for us to Himself, maintaining our case and supporting our supplication. We need never feel, therefore, that the complexities of our situations on earth are unnoticed. They are known and analyzed better than we know ourselves, in Heaven itself.

8:58 *He may incline our hearts to Him* – We’re wrong to think that God passionlessly waits for us to repent or pray to Him, and then He will forgive or act for us. He loves us, simply so; and with all love’s manipulation of circumstances, seeks to pour out His love upon us. Thus repentance itself is a gift which God gives and is not totally upon human initiative (see too Dt. 4:29-31; 30:1-10).

commandments, His statutes and his ordinances which He commanded our fathers. ⁵⁹ Let these my words, with which I have made supplication before Yahweh, be near to Yahweh our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant, and the cause of His people Israel, as each day shall require; ⁶⁰ that all the peoples of the earth may know that Yahweh, He is God. There is none else. ⁶¹ Let your heart therefore be perfect with Yahweh our God, to walk in His statutes and to keep His commandments, as you do at this day. ⁶² The king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before Yahweh. ⁶³ Solomon offered for the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to Yahweh, twenty two thousand head of cattle, and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of Yahweh. ⁶⁴ The same day the king made the middle of the court holy that was before the house of Yahweh; for there he offered the burnt offering, and the meal offering, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar that was before Yahweh was too little to receive the

burnt offering, the meal offering, and the fat of the peace offerings. ⁶⁵ So Solomon held the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly, from the entrance of Hamath to the brook of Egypt, before Yahweh our God, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days. ⁶⁶ On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they blessed the king, and went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that Yahweh had shown to David His servant, and to Israel His people.

CHAPTER 9 Aug. 14

God Warns Solomon

It happened, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of Yahweh, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, ² that Yahweh appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. ³ Yahweh said to him, I have heard your prayer and your supplication, that you have made before Me. I have made this house holy, which you have built, to put My name there forever; and My eyes and My heart shall be there constantly. ⁴ As for

9:1 *Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do* – See on 7:1. Solomon's building work was what he naturally desired to do, he built for his personal "pleasure" (:19); he didn't understand that true service of God requires us to go against the grain of our natural desires.

9:3 God didn't ideally want to have a physical temple, in the same way as He didn't want Israel to have a system of human kings. But He made concessions to human weakness, as He does today, so eager is He for fellowship with us.

9:4 Notice all the time God uses the word "if" in this communication. There are times in our lives when like Solomon we need to be reminded that whatever successes we have had in spiritual life, our eternal future is always conditional upon our enduring to the end (Mt. 10:22). The sense of the eternity we might miss should in some form be ever in our consciousness.

you, if you will walk before Me, as David your father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and will keep My statutes and My ordinances; ⁵ then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, according as I promised to David your father saying, ‘There shall not fail you a man on the throne of Israel’. ⁶ But if you turn away from following Me, you or your children, and don’t keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; ⁷ then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have made holy for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ⁸ Though this house is so high, yet shall everyone who passes by it be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, ‘Why has Yahweh done thus to this land, and to this house?’; ⁹ and they shall answer, ‘Because they forsook Yahweh their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold of other gods, and worshiped them, and served them. Therefore Yahweh has brought all this evil on them’. ¹⁰ It happened at the end of twenty years, in which Solomon had built the two houses, the house of Yahweh and the king’s house ¹¹ (now Hiram the king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold,

according to all his desire), that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. ¹² Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they didn’t please him. ¹³ He said, What cities are these which you have given me, my brother? He called them the land of Cabul to this day. ¹⁴ Hiram sent to the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold.

Solomon Strengthens His Kingdom

¹⁵ This is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised, to build the house of Yahweh, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer. ¹⁶ Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites who lived in the city, and given it for a present to his daughter, Solomon’s wife. ¹⁷ Solomon built Gezer, and Beth Horon the lower, ¹⁸ and Baalath, and Tamar in the wilderness, in the land, ¹⁹ and all the storage cities that Solomon had, and the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build for his pleasure in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. ²⁰ As for all the people who were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, who were not of the children of Israel; ²¹ their children who were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel were not

9:7 *I cut off Israel* – A whole nation would suffer as the result of Solomon’s disobedience; our sins really can affect third parties, and this is the very sinfulness of sin.

able utterly to destroy, of them Solomon raised a levy of bondservants to this day. ²² But of the children of Israel Solomon made no bondservants; but they were the men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots and of his horsemen. ²³ These were the chief officers who were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, who bore rule over the people who laboured in the work. ²⁴ But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David to her house which Solomon had built for her: then he built Millo. ²⁵ Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he built to Yahweh three times a year, burning incense with them, on the altar that was before Yahweh. So he finished the house. ²⁶ King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion Geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. ²⁷ Hiram sent in the navy his servants, sailors who had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. ²⁸ They came to Ophir, and fetched from there gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.

CHAPTER 10 Aug. 15

The Queen of Sheba Visits

Solomon

When the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Yahweh, she came to test him with hard questions. ² She came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that carried spices, and very much gold and precious stones; and when she had come to Solomon, she talked with him of all that was in her heart. ³ Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hidden from the king which he didn't tell her. ⁴ When the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, ⁵ and the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their clothing, and his cup bearers, and his ascent by which he went up to the house of Yahweh; there was no more spirit in her. ⁶ She said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in my own land of your acts, and of your wisdom. ⁷ However I didn't believe the words, until I came, and my eyes had seen it. Behold, the half was not told me! Your wisdom and prosperity ex-

9:22 *Of the children of Israel Solomon made no bondservants* – But he did later, and the people complained bitterly about the harshness he showed them (12:4). He began by being inhumane to unbelievers, and then came to treat God's people with the same hardness he showed people in the world; and we can take a lesson from this.

10:4-8 The Queen of Sheba *saw* Solomon's wisdom through seeing the "sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their clothing". It was through her observation of Solomon's people that she perceived and understood his wisdom. The nations will likewise learn the knowledge of Christ through observing the example of natural Israel and ourselves; as they should in this life too. People tend not to believe mere words until they see them lived out in practice before their eyes.

ceed the fame which I heard. ⁸ Happy are your men, happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you, who hear your wisdom. ⁹ Blessed is Yahweh your God, who delighted in you, to set you on the throne of Israel. Because Yahweh loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness. ¹⁰ She gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones. There came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. ¹¹ The navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir a great quantity of almug trees and precious stones. ¹² The king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of Yahweh, and for the king's house, harps also and stringed instruments for the singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen, to this day. ¹³ King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned, and went to her own land, she and her servants.

Solomon's Wealth

¹⁴ Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, ¹⁵ besides that which the traders brought, and the traffic of the merchants, and of all the kings of the mixed people, and of the governors of the country. ¹⁶ King Solomon made two hundred bucklers of beaten gold; six hundred shekels of gold went to one buckler. ¹⁷ he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three minas of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon. ¹⁸ Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the finest gold. ¹⁹ There were six steps to the throne, and the top of the throne was round behind; and there were stays on either side by the place of the seat, and two lions standing beside the stays. ²⁰ Twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other on the six steps: there was nothing like it made in any kingdom. ²¹ All king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold: none were of silver; it was

10:9 Because of God's enthusiasm for human response to His ways, the exalted language in which He describes believers, even in their weakness, is an essay in His humility. Thus God "delighted" in Solomon – translating a Hebrew word meaning literally 'to bend down to'. It's used about men in love (Gen. 34:19; Dt. 21:14; 25:7), and about Jonathan's deferential attitude to David (1 Sam. 19:2). If God is humble, so should we be.

10:14 *Six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold* – The connection with 666 as the number of the man of sin (Rev. 13:18), and the similarities between Babylon's merchandise in Rev. 17 and 18 and that which came to Solomon, indicates that all was not spiritually well with Solomon. His kingdom was on one hand God's Kingdom, and yet it was also a kingdom of sin. This is ever our temptation – not atheism, but a serving of sin under the impression of serving God.

nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. ²² For the king had at sea a navy of Tarshish with the navy of Hiram: once every three years came the navy of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. ²³ So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. ²⁴ All the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. ²⁵ They brought every man his tribute, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and clothing, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year. ²⁶ Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, that he placed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. ²⁷ The king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the lowland, for abundance. ²⁸ The horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt; and the king's merchants received them in droves, each drove at a price. ²⁹ A chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a

horse for one hundred and fifty; and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, they brought them out by their traders.

CHAPTER 11 Aug. 16

Solomon Turns Away from God

Now king Solomon loved many foreign women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites; ² of the nations concerning which Yahweh said to the children of Israel, You shall not go among them, neither shall they come among you; for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. Solomon joined to these in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴ For it happened, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with Yahweh his God, as was the heart of David his father. ⁵ For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶ Solomon did that which was evil

10:29 Solomon's love of horses was not right for the king of Israel (Dt. 17:16). He began by being a middleman, bringing horses out of Egypt and selling them on to other nations. But he ended up being addicted to them. We should choose not to have involvement with sinful things, because it's likely that the more we deal with them, the more likely it is we will ourselves start to use them.

11:2, 3 The following passages all make the same connection between marriage out of the covenant, and adopting idolatry: Ex. 34:12-16; Dt. 7:2-9; Jud. 3:6,7; Mal. 2:11; 2 Cor. 6:14. Dt. 7:4 dogmatically predicts that a Gentile man will definitely turn away the heart of his Hebrew son-in-law... So certain is it that marriage to Gentiles leads to accepting their idols that Ezra 9:1,2 reasons that Israel hadn't separated from idols *because* they had married Gentiles. Marriage to unbelievers is very serious.

in the sight of Yahweh, and didn't go fully after Yahweh, as did David his father. ⁷ Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the mountain that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon. ⁸ So he did for all his foreign wives, who burnt incense and sacrificed to their gods. ⁹ Yahweh was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned away from Yahweh, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, ¹⁰ and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he didn't keep that which Yahweh commanded. ¹¹ Therefore Yahweh said to Solomon, Because this is done by you, and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant. ¹² Notwithstanding I will not do it in your days, for David your father's sake; but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³ However I will not tear away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to your son, for David My servant's

sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

Solomon's Adversaries

¹⁴ Yahweh raised up an adversary to Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom. ¹⁵ For it happened, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the army was gone up to bury the slain, and had struck every male in Edom ¹⁶ (for Joab and all Israel remained there six months, until he had cut off every male in Edom); ¹⁷ that Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt, Hadad being yet a little child. ¹⁸ They arose out of Midian, and came to Paran; and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a house, and appointed him food, and gave him land. ¹⁹ Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him as wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen. ²⁰ The sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house; and

11:6 Anything less than following Yahweh with all our heart is seen as doing evil in His eyes. We see here the logic of total devotion to Him.

11:13 The extent of grace explains many apparent contradictions and paradoxes throughout God's relationships with men – e.g. God repeatedly said that He would leave David with “one tribe”. But actually by grace He gave David and Judah two and a half tribes.

11:14 1 Kings 11 mentions that God raised up ‘adversaries’ to Solomon (see too :23,25). The Hebrew word ‘satan’ used here means simply an adversary. God didn't stir up a supernatural being to be a Satan/adversary to Solomon; He stirred up ordinary men. The original word ‘satan’ has no negative connotation in itself. Mt. 16:22,23 speaks of Peter as a ‘satan’ to Jesus. Note that God is in control of these ‘satans’. He raised them up and put them down; ‘satan’ doesn't refer to anyone in radical opposition to God.

Genubath was in Pharaoh's house among the sons of Pharaoh. ²¹ When Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to my own country. ²² Then Pharaoh said to him, But what have you lacked with me, that behold, you seek to go to your own country? He answered, Nothing, however please only let me depart. ²³ God raised up an adversary to him, Rezon the son of Eliada, who had fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah. ²⁴ He gathered men to him, and became captain over a troop, when David killed them of Zobah: and they went to Damascus, and lived therein, and reigned in Damascus. ²⁵ He was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, besides the mischief of Hadad: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

Ahijah's Prophecy

²⁶ Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of Zeredah, a servant of

Solomon, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, he also opposed the king. ²⁷ This was the reason why he opposed the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breach of the city of David his father. ²⁸ The man Jeroboam was a brave man; and Solomon saw the young man that he was industrious, and he put him in charge of all the labour of the house of Joseph. ²⁹ It happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; now Ahijah had put on a new garment; and they two were alone in the field. ³⁰ Ahijah laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it in twelve pieces. ³¹ He said to Jeroboam, Take ten pieces; for thus says Yahweh the God of Israel, 'Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to you' ³² (but he shall have one tribe, for My servant David's sake and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel); ³³ because they have forsaken

11:28 The final comment upon Jeroboam is that he was not as God's servant David (14:7-9). And yet he was set up with that potential possibility. He was a young "man of valour" as was David (1 Sam. 16:18; 17:58); a ruler over all (as David, 1 Sam. 18:5); taken by God to reign over Israel (:37) as was David (2 Sam. 7:8); would have a house built (:38) as David (2 Sam. 7:11); and compare :40 with 1 Sam. 19:2,10. We are set up with great potentials; our lives are sometimes potentially guided to be similar to those of Biblical characters. But we have to make the right decisions and choices in order to realize that potential.

11:29 The division within Israel was the greatest tragedy to come upon God's people, just as it is today (Is. 7:17). The way the new garment of Ahijah was torn up symbolized the division, and it reflects the utter waste. For an outer cloak was a garment a man could wear for life; to have a new one was something significant. The Lord's coat being unrent at His death may therefore be a reflection of how His death brought about unity amongst His people (Jn. 11:52; 17:21,22). Before Him there, we simply cannot be divided amongst ourselves.

Me, and have worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon. They have not walked in My ways, to do that which is right in My eyes, and to keep My statutes and My ordinances, as David his father did. ³⁴ However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand; but I will make him prince all the days of his life, for David My servant's sake whom I chose, who kept My commandments and My statutes; ³⁵ but I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it to you, even ten tribes. ³⁶ To his son will I give one tribe, that David My servant may have a lamp always before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Me to put My name there. ³⁷ I will take you, and you shall reign according to all that your soul desires, and shall be king over Israel. ³⁸ It shall be, if you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in My ways, and do that which is right in My eyes, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as David My servant did; that I will be with you, and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. ³⁹ I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not forever'. ⁴⁰ Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam; but Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. ⁴¹ Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all

that he did, and his wisdom, aren't they written in the book of the acts of Solomon? ⁴² The time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. ⁴³ Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

CHAPTER 12 Aug. 17

The People Complain to Rehoboam

Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. ² It happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it (for he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam therefore lived in Egypt; ³ and they sent and called him), that Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam saying, ⁴ Your father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make the grievous service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, lighter, and we will serve you. ⁵ He said to them, Depart for three days, then come back to me. The people departed. ⁶ King Rehoboam took advice with the old men, who had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What advice do you give me to return answer to this people? ⁷ They said, If you will be a servant to this people this day, and will serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.

12:7 We see here the paradox of servant leadership – if Rehoboam had been a servant of his people, then he would have ruled over them. In all ways, Jesus is our pattern. He was a servant of all, and so should we be. His servanthood dominated His conscious-

⁸ But he ignored the advice of the old men which they had given him, and took advice with the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. ⁹ He said to them, What advice do you give, that we may return answer to this people, who have spoken to me saying, ‘Make the yoke that your father put on us lighter?’ ¹⁰ The young men who had grown up with him spoke to him saying, Thus you shall tell this people who spoke to you saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but make it lighter to us;’ you shall say to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist. ¹¹ Now whereas my father burdened you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions’. ¹² So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king asked, saying, Come to me again the third day. ¹³ The king answered the people roughly, and forsook the advice of the old men which they had given him, ¹⁴ and spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. ¹⁵ So the king didn’t lis-

ten to the people; for it was a thing brought about of Yahweh, that He might establish His word which Yahweh spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

The Division of the Kingdom

¹⁶ When all Israel saw that the king didn’t listen to them, the people answered the king saying, What portion have we in David? Neither do we have an inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, Israel! Now see to your own house, David. So Israel departed to their tents. ¹⁷ But as for the children of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. ¹⁸ Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the men subject to forced labour; and all Israel stoned him to death with stones. King Rehoboam made speed to get himself up to his chariot, to escape to Jerusalem. ¹⁹ So Israel rebelled against the house of David to this day. ²⁰ It happened, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, that they sent and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. ²¹ When Rehoboam had come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house

ness. He said that He came not [so much as] to be ministered unto, but so as to minister, with the end that He gave His life for others (Mk. 10:45). This is what makes Him Lord of all – because He was servant of all.

12:15 There are times when God has influenced men not to respond to the evidently wise words of other men, in order to fulfil His purpose (see too 2 Chron. 25:20).

12:21 The Lord Jesus framed His parable about Satan’s kingdom rising up and being divided against itself (Mk. 3:23-26) in the very language of the Kingdom of Israel being “divided” against itself by Jeroboam’s ‘rising up’ (see too 13:6) – as if Israel’s

of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin, a hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. ²² But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God saying, ²³ Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people saying, ²⁴ ‘Thus says Yahweh, You shall not go up, nor fight against your brothers, the children of Israel. Everyone return to his house; for this thing is of Me’. So they listened to the word of Yahweh, and returned and went their way, according to the word of Yahweh. ²⁵ Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and lived in it; and he went out from there, and built Peniel. ²⁶ Jeroboam said in his heart, Now the kingdom will return to the house of David. ²⁷ If this people goes up to offer sacrifices in the house of Yahweh at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me, and return to Rehoboam king of Judah. ²⁸ Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold; and he

said to them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Look and see your gods, Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt! ²⁹ He set the one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. ³⁰ This thing became a sin; for the people went to worship before the one, even to Dan. ³¹ He made houses on high places, and made priests from among all the people, who were not of the sons of Levi. ³² Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast that is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; he did so in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. ³³ He went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart: and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and went up to the altar, to burn incense.

CHAPTER 13 Aug. 18

A Man of God Condemns Jeroboam

There came a man of God out of Judah by the word of Yahweh to Beth El: and Jeroboam was stand-

Kingdom was Satan’s kingdom. Dividing against our brethren makes us Satan’s Kingdom rather than God’s.

12:24 *So they listened to the word of Yahweh* – It requires quite some humility to change our plans when we have already set up a plan of action which involves mobilizing others.

12:26 ‘Said in his heart’ is a common Biblical phrase (e.g. Gen. 17:17; 1 Sam. 27:1; Esther 6:6). The focus of the Bible is upon our spiritual mindedness, rather than upon any cosmic conflict between God and a supposed Satan figure. The arena for spiritual conflict is ultimately within the human heart.

ing by the altar to burn incense. ² He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh and said, Altar, altar, thus says Yahweh: ‘Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name. On you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and they will burn men’s bones on you’. ³ He gave a sign the same day saying, This is the sign which Yahweh has spoken: Behold, the altar will be split apart, and the ashes that are on it will be poured out. ⁴ It happened, when the king heard the saying of the man of God which he cried against the altar in Bethel, that Jeroboam put out his hand from the altar, saying, Seize him! His hand, which he put out against him, dried up, so that he could not draw it back again to himself. ⁵ The altar also was split apart, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of Yahweh. ⁶ The king answered the man of God, Now entreat the favour of Yahweh your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me again. The man of God entreated Yahweh, and the king’s hand was restored him again, and became as it was before. ⁷ The king said to the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward. ⁸ The man of God said to the king, Even if you gave me half of your house, I would not go in

with you, neither would I eat bread nor drink water in this place; ⁹ for so was it commanded me by the word of Yahweh saying, ‘You shall eat no bread, nor drink water, neither return by the way that you came’. ¹⁰ So he went another way, and didn’t return by the way that he came to Bethel.

The Man of God is Disobedient and Punished

¹¹ Now there lived an old prophet in Bethel; and one of his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel. They also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king. ¹² Their father said to them, Which way did he go? Now his sons had seen which way the man of God went, who came from Judah. ¹³ He said to his sons, Saddle the donkey for me. So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it. ¹⁴ He went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. He said to him, Are you the man of God who came from Judah? He said, I am. ¹⁵ Then he said to him, Come home with me, and eat bread. ¹⁶ He said, I may not return with you, nor go in with you; neither will I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place. ¹⁷ For it was said to me by the word of Yahweh, ‘You shall eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that you came’. ¹⁸ He said to him, I also am a prophet as you

13:6 The prayer of the man of God caused Jeroboam’s hand to be healed. The prayers of someone else can affect the fortunes of another in a way which would not happen if they just prayed for themselves. What stronger motivation could we have to pray earnestly for each other?

are; and an angel spoke to me by the word of Yahweh, saying, ‘Bring him back with you into your house, that he may eat bread and drink water’. He lied to him. ¹⁹ So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water. ²⁰ It happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of Yahweh came to the prophet who brought him back; ²¹ and he cried to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, Thus says Yahweh, ‘Because you have been disobedient to the mouth of Yahweh, and have not kept the commandment which Yahweh your God commanded you, ²² but came back, and have eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which He said to you, Eat no bread, and drink no water; your body shall not come to the tomb of your fathers’. ²³ It happened, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for the prophet whom he had brought back. ²⁴ When he had gone, a lion met him by the way, and killed him. His body was cast in the way, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the body. ²⁵ Behold, men passed by, and saw the body cast in the way,

and the lion standing by the body; and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet lived. ²⁶ When the prophet who brought him back from the way heard of it, he said, It is the man of God who was disobedient to the mouth of Yahweh. Therefore Yahweh has delivered him to the lion, which has mauled him and slain him, according to the word of Yahweh, which He spoke to him. ²⁷ He spoke to his sons saying, Saddle the donkey for me. They saddled it. ²⁸ He went and found his body cast in the way, and the donkey and the lion standing by the body. The lion had not eaten the body, nor mauled the donkey. ²⁹ The prophet took up the body of the man of God, and laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. He came to the city of the old prophet to mourn, and to bury him. ³⁰ He laid his body in his own grave; and they mourned over him saying, Alas, my brother! ³¹ It happened, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb in which the man of God is buried. Lay my bones beside his bones. ³² For the saying which he cried by the word of Yahweh against

13:18 These two prophets both loved God’s word and showed themselves faithful to Him at a time when God’s people had gone badly astray. But the point of the history is to show that this alone isn’t enough; we must not make assumptions about what God’s word is, nor must we assume that because we love His word therefore our gut feelings and natural desires are thereby justified and we can do as we wish.

13:21 When we read God’s word, we hear His voice from His very mouth. We hear “the *mouth* of God”. Jeremiah spoke “from the mouth of the Lord” (2 Chron. 36:12). His word brings Him that near to us, if we will perceive it for what it is. Thus “Scripture” is put for “God” (Rom. 9:17; Gal. 3:8) and vice versa (Mt. 19:4,5). When we speak and preach God’s word, we are relaying God’s voice to men, and should make appropriate effort to deport ourselves as the ministers of His word and voice.

the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, will surely happen. ³³ After this thing Jeroboam didn't return from his evil way, but again made priests of the high places from among all the people. Whoever wanted to, he consecrated him, that there might be priests of the high places. ³⁴ This thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the surface of the earth.

CHAPTER 14 Aug. 19

Abijah's Prophecy against Jeroboam

At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick. ² Jeroboam said to his wife, Please get up and disguise yourself, that you won't be recognized as the wife of Jeroboam. Go to Shiloh. Behold, there is Ahijah the prophet, who spoke concerning me that I should be king over this people. ³ Take with you ten loaves, cakes and a jar of honey, and go to him. He will tell you what will become of the child. ⁴ Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. Now Ahijah could not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age. ⁵ Yahweh said to Ahijah, The wife of Jeroboam is coming to inquire of you concerning her son; for he is sick. This is what you shall tell her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend to be another woman. ⁶ It was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet,

as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, you wife of Jeroboam! Why do you pretend to be another? For I am sent to you with heavy news. ⁷ Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel: Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you prince over My people Israel, ⁸ and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it you; and yet you have not been as My servant David who kept My commandments, and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only that which was right in My eyes, ⁹ but you have done evil above all who were before you, and have gone and made you other gods and molten images, to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back: ¹⁰ therefore, behold, I will bring evil on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male, he who is shut up and he who is left free in Israel, and will utterly sweep away the house of Jeroboam, as a man sweeps away dung, until it is all gone. ¹¹ He who dies of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and he who dies in the field shall the birds of the sky eat: for Yahweh has spoken it'. ¹² Arise therefore, and go to your house. When your feet enter into the city, the child shall die. ¹³ All Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward Yahweh, the God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam. ¹⁴ Moreover Yahweh will raise

14:14 *Even now* – This reflects how God's words are as good as done as soon as they are uttered, so certain are they of fulfilment. This is the way to understand those pas-

Him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam. This is the day! What? Even now. ¹⁵ Yahweh will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; and He will root up Israel out of this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their Asherim, provoking Yahweh to anger. ¹⁶ He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he has sinned, and with which he has made Israel to sin.

The Death of Jeroboam

¹⁷ Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah. As she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. ¹⁸ All Israel buried him and mourned for him, according to the word of Yahweh, which He spoke by His servant Ahijah the prophet. ¹⁹ The rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. ²⁰ Jeroboam reigned for twenty two years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his place.

Rehoboam's Reign

²¹ Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which Yahweh had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there: and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. ²² Judah did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, even worse than all that their fathers had done. ²³ For they also built themselves high places, and pillars and Asherim on every high hill, and under every green tree; ²⁴ and there were also sodomites in the land: they did according to all the abominations of the nations which Yahweh drove out before the children of Israel. ²⁵ It happened in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem; ²⁶ and he took away the treasures of the house of Yahweh, and the treasures of the king's house; he took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

sages which appear to teach that both Jesus and ourselves existed physically before our birth. God doesn't completely express Himself in our terms and language (although of course to some degree He does). There is a degree to which God is God, and He expresses Himself as He is. We must bring ourselves to accept His perspective. Indeed, faith is the ability to believe that what God has said will actually happen physically, and that therefore we can live as if we see that future physical event as actually having happened. In other words, faith is about adopting God's time-less perspective.

14:15 As Pharaoh's heart was plagued (Ex. 9:14), so was Israel's (1 Kings 8:38); as Egypt was a reed, so were Israel (1 Kings 14:15). The language of the world is thus applied to God's people because this is how they thought and acted. Apostate Israel are spoken of as the pagan world; and therefore at the day of judgment the rejected of the new Israel will be condemned along with the world (1 Cor. 11:32); assigned their portion "with the unbelievers" (Lk. 12:46).

27 King Rehoboam made in their place shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, who kept the door of the king's house. 28 It was so, that as often as the king went into the house of Yahweh, the guard bore them, and brought them back into the guard room. 29 Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 30 There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually. 31 Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. Abijam his son reigned in his place.

CHAPTER 15 Aug. 20

Abijam's Reign

Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat began Abijam to reign over Judah. 2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom. 3 He walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him; and his heart was not perfect with Yahweh his God, as the heart of David his father. 4 Nevertheless for Dav-

id's sake, Yahweh his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem; 5 because David had done that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh, and didn't turn aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. 6 Now there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. 7 The rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? There was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. 8 Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his place.

Asa's Reign

9 In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Asa to reign over Judah. 10 He reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom. 11 Asa did that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh, as did David his father. 12 He put away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. 13 Also Maacah his mother he removed from being queen, because

14:31 *His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess* – This is repeated twice (:21). The emphasis is on the fact that Solomon's marriage to a Gentile unbeliever resulted in unbelieving children.

15:11 Asa is recorded as serving God just as well as David, when actually this wasn't the case; but God counted him as righteous. The incomplete faith of men like Baruch was counted as full faith by later inspiration (Jud. 4:8,9 cp. Heb. 11:32). Sometimes the purges of idolatry by the kings is described in undoubtedly exaggerated language – such was God's joy that at least something was being done? Or because, again, He imputed righteousness to those who had some faith in Him?

she had made an abominable image for an Asherah; and Asa cut down her image, and burnt it at the brook Kidron. ¹⁴ But the high places were not taken away: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect with Yahweh all his days. ¹⁵ He brought into the house of Yahweh the things that his father had dedicated, and the things that himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels. ¹⁶ There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. ¹⁷ Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might not allow anyone to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. ¹⁸ Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of Yahweh, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants; and king Asa sent them to Ben Hadad son of Tabrimmon son of Hezion, king of Syria, who lived at Damascus, saying, ¹⁹ There is a treaty between me and you, between my father and your father. Behold, I have sent to

you a present of silver and gold. Go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me. ²⁰ Ben Hadad listened to king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel, and struck Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maacah and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. ²¹ It happened, when Baasha heard of it, that he left off building Ramah, and lived in Tirzah. ²² Then king Asa made a proclamation to all Judah; none was exempted: and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and its timber, with which Baasha had built; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah. ²³ Now the rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. ²⁴ Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father; and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place.

15:14 *The high places were not taken away: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect with Yahweh all his days* – God appears prepared to overlook some failures because our conscience is still right with Him. And yet, despite the significance of conscience, we will be judged at the last day according to God's word rather than our own conscience as it were jumping out of us and standing there as the yardstick for our judgment. Asa and Jehoshaphat removed the high places, but in a sense they didn't (1 Kings 15:14 cp. 2 Chron. 14:5; 17:6 cp. 20:33). We read of how the land was purged of Baal, Sodomites etc.; but in a very short time, we read of another purge being necessary. Hezekiah, Manasseh and Josiah all made major purges within a space of 80 years. Jeremiah therefore condemns the Jews who lived at the time of Josiah's reformation for not *knowing* God in their hearts.

15:15, 18 Asa gathered the gold and silver vessels back into the temple – and then went and used them to make a political treaty. He *apparently* treated them as God's riches, but then in reality he used them as his own. Many a believer has this very same tendency.

Nadab's Reign

²⁵ Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah; and he reigned over Israel two years. ²⁶ He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin with which he made Israel to sin. ²⁷ Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha struck him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel were laying siege to Gibbethon. ²⁸ Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha killed him, and reigned in his place. ²⁹ As soon as he was king, he struck all the house of Jeroboam: he didn't leave to Jeroboam any who breathed, until he had destroyed him; according to the saying of Yahweh which He spoke by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite; ³⁰ for the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and with which he made Israel to sin, because of his provocation with which he provoked Yahweh the God of Israel, to anger. ³¹ Now the rest of the acts of Nadab and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ³² There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. ³³ In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah began to reign over all Israel in Tirzah for twenty-four years. ³⁴ He did evil in the sight of Yahweh,

and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin with which he made Israel to sin.

CHAPTER 16 Aug. 21*The Destruction of Baasha's Family*

The word of Yahweh came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, ² Because I exalted you out of the dust, and made you prince over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have made My people Israel to sin, to provoke Me to anger with their sins; ³ behold, I will utterly sweep away Baasha and his house; and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. ⁴ The dogs will eat Baasha's descendants who die in the city; and he who dies of his in the field- the birds of the sky will eat. ⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ⁶ Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah; and Elah his son reigned in his place. ⁷ Moreover by the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of Yahweh against Baasha, and against his house, both because of all the evil that he did in the sight of Yahweh, to provoke Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he struck him. ⁸ In the twenty-sixth year of

16:2 We can make others stumble from the path to His salvation. Baasha made other people sin and thus provoke God to anger; his own sin and that of the people are described in identical language, to portray how he influenced them. We have far more spiritual influence upon others than we might think.

Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha began to reign over Israel in Tirzah for two years. ⁹ His servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him. Now he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, who was over the household in Tirzah: ¹⁰ and Zimri went in and struck him and killed him, in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. ¹¹ It happened, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he struck all the house of Baasha: he didn't leave him a single male, neither of his relatives, nor of his friends. ¹² Thus Zimri destroyed all the house of Baasha, according to the word of Yahweh, which He spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, ¹³ for all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, which they sinned, and with which they made Israel to sin, to provoke Yahweh, the God of Israel, to anger with their vanities. ¹⁴ Now the rest of the acts of Elah and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ¹⁵ In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri reigned seven days in Tirzah. Now the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. ¹⁶ The people who were encamped heard say, Zimri has conspired, and has also struck the king: therefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of

the army, king over Israel that day in the camp. ¹⁷ Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. ¹⁸ It happened, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the castle of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over himself with fire, and died, ¹⁹ for his sins which he sinned in doing that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin. ²⁰ Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he committed, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ²¹ Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri. ²² But the people who followed Omri prevailed against the people who followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned. ²³ In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri began to reign over Israel for twelve years. He reigned six years in Tirzah. ²⁴ He bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver; and he built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built Samaria, after the name of Shemer the owner of the hill. ²⁵ Omri did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and dealt wickedly above all who were before him. ²⁶ For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam

16:25 *Dealt wickedly above all who were before him* – The same is stated about his son, Ahab (:30). The weaknesses of the fathers tend to be repeated by the children, even worse. Sin tends towards a downwards spiral, people become morally worse and worse without the influence of God's word.

the son of Nebat, and in his sins with which he made Israel to sin, to provoke Yahweh, the God of Israel, to anger with their vanities. ²⁷ Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he showed, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ²⁸ So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria; and Ahab his son reigned in his place.

Ahab's Evil Reign

²⁹ In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and he reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. ³⁰ Ahab the son of Omri did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh above all that were before him. ³¹ It happened, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel

the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. ³² He reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. ³³ Ahab made the Asherah; and Ahab did yet more to provoke Yahweh, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. ³⁴ In his days Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho: he laid its foundation with the loss of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates with the loss of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of Yahweh, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.

CHAPTER 17 Aug. 22

Elijah is Sustained during the Famine

Elijah the Tishbite, who was among the foreigners of Gilead, said to Ahab, As Yahweh, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand,

16:31 Ahab's marriage to a Gentile was far worse than *all* the sins of Jeroboam; the idolatry, the perversion, the making of Israel sin; these were "a light thing" compared to the evil of marriage out of the faith. That perspective on marriage to unbelievers needs to be shared by us today. And further, those who married the daughters of Ahab were led astray by them (2 Kings 8:18,27).

17:1 *There shall not be dew* – Elijah was motivated in this by the way Gideon asked that there should only be dew upon the ground (or perhaps even upon the whole land of Israel) according to his word of faithful prayer (Jud. 6:37-39). It is quite possible that we, too, may be given certain prompts in life by reason of particular experiences repeating those of a Biblical character. David also prayed just the same things (2 Sam.1:21). When it comes to prayer, there is a positive pattern of influence and example both amongst us as believers and from our absorbing the spirit of Biblical examples.

But according to my word – His faith was based upon being attune to the will of God and His ways of working with His people, to the extent that he knew that because God's word abided in him, he could ask what he wanted and it would be heard, because he asked according to God's will (Jn. 15:7). But when the time comes for rain, we read that "the word of Yahweh [not Elijah's word] came to Elijah... saying... I will send rain on the earth" (18:1). God's word reveals His will, and therefore the more in

there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. ² The word of Yahweh came to him saying, ³ Go away from here, turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan. ⁴ It shall be, that you shall drink of the brook. I have commanded the ravens to feed you there. ⁵ So he went and did according to the word of Yahweh; for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan. ⁶ The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. ⁷ It happened after a while, that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land. ⁸ The word of Yahweh came to him saying, ⁹ Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to sustain you. ¹⁰ So he arose and went to Zarephath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gather-

ing sticks: and he called to her and said, Please get me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. ¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand. ¹² She said, As Yahweh your God lives, I don't have a cake, but a handful of flour in a pitcher, and a little oil in a pitcher. Behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and bake it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. ¹³ Elijah said to her, Don't be afraid. Go and do as you have said; but make me of it a little cake first, and bring it out to me, and afterward make some for you and for your son. ¹⁴ For thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, 'The jar of meal shall not empty, neither shall the jar of oil fail, until the day that Yahweh sends rain on the earth'. ¹⁵ She went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, ate many days. ¹⁶ The jar of meal didn't empty, neither did the jar of oil fail, accord-

touch we are with His will the more we will be able to confidently ask for things in prayer.

17:6 *Ravens* – These were unclean animals, and yet God made Elijah depend upon them and the unclean food. He was trying to teach Elijah not to trust in legalistic obedience.

17:9 God had sought to gently teach Elijah his need for others when He told Elijah to go to the widow woman in Zarephath who would “sustain you”; it worked out that Elijah sustained *her*. And he must have reflected upon this. God's intention was that *spiritually*, his experience with that woman would sustain *him*. Our efforts to sustain others lead to our being sustained.

17:12 *A handful of flour in a pitcher* – The idea is of a handful of meal in a very large container; it's a picture of her poverty, and how she was down to the last little bit of flour in a large container that was once full. And the Lord through Elijah demanded this of her, that He might save her. God can be demanding, but we don't have the same right to be upon others. She had to *first* feed God's representative, and *after* feed herself and her son (:13) – rather than give God the leftovers after she had firstly taken what *she* needed.

ing to the word of Yahweh, which he spoke by Elijah.

Elijah Raises the Widow's Son

¹⁷ It happened after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so severe, that there was no breath left in him. ¹⁸ She said to Elijah, What have I to do with you, you man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to memory, and to kill my son! ¹⁹ He said to her, Give me your son. He took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into the room where he stayed, and laid him on his own bed. ²⁰ He cried to Yahweh and said, Yahweh my God, have You also brought evil on the widow with whom I stay, by killing her son? ²¹ He stretched himself on the child three times, and cried to Yahweh and said, Yahweh my God, please let this child's soul come into him again. ²² Yahweh listened to the voice of

Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. ²³ Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the room into the house, and delivered him to his mother; and Elijah said, Behold, your son lives. ²⁴ The woman said to Elijah, Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of Yahweh in your mouth is truth.

CHAPTER 18 Aug. 23

Elijah and Obadiah

It happened after many days, that the word of Yahweh came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, show yourself to Ahab; and I will send rain on the earth. ² Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. The famine was severe in Samaria. ³ Ahab called Obadiah, who was over the household. (Now Obadiah feared Yahweh greatly: ⁴ for it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of Yahweh, that Obadiah took one hundred proph-

17:21 *Three times* – Perhaps the way that the first six prayers of Elijah for rain went unanswered and his need to pray three times for the child to resurrect, were all part of God teaching Elijah that no matter how close we are to Him, we have no right to expect automatic answers to prayer, even if they are according to God's will.

17:22 The woman's son was resurrected because God heard Elijah's faithful prayer; Heb. 11:35 alludes to this incident by saying that through faith – in this case, the faith of Elijah, a third party – women received their dead raised to life. Our prayers really can make a huge difference in the lives of others.

18:4 God tried to correct Elijah's despising of the other prophets of the Lord. Elijah was in a cave, and was also fed bread and water – just as the other prophets were. And yet Elijah didn't see, or didn't want to see, that connection – after having been reminded of this experience of the other prophets, he claims that he alone was a true prophet of Yahweh (:22) – he wrongly believed that all other valid prophets had been slain (19:10). But the record shows how that during Elijah's lifetime there were other prophets of Yahweh active in His service (20:13,35). Yet God still works through the conceited, the spiritually superior, those who despise their brethren. God didn't give up on Elijah because he was like this, and neither should we give up in our relationship with such brethren.

ets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water).

⁵ Ahab said to Obadiah, Go through the land, to all the springs of water, and to all the brooks. Perhaps we may find grass and save the horses and mules alive, so that we don't lose all the animals. ⁶ So they divided the land between them to pass through-out it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. ⁷ As Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he recognized him and fell on his face and said, Is it you, my lord Elijah?

⁸ He answered him, It is I. Go, tell your lord, 'Behold, Elijah is here!'

⁹ He said, Wherein have I sinned, that you would deliver your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me?

¹⁰ As Yahweh your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent to seek you. When they said, 'He is not here', he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they didn't find you. ¹¹ Now you say, 'Go, tell your lord, Behold, Elijah is here'. ¹² It will happen, as soon as I am gone from you, that the spirit of Yahweh will carry you I don't

18:8 *Go, tell your lord* – Elijah didn't have too positive a view of anyone apart from himself – and that included faithful Obadiah. Obadiah repeatedly calls Elijah “my Lord” and describes himself as “your servant”; but Elijah responds to this by calling Obadiah the servant of Ahab – he tells him to go and tell “your Lord”, i.e. Ahab. Elijah is insisting that he and Obadiah have nothing in common – Obadiah serves Ahab, and he is nothing to do with Elijah. ‘Obadiah’ means ‘servant of Yahweh’ – the name surely reflects very faithful parents to have called him that at the time of the Baal cult. But Elijah insists that Obadiah is really a servant of Ahab, not of Yahweh. The fact Elijah was hidden by God meant that he was forced into fellowship with the prophets of Yahweh whom Obadiah hid in a cave (:4). Elijah was thus intended to see a link between Obadiah and God, and himself and the other prophets of Yahweh. But Elijah's pride didn't let himself make the connection, just as ours often doesn't. For he continued doubtful of Obadiah's sincerity, and still insisted that he alone remained a faithful prophet of Yahweh – even though Obadiah had hidden one hundred other prophets from Jezebel's persecution. Those one hundred prophets were presumably part of the 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal. And maybe they weren't that strong – they are set up as representative of those who will only be saved by grace, not their works (Rom. 11:4-6). But, by implication, Elijah, for all his love of Israel, did not look upon them through the eyes of grace. Elijah insisted that he alone was “left”; yet God says that He has “left” Himself the 7,000 (19:18). The preservation of the people of God, or ‘the truth’ is done by God Himself; yet the likes of Elijah consider that it is *they* who ‘preserve the truth’. Again, Elijah had to learn that we are all saved by grace. God will leave for and to Himself His people, without requiring the help of man. Elijah struggled with this issue of accepting others and not thinking he was the only one who could do the job right up to the end of his ministry; for he ascends to Heaven clutching his mantle, the sign of his prophetic ministry. It seems he took it with him because he felt that not even Elisha was really fit to do the job and take his place; but perhaps in what were possibly the last seconds of his mortal life, he learnt his lesson and let go of it, allowing it to fall to the earth to let another man take it up.

know where; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he can't find you, he will kill me. But I, your servant, have feared Yahweh from my youth. ¹³ Wasn't it told my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of Yahweh, how I hid one hundred men of Yahweh's prophets with fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? ¹⁴ Now you say, 'Go, tell your lord, Behold, Elijah is here!' - and he will kill me. ¹⁵ Elijah said, As Yahweh of Armies lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today. ¹⁶ So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

The Contest on Mount Carmel

¹⁷ It happened that when Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, Is that you, you troubler of Israel? ¹⁸ He answered, I have not troubled Israel; but you, and your father's house, in that you have forsaken the commandments of Yahweh, and you have followed the Baals. ¹⁹ Now therefore

send, and gather to me all Israel to Mount Carmel, and four hundred and fifty of the prophets of Baal, and four hundred of the prophets of the Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table. ²⁰ So Ahab sent to all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together to Mount Carmel. ²¹ Elijah came near to all the people and said, How long will you waver between the two sides? If Yahweh is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. The people answered him not a word. ²² Then Elijah said to the people, I, even I only, am left a prophet of Yahweh; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. ²³ Let them therefore give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under it; and I will dress the other bull, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under it. ²⁴ You call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Yahweh. The God who answers by fire, let him be God. All

18:15 Elijah assured Obadiah that he was really telling him the truth, because Yahweh of Hosts (Angels) is real, and he stood before those Angels. A sense of Angelic presence and observation will likewise inspire us to transparent lives (1 Cor. 11:10; 1 Tim. 5:21).

18:21 The inertia of indecision is a huge problem. Your own example of making clear choices, doing what is right before God rather than what is wise and smart in human eyes, will reveal a sense of clarity about you which will become inspirational to your brethren. Yours will not be one of those many lives that is paralyzed by constantly postponing the choices, by indecision, like Israel on Carmel, hopping backwards and forwards between two opinions. When Elijah demands that the people chose which lord they will serve – Baal [= 'lord'] or Yahweh, he is really getting to the very crux of spirituality – for truly, there can be no halting between the two opinions of serving Baal and serving Yahweh. Jesus based His words of Lk. 16:13 on those of Elijah here – we can't serve two masters. Although on one hand the Lord Jesus Himself quotes Elijah's 'truth' approvingly, there is evidence galore that at the very same time, Elijah's attitudes were far from Christ-like

the people answered, It is well said. ²⁵ Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, Choose one bull for yourselves, and dress it first; for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it. ²⁶ They took the bull which was given to them and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon,

saying, Baal, hear us! But there was no voice, nor any who answered. They leaped about the altar which was made. ²⁷ It happened at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, Cry louder; for he is a god! Either he is musing, or he has gone aside to the toilet, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he sleeps and must be awak-

18:26-29 The idea of prophets was well known in the world around ancient Israel. The idea of a prophet was that a person was caught up in some kind of ecstasy, transported into some ‘other’ world, leaving behind their humanity. The true prophets were different. Their inspiration was about being attuned to the mind of God, they remained very much in the flesh and in the world, and the subjects of their prophecy related to very real, human things – injustice, a guy building an extension on his house without paying the labourers. Not flashing lights and ethereal coasting through space. The pagan prophets (e.g. the prophets of Baal here) worked themselves into a frenzy in order to reach a state of depersonalization and loss of consciousness, in the hope that then they would be filled with Divine consciousness. True prophets were absolutely different; the inspiration process required them to be fully in touch with their own consciousness and personality, and it was exactly through their humanity that the personality of God came through in the inspired words they spoke and wrote. This is why at times the prophets give God’s word but then interrupt, as it were, in full consciousness, to plead or even protest (e.g. Am. 7:2). Whereas the false prophets aimed to lose consciousness in order to receive something from God’s consciousness, the true prophets received heightened sensitivity and conscience / consciousness in order to receive God’s word and to know His mind. The message which the true prophets received wasn’t some vague abstraction or personal transport into an unreal world. What they received from God was the sense that this world and its fate are very dear to its creator. It was because the true prophets entered into the mind of God, that this issued in the experience of words. The false prophets tended to experience something *happening*; whereas the true prophets experienced the thoughts of God, which issued in words. Their experience had form, but no content. The Pentecostal ‘Holy Spirit’ experiences appear to be the form of ecstasy claimed by the false prophets. Receipt of God’s true revelation involved dialogue with God, even disagreement with Him for a moment, response, pleading, speech and counterspeech. It wasn’t a case of merely passively hearing a voice and writing it down.

18:27 *To the toilet* – This kind of mockery and crudeness is surely not how the Father and Son would have us act. We aren’t to mock false beliefs in this way. Yet Elijah did this whilst at the same time deeply believing the fire would come down, and bringing it down by his faith. Elijah’s mocking attitude is also shown by the way in which he demands they find him four barrels of water – on the top of a mountain, after a major three and a half year drought (:33). Presumably they took the water from the sea at the bottom of the mountain – and thus Elijah’s sacrifice would be offered with salt. He was strictly obedient to the requirements for sacrifice – yet amidst an abusive,

ened. ²⁸ They cried aloud, and cut themselves in their way with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. ²⁹ It was so, when mid-day was past, that they prophesied until the time of the offering of the offering; but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any who responded. ³⁰ Elijah said to all the people, Come near to me; and all the people came near to him. He repaired the altar of Yahweh that was thrown down. ³¹ Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of Yahweh came, saying, Israel shall be your name. ³² With the stones he built an altar in the name of Yahweh. He made a trench around the altar, large enough to contain two measures of seed. ³³ He put the wood

in order, and cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood. He said, Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood. ³⁴ He said, Do it a second time; and they did it the second time. He said, Do it a third time; and they did it the third time. ³⁵ The water ran around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water. ³⁶ It happened at the time of the offering of the offering, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. ³⁷ Answer me, Yahweh, answer me, that this people may know that You, Yahweh, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again. ³⁸ Then

self-justifying mindset. The very possession of truth can take our attention away from our need for self-examination and right attitudes towards others. In this lies one of our most subtle temptations.

18:36 Elijah “prayed in his prayer” (James 5:17 Gk.) – there was a deep prayer going on within his prayer, words and feelings within words – the prayer of the very inner being. This was how much he sought their repentance. The James passage sets Elijah up as a pattern for our prayer for our wayward brethren. He really is our pattern here. He clearly saw prayer as requiring much effort; and the way he prays at the time of the evening sacrifice on Horeb suggests that he saw prayer as a sacrifice.

18:37 *Answer me* – Elijah appears utterly certain that God will answer by a bolt of fire, without having asked Him first. He asks God to “answer me” without specifically requesting for fire to be sent down; he brings the situation before God and asks Him to ‘answer’ that situation. Prayer is often answered in ways we do not perceive, or by an answer which will only much later be revealed. Elijah’s prayer here will only be finally answered when Elijah comes in the last days (Mal. 4:6).

You have turned their heart back – God appeals for people to respond by pointing out that in prospect, He has already forgiven them. Thus Elijah wanted Israel to know that God had already in prospect turned their hearts back to Him (see too Is. 44:22). We preach the cross of Christ, and that through that forgiveness has been enabled for all men; but they need to respond by repentance in order to access it. God has potentially enabled their conversion (see Jn. 1:7). Hence the tragedy of human lack of response; so much has been enabled, the world has been reconciled, but all this is in vain if they will not respond.

the fire of Yahweh fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood, the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces. They said, Yahweh, he is God! Yahweh, He is God! ⁴⁰ Elijah said to them, Seize the prophets of Baal! Don't let one of them escape! They seized them. Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and killed them there.

Elijah Prays for Rain

⁴¹ Elijah said to Ahab, Get up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain. ⁴² So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he bowed himself down on the earth, and put his face between his knees. ⁴³ He said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. He went up and looked, and said, There is nothing. He said seven times, Go again. ⁴⁴ It happened at the seventh time that he said, Behold, a small cloud, like a man's hand, is rising out of the sea. He said, Go up, tell Ahab, 'Get ready and go down, so that the rain doesn't stop you'. ⁴⁵ It happened in a little while, that the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. ⁴⁶ The hand of Yahweh was on Elijah; and he tucked his cloak into his belt and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

CHAPTER 19 Aug. 24

Elijah Meets God at Horeb

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I don't make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time! ³ When he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. ⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough. Now, O Yahweh, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. ⁵ He lay down and slept under a juniper tree; and behold, an angel touched him, and said to him, Arise and eat! ⁶ He looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on the coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. ⁷ The angel of Yahweh came again the second time, and touched him and said, Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you. ⁸ He arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the Mount of God. ⁹ He came there to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of Yahweh came to him, and he said to him, What are

18:40-44 Believe that you really will receive; avoid the temptation of asking for things as a child asks for birthday presents, with the vague hope that something might turn up. Remember how Elijah heard, by faith, the noise of rain even before he had formally prayed for it, and when there was no hint of rain.

you doing here, Elijah? ¹⁰ He said, I have been very zealous for Yahweh, the God of Armies; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, thrown down Your altars and slain Your prophets with the sword. I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. ¹¹ He said, Go out, and stand on the mountain before Yahweh. Behold, Yahweh passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains, and broke

in pieces the rocks before Yahweh; but Yahweh was not in the wind. After the wind an earthquake; but Yahweh was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake a fire passed; but Yahweh was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. ¹³ It was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. Behold, a voice came to him, and said, Why are you still

19:10 “I, even I *only* am left” was Elijah’s cry to God as he realized the depth of Israel’s apostasy. But this was interpreted by God as a prayer for God to condemn Israel (Rom. 11:2,3). God read what was in Elijah’s heart, and counted this as his prayer.

19:11, 13 The Angel tells Elijah to actually go and stand before the Lord and learn what it really meant; so he had to literally stand before the Angel as He passed by. Yet Elijah hid his face; he was no longer so happy to be before the Lord once he realized the humility and breaking in pieces of a proud man’s spirit that it really implies. So (:13) he wrapped *his face* [in Hebrew, the words for ‘face’ and ‘before’ are the same] in his mantle and “stood” in the cave mouth before the Angel. Too ashamed to really stand before the Lord, Elijah therefore wrapped his face. Earlier, he had been so keen to use this phrase of himself (17:1; 18:15); he had prided himself on the fact that he stood before the Lord. But now he hid his face, an idiom often used by God for withholding fellowship. The fact we too are God’s covenant people can initially be a source of pride to us as we do our theological gladiatorship with others. But the implications are so far deeper; and through Angelic work in our lives, we too are brought to see this. The word for “mantle” is translated “glory” in Zech. 11:3; Elijah wrapped his presence in his own glory, rather than face up to the implications of God’s glory. A desire for our own glory prevents us perceiving God’s glory. Only at the very end does Elijah cast away his mantle (2 Kings 2:13), his human strength, allowing himself to merge with God’s glory. He should have cast away his mantle earlier, when he stood before the still small voice on Horeb. The question of :13 “Why are you still here, Elijah?” may imply that Elijah should have allowed himself to be carried away by the cherubim, he should have surrendered himself to the progress of God’s glory, rather than so obsessively insist upon his own personal rightness and the wrongness of others. And this was why God’s ultimate response to Elijah’s attitude on Horeb was to dismiss him from his prophetic ministry and instate Elisha as his successor (:16). Elijah seems to have finally learnt his lesson, for he calls Elisha to the ministry by ‘passing by’ Elisha as in a theophany, taking off his mantle and throwing it upon Elisha (:19). He realized that he had hidden behind that mantle, using it to resist participating in the selfless association with God’s glory [rather than his own] to which he was called. But he got there in the end; hence the enormous significance of Elijah giving up his mantle when he finally ascends to Heaven in the cherubim chariot (2 Kings 2:13).

here, Elijah? ¹⁴ He said, I have been very zealous for Yahweh, the God of Armies; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, thrown down your altars and slain Your prophets with the sword. I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. ¹⁵ Yahweh said to him, Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.

Elisha is Commissioned

¹⁶ You shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi to be king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷ It shall happen, that he who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and he who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. ¹⁸ Yet will I leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth which has not kissed him. ¹⁹ So he departed to there, and found Elisha the son of

Shaphat, who was ploughing, with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed over to him, and threw his mantle on him. ²⁰ He left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me please kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you. He said to him, Go back again; for what have I done to you? ²¹ He returned from following him, and took the yoke of oxen, killed them and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave to the people and they ate. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and served him.

CHAPTER 20 Aug. 25

Conflict between Ahab and Ben Hadad

Ben Hadad the king of Syria gathered all his army together; and there were thirty-two kings with him, and horses and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and fought against it. ² He sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said to him, Thus says Ben

19:16 The call of God comes to us right in the midst of ordinary, mundane life. Christ called men in just the same way. This was what was and is so unusual and startling about the ministry of the Lord. His love sought men out, He didn't wait for them to come to Him; and He does the same today in calling us to live as Him, often unexpectedly and in the midst of life's repetitive course. Other examples in 2 Kings 9:1-13,18; Jud. 6:1; 1 Sam. 9:10; 11:5; Am. 7:14.

19:18 There is such a thing as feeling lonely when we needn't. Elijah is an example of this; he felt that he was "left alone" faithful in Israel – even though there were another 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal (Rom. 11:3). The Hebrew could mean that God reserved 7,000 of Elijah's brothers and sisters who potentially would not bow the knee to Baal. Yet Elijah didn't want to see the potential of his brethren. He set himself in a league above them, like the Psalmist, saying in his haste that all men are liars (Ps. 116:11).

19:20 Elisha bade farewell to his family before following Elijah, and Elijah allowed him to do this – but the Lord Jesus was more demanding (Lk. 9:59-61).

Hadad, ³ ‘Your silver and your gold is mine. Your wives also and your children, even the best, are mine’.

⁴ The king of Israel answered, It is according to your saying, my lord, O king. I am yours, and all that I have.

⁵ The messengers came again and said, Ben Hadad says, ‘I sent indeed to you, saying, You shall deliver me your silver, and your gold, and your wives, and your children; ⁶ but I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house, and the houses of your servants; and it shall be, that whatever is pleasant in your eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away’.

⁷ Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land and said, Please notice how this man seeks mischief; for he sent to me for my wives, my children, my silver, my gold; and I didn’t deny him.

⁸ All the elders and all the people said to him, Don’t listen, neither consent.

⁹ Therefore he said to the messengers of Ben Hadad, Tell my lord the king, ‘All that you sent for to your servant at the first I will do; but this thing I cannot do’. The messengers departed, and delivered the message.

¹⁰ Ben Hadad sent to him and said, The gods do so to me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people who follow me.

¹¹ The king of Israel answered, Tell him, ‘Don’t let him who puts on his armour brag like he who takes it off’.

¹² It happened, when Ben Hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings, in the pavilions, that he said to his servants,

Prepare to attack! They prepared to attack the city.

¹³ Behold, a prophet came near to Ahab king of Israel and said, Thus says Yahweh, ‘Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand this day; and you shall know that I am Yahweh’.

¹⁴ Ahab said, By whom? He said, Thus says Yahweh, ‘By the young men of the princes of the provinces’.

Then he said, Who shall begin the battle? He answered, You.

¹⁵ Then he mustered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty-two. After them, he mustered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand.

¹⁶ They went out at noon. But Ben Hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty-two kings who helped him.

¹⁷ The young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben Hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, Men are coming out from Samaria.

¹⁸ He said, If they have come out for peace, take them alive; or if they have come out for war, take them alive.

¹⁹ So these went out of the city, the young men of the princes of the provinces, and the army which followed them.

²⁰ They each killed his opponent. The Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them. Ben Hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with horsemen.

²¹ The king of Israel went out, and struck the horses and chariots, and killed the Syrians with a great slaughter.

²² The prophet came near to the king of Israel and said to him, Go, strengthen yourself,

and mark, and see what you do; for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against you. ²³ The servants of the king of Syria said to him, Their god is a god of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we. But let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. ²⁴ Do this thing: take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their place. ²⁵ Muster an army, like the army that you have lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot. We will fight against them in the plain, and surely we will be stronger than them. He listened to their voice, and did so. ²⁶ It happened at the return of the year, that Ben Hadad mustered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel. ²⁷ The children of Israel were mustered and were provisioned, and went against them. The children of Israel encamped before them like two little flocks of young goats; but the Syrians filled the country. ²⁸ A man of God came near and spoke to the king of Israel and said, Thus says Yahweh, 'Because the Syrians have said, Yahweh is a god of the hills, but He is not a god of the valleys; therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am Yahweh'. ²⁹ They encamped opposite one another seven days. So it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined; and the children of Israel killed one hundred thousand

footmen of the Syrians in one day. ³⁰ But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and the wall fell on twenty-seven thousand men who were left. Ben Hadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner room. ³¹ His servants said to him, See now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings. Please let us put sackcloth on our bodies, and ropes on our heads, and go out to the king of Israel. Maybe he will save your life. ³² So they put sackcloth on their bodies and ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Your servant Ben Hadad says, 'Please let me live'. He said, Is he still alive? He is my brother. ³³ Now the men observed diligently, and hurried to take this phrase; and they said, Your brother Ben Hadad. Then he said, Go, bring him. Then Ben Hadad came out to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot. ³⁴ Ben Hadad said to him, The cities which my father took from your father I will restore. You shall make streets for yourself in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. I, said Ahab, will let you go with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and let him go.

A Lesson in the Need for Obedience

³⁵ A certain man of the sons of the prophets said to his fellow by the word of Yahweh, Please strike me! The man refused to strike him. ³⁶ Then he said to him, Because you

20:28 Sometimes God gives victory to unspiritual people because He wishes to justify Himself or teach others a lesson through that victory. The fact God uses us doesn't necessarily mean we are therefore acceptable with Him.

have not obeyed the voice of Yahweh, behold, as soon as you are departed from me, a lion shall kill you. As soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and killed him. ³⁷ Then he found another man, and said, Please strike me. The man struck him, smiting and wounding him. ³⁸ So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with his headband over his eyes. ³⁹ As the king passed by, he cried to the king; and he said, Your servant went out into the midst of the battle; and behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man to me and said, ‘Guard this man! If by any means he be missing, then your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver’. ⁴⁰ As your servant was busy here and there, he was gone. The king of Israel said to him, So your judgment shall be; you yourself have decided it. ⁴¹ He hurried, and took the headband away from his eyes; and the king of Israel recognized that he was of the prophets. ⁴² He said to him, Thus says Yahweh, ‘Because you have let go out of your hand the man whom I had devoted to destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people’. ⁴³ The king of Israel went to his house sullen and angry, and came to Samaria.

CHAPTER 21 Aug. 26

Ahab and Naboth's Vineyard

It happened after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, right next to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. ² Ahab spoke to Naboth saying, Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near to my house; and I will give you for it a better vineyard than it. Or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its worth in money. ³ Naboth said to Ahab, May Yahweh forbid me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you! ⁴ Ahab came into his house sullen and angry because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers. He laid himself down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. ⁵ But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, Why is your spirit so sad, that you eat no bread? ⁶ He said to her, Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, ‘Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it pleases you, I will give you another vineyard for it’. He answered, ‘I will not give you my vineyard’. ⁷ Jezebel his wife said to him, Do you really now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let your heart be merry. I

20:40 *So your judgment shall be; you yourself have decided it* – Right now, men are justified by their words before the court of Heaven – for ‘justify’ means to pronounce righteous, and this pronouncement / justification is therefore given even now.

21:4 *Sullen and angry* – As in 20:43. Living with a bad conscience before God, endlessly seeking our own pleasure, doesn’t bring happiness but rather depression and anger (1 Tim. 6:9,10).

will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. ⁸ So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and to the nobles who were in his city, who lived with Naboth. ⁹ She wrote in the letters saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. ¹⁰ Set two men, base fellows, before him, and let them testify against him saying, 'You cursed God and the king!' Then carry him out, and stone him to death. ¹¹ The men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent to them, according as it was written in the letters which she had sent to them. ¹² They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. ¹³ The two men, the base fellows, came in and sat before him. The base fellows testified against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people saying, Naboth cursed God and the king! Then they carried him out of the city, and stoned him to death with stones. ¹⁴ Then they sent to Jezebel saying, Naboth has been stoned, and is dead. ¹⁵ It happened, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jez-

reelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead. ¹⁶ It happened, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

Ahab's Condemnation and Repentance

¹⁷ The word of Yahweh came to Elijah the Tishbite saying, ¹⁸ Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who dwells in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to take possession of it. ¹⁹ You shall speak to him saying, 'Thus says Yahweh, Have you killed and also taken possession?'. You shall speak to him saying, 'Thus says Yahweh, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs will lick your blood, even yours'. ²⁰ Ahab said to Elijah, Have you found me, my enemy? He answered, I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of Yahweh. ²¹ Behold, I will bring evil on you, and will utterly sweep you away and will cut off from Ahab every male, and him who is shut up and him who is left at large in Israel. ²² I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,

21:21 *I will bring evil on you* – We expect this to be prefaced by a “Thus says Yahweh” – but Elijah was so close to God he assumed he was speaking directly from Him. And yet Elijah doesn't repeat what God had told him to say in :19. Was he too familiar with God? Assuming he knew God's will and words? But Elijah improved – in 2 Kings 1:6 he says that what he says is the word of Yahweh, and he repeats verbatim what he was told to say. We too know God's word. We know the Bible text well. But this can lead to a wrong assumption that we speak for God; that we must be right in all our attitudes and positions we adopt on issues.

and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah for the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and have made Israel to sin. ²³ Yahweh also spoke of Jezebel saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the rampart of Jezreel. ²⁴ The dogs will eat him who dies of Ahab in the city; and the birds of the sky will eat him who dies in the field. ²⁵ But there was none like Ahab, who sold himself to do that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. ²⁶ He did very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites did, whom Yahweh cast out before the children of Israel. ²⁷ It happened, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. ²⁸ The word of Yahweh came to Elijah the Tishbite saying, ²⁹ See how Ahab humbles himself before Me? Because he humbles himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days will I bring the evil on his family.

CHAPTER 22 Aug. 27

Ahab's Alliance with Jehoshaphat

They continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. ² It happened in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. ³ The king of Israel said to his servants, You know that Ramoth Gilead is ours, and we are sitting still, and don't take it out of the hand of the king of Syria? ⁴ He said to Jehoshaphat, Will you go with me to battle to Ramoth Gilead? Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses. ⁵ Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, Please inquire first for the word of Yahweh. ⁶ Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, Shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? They said, Go up; for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king. ⁷ But Jehoshaphat said, Isn't there here a prophet of Yahweh, that we may inquire of Him? ⁸ The

21:29 *Before Me* – Yet Elijah also lived a life “before Yahweh” (17:1); it's as if God was trying to get Elijah to see that he wasn't the only person in God's presence. Spiritual elitism is so wrong, and God works hard to bring people out of it.

22:15 *Go up and prosper* – Like the prophet Nathan in 2 Sam. 7:3, Micaiah initially said what he knew his audience wanted to hear. We who know God's word are tempted likewise; human nature has a strong ability to sense what our audience wants to hear, and to say it. This is where speaking according to God's word is at times counter-instinctive.

22:20 God deceived prophets to speak things in His Name which were actually false (see too Ez. 14:9). He chose Israel's delusions by making their idols answer them (Is. 66:3,4). Jeremiah feared God had deceived *him* (Jer. 20:7) – showing he knew such a thing was possible. God is constantly pushing people up an upward spiral of spirituality, or further down a downward spiral of unspirituality whereby He makes those who don't love His truth to believe a lie (2 Thess. 2:10,11).

king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of Yahweh, Micaiah the son of Imlah; but I hate him; for he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. Jehoshaphat said, Don't let the king say so. ⁹ Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Quickly get Micaiah the son of Imlah. ¹⁰ Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting each on his throne, arrayed in their robes, in an open place at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them. ¹¹ Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron and said, Thus says Yahweh, 'With these you shall push the Syrians, until they are consumed'. ¹² All the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth Gilead, and prosper; for Yahweh will deliver it into the hand of the king. ¹³ The messenger who went to call Micaiah spoke to him saying, See now, the prophets declare good to the king with one mouth. Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak good. ¹⁴ Micaiah said, As Yahweh lives, what Yahweh says to me, that I will speak. ¹⁵ When he had come to

the king, the king said to him, Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth Gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? He answered him, Go up and prosper; and Yahweh will deliver it into the hand of the king. ¹⁶ The king said to him, How many times do I have to adjure you that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of Yahweh? ¹⁷ He said, I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. Yahweh said, 'These have no master. Let them each return to his house in peace'. ¹⁸ The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Didn't I tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?

A Vision of God's Throne Room

¹⁹ Micaiah said, Therefore hear the word of Yahweh. I saw Yahweh sitting on His throne, and all the army of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left. ²⁰ Yahweh said, 'Who shall entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead?' One said one thing; and another said another. ²¹ A spirit came out and stood before Yahweh, and said, 'I will entice him'. ²² Yahweh said to him, 'How?' He said, 'I will go out and will be a lying spirit in the

22:22 Here the Angels present their various plans of how to slay Ahab. God says to the one whose plan He accepts that he must go out and "prevail" or 'struggle' to operationalize a command from God which they know is His will to perform. And we have to do likewise, not least in the preaching of the Gospel, both obeying and prevailing. We shouldn't think that God is unaware of our situations on earth. The Angels discuss their plans for us in the court of Heaven, coming up with various possibilities of how to act in our lives, discussing them with God. We will take over the roles of the Angels in administering God's future Kingdom (Lk. 20:35,36; Heb. 2:5). Their knowledge and power isn't total; they still have to go through a process of working out how to operationalize God's will, coming up with differing suggestions.

mouth of all his prophets'. He said, 'You will entice him, and will also prevail. Go out and do so'.²³ Now therefore, behold, Yahweh has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; and Yahweh has spoken evil concerning you.²⁴ Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way did the Spirit of Yahweh go from me to speak to you?²⁵ Micaiah said, Behold, you will see on that day when you go into an inner room to hide yourself.²⁶ The king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son.²⁷ Say, 'Thus says the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace'.²⁸ Micaiah said, If you return at all in peace, Yahweh has not spoken by me. He said, Listen, all you people!

The Battle at Ramoth Gilead

²⁹ So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead.³⁰ The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and go into the battle; but you put on your robes. The king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.³¹ Now the king of Syria had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots saying, Fight neither with small nor great,

except only with the king of Israel.³² It happened, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely that is the king of Israel! And they turned aside to fight against him. Jehoshaphat cried out.³³ It happened, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.³⁴ A certain man drew his bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of the armour. Therefore he said to the driver of his chariot, Turn your hand, and carry me out of the battle; for I am severely wounded.³⁵ The battle increased that day. The king was propped up in his chariot facing the Syrians, and died at evening. The blood ran out of the wound into the bottom of the chariot.³⁶ A cry went throughout the army about the going down of the sun saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his country!³⁷ So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.³⁸ They washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood where the prostitutes washed themselves; according to the word of Yahweh which He spoke.³⁹ Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he built, and all the cities that he built, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?⁴⁰ So Ahab slept with his

22:32 Jehoshaphat nearly lost his life because of his alliance with Ahab. Even though Ahab was nominally one of God's people, he had no respect for Yahweh's word (:8). We have to chose our friendships and associations carefully even amongst those who are numbered amongst the body of believers.

fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

Jehoshaphat's Reign

⁴¹ Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. ⁴² Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. ⁴³ He walked in all the way of Asa his father; he didn't turn aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh: however the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places. ⁴⁴ Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. ⁴⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he showed, and how he warred, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ⁴⁶ The remainder of the sodomites, from the days of his father Asa, he put away out of the land. ⁴⁷ There

was no king in Edom: a deputy was king. ⁴⁸ Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they didn't go; for the ships were broken at Ezion Geber. ⁴⁹ Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with your servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not. ⁵⁰ Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father; Jehoram his son reigned in his place. ⁵¹ Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned two years over Israel. ⁵² He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, in which he made Israel to sin. ⁵³ He served Baal and worshipped him, and provoked to anger Yahweh, the God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.

22:49 Jehoshaphat had learnt the lesson about not working together with the family of Ahab (:32). Sometimes God repeats situations in our lives so that we learn the lesson and have practice in it; this is why it's clear that our life situations tend to repeat, under God's providential hand. See on 2 Kings 3:7.

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS

CHAPTER 1 Aug. 28

Ahaziah Condemned by God

Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. ² Ahaziah fell down through the lattice in his upper room that was in Samaria, and was sick. So he sent messengers and said to them, Go, inquire of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I will recover of this sickness. ³ But the angel of Yahweh said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and tell them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you go to inquire of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? ⁴ Now therefore thus says Yahweh, You shall not come down from the bed where you have gone up, but shall surely die'. Elijah departed. ⁵ The messengers returned to him, and he said to them, Why is it

that you have returned? ⁶ They said to him, A man came up to meet us and said to us, 'Go, return to the king who sent you, and tell him, Thus says Yahweh, Is it because there is no God in Israel that you send to inquire of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed where you have gone up, but shall surely die'. ⁷ He said to them, What kind of man was he who came up to meet you, and told you these words? ⁸ They answered him, He was a hairy man, and wearing a leather belt around his waist. He said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.

Elijah Calls Fire Down from Heaven

⁹ Then the king sent a captain of fifty with his fifty to him. He went up to him; and behold, he was sit-

1:2 This clearly tells us that Baal Zebub, or Beelzebub, was a false god of the Philistines. When the Jews of the first century accused Jesus of being in league with this god, Jesus did not say, 'Now look, 2 Kings 1:2 says Beelzebub was a false god, so your accusation cannot be true'. Rather He spoke as if Beelzebub existed, because He was interested in getting His message through to His audience. So in the same way Jesus talked about casting out demons – He did not keep saying, 'actually, they do not exist', He just preached the Gospel in the language of the day.

1:9, 10 When Elijah is ordered by the captain of 50 to "come down", Elijah responds by saying "let fire come down". Elijah sees himself as the fire sent from God; he associates himself directly with God and His judgments. He hadn't learnt the lesson that God wasn't in the fire but in the small voice. The captain wanted Elijah to come down from the high hill (cp. Heaven), so Elijah calls fire to come down from Heaven. He sees himself as the fire, as God coming down. The incident is specifically rebuked by the Jesus as not being of *His* Spirit (Lk. 9:54,55). And He rebukes His followers for assuming that their natural prejudice against others can be justified by an appeal to Elijah's example. Elijah failed to see the value of those 100 lives; the value and meaning of persons was lost on him. All he could think of was fighting apostasy and judging it. Elijah called the fire down in allusion to how fire came down from the Lord to destroy Nadab and Abihu and also Sodom (Lev. 10:2; Gen. 19:24). He did the

ting on the top of the hill. He said to him, Man of God, the king has said, ‘Come down!’¹⁰ Elijah answered to the captain of fifty, If I am a man of God, let fire come down from the sky, and consume you and your fifty! Fire came down from the sky, and consumed him and his fifty.¹¹ Again he sent to him another captain of fifty and his fifty. He answered him, Man of God, the king has said, ‘Come down quickly!’¹² Elijah answered them, If I am a man of God, let fire come down from the sky, and consume you and your fifty! The fire of God came down from the sky, and consumed him and his fifty.¹³ Again he sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. The third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah and begged him and said to him, Man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty your servants, be precious in your sight.¹⁴ Behold, fire came down from the sky, and consumed the two former captains of fifty with their fifties. But now let my life be precious in your sight.¹⁵ The angel of Yahweh said to Elijah, Go down with him. Don’t be afraid of him. He

arose, and went down with him to the king.¹⁶ He said to him, Thus says Yahweh, ‘Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron, is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of His word? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed where you have gone up, but shall surely die’.¹⁷ So he died according to the word of Yahweh which Elijah had spoken. Jehoram began to reign in his place in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son.¹⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, aren’t they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

CHAPTER 2 Aug. 28

Elijah’s Public Ministry Ends

It happened, when Yahweh would take up Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.² Elijah said to Elisha, Please wait here, for Yahweh has sent me as far as Bethel. Elisha said, As Yahweh lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you. So they went down to Bethel.³ The sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came

wrong thing from wrong motives and yet he Biblically justified it – for the prophets themselves saw an apostate Israel as being like Sodom (Is. 1:10). Elijah had the wrong attitude, lacking the spirit of Christ, and yet God still heard his prayers; God worked with Elijah as Elijah wanted. And so we perceive the subtleties of a man’s relationship with God. Prayer may be answered, and the extent of Elijah’s faith in ‘commanding’ the fire to come down is indeed awesome, but we may even then still be ‘playing God’ in a wrong way.

1:15 *Don’t be afraid of him* – Elijah may appear to have been a fearless aggressor, but underneath he was fearful, just as the Canaanites seemed so strong but in fact they were very fearful. Others’ aggression to us is sometimes simply because they fear us on some level.

out to Elisha and said to him, Do you know that Yahweh will take away your master from your head today? He said, Yes, I know it. Hold your peace. ⁴ Elijah said to him, Elisha, please wait here, for Yahweh has sent me to Jericho. He said, As Yahweh lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you. So they came to Jericho. ⁵ The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came near to Elisha and said to him, Do you know that Yahweh will take away your master from your head today? He answered, Yes, I know it. Hold your peace. ⁶ Elijah said to him, Please wait here, for Yahweh has sent me to the Jordan. He said, As Yahweh lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you. They both went on. ⁷ Fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood opposite them at a distance; and they

both stood by the Jordan. ⁸ Elijah took his mantle, wrapped it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that they two went over on dry ground. ⁹ When they had gone over, Elijah said to Elisha, Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you. Elisha said, Please let a double portion of your spirit be on me. ¹⁰ He said, You have asked a hard thing. If you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so. ¹¹ It happened, as they still went on, and talked, that behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into the sky. ¹² Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horseman! He saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and

2:11 *Into the sky* – This doesn't mean that Elijah went to get his reward in Heaven. Nobody has ascended to Heaven (Jn. 3:13). Jesus was the first person to be given immortality (1 Cor. 15:20), and was the only person who never sinned. Elijah therefore had to die, because the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). The Bible presents the Kingdom of God on earth as the reward for the righteous, not going to Heaven at death. The dramatic snatching away of Elijah was in order to openly demonstrate that his public ministry had ended and been passed on to Elisha. It seems Elijah was snatched away into the sky and returned to earth somewhere else – hence the men go searching for him (:16). It seems this happened often in Elijah's life (1 Kings 18:12). Some time after this, Elijah sent a letter (2 Chron. 21:12) – implying he was on earth.

2:12 The chariots and horseman of God appeared; and Elisha perceived that Elijah had finally become identified with them. For Elisha sees them and then describes Elijah as being them – the chariot and horseman of Israel. The Hebrew word for “mantle” is translated “glory” in Zech. 11:3. Elijah had earlier wrapped his presence in his own mantle / glory, rather than face up to the implications of God's glory. But he got there in the end; hence the enormous significance of Elijah giving up his mantle when he finally ascends to Heaven in the cherubim chariot. Finally, Elijah became part of God's glory; He merged into it rather than resisting it for the sake of his *own* glory. He was the charioteer of the cherubim; for his prayers had controlled their direction. This identification of ourselves with God's glory, this losing of ourselves and our own insistence upon our rightness, and our focus on others' wrongness... this is the end result of our lives if they are lived out after the pattern of Elijah's. See on 13:14.

tore them in two pieces. ¹³ He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ He took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and struck the waters, and said, Where is Yahweh, the God of Elijah? When he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha went over. ¹⁵ When the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho opposite him saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha. They came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him. ¹⁶ They said to him, See now, there are with your servants fifty strong men. Please let them go and seek your master. Perhaps the spirit of Yahweh has taken him up, and put him on some mountain, or into some valley. He said, You shall not send them. ¹⁷ When they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, Send

them. They sent therefore fifty men; and they searched for three days, but didn't find him. ¹⁸ They came back to him while he stayed at Jericho; and he said to them, Didn't I tell you, 'Don't go?'

Elisha's First Miracles

¹⁹ The men of the city said to Elisha, Behold, please, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the land miscarries. ²⁰ He said, Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it. They brought it to him. ²¹ He went out to the spring of the waters, and threw salt into it, and said, Thus says Yahweh, 'I have healed these waters. There shall not be from there any more death or miscarrying'. ²² So the waters were healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke. ²³ He went up from there to Bethel. As he was going up by the way,

2:19 It could be that the people thought that the barren land was causing their women to be barren. This was evidently an incorrect superstition of the time; barren ground cannot make the women who live on it barren. But Elisha does not specifically rebuke them for believing such nonsense. Instead he performed the miracle of curing the barrenness of the land. The record says that there was no more barrenness of the land or women "*according to the saying of Elisha which he spake*". Normally the people would have resorted to wizards to drive away the relevant demon which they thought was causing the problem. But the miracle made it evident that ultimately God had caused the problem, and He could so easily cure it. This was a far more effective way of sinking the people's foolish superstition than a head-on frontal attack upon it. The way Jesus dealt with the demons issue in the first century is identical in principle.

2:21 Land and water were seen as barren and bad because they were salty (Dt. 29:23; Jud. 9:45; Jer. 17:6); to put salt into bad water to cure it was therefore counter-instinctive. But this is how God loves to operate; we have to recognize the badness and acknowledge that God can work through it. Hence in this case, salt was used to cure saltiness.

2:23 *Go up, you baldhead* – They were doubting that Elisha was really in Elijah's place, and were asking him to go up into the sky as Elijah had done; and they mocked the difference between hairy Elijah and Elisha's baldness.

some youths came out of the city and mocked him, and said to him, Go up, you baldy! Go up, you baldhead! ²⁴ He looked behind him and saw them, and cursed them in the name of Yahweh. Two female bears came out of the woods, and mauled forty-two of those youths. ²⁵ He went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

CHAPTER 3 Aug. 29

War with Moab

Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. ² He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, but not like his father or his mother; for he put away the pillar of Baal that his father had made. ³ Nevertheless he held to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel to sin; he didn't depart from them. ⁴ Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheep breeder; and he rendered to the king of Israel the wool of one hundred thousand lambs, and of one hundred thousand rams. ⁵ But it happened, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. ⁶ King Jehoram went out of Samaria at that

time, and mustered all Israel. ⁷ He went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me against Moab to battle? He said, I will go up. I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses. ⁸ He said, Which way shall we go up? He answered, The way of the wilderness of Edom. ⁹ So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom; and they made a circuit of seven days' journey. There was no water for the army, nor for the animals that followed them. ¹⁰ The king of Israel said, Alas! For Yahweh has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab. ¹¹ But Jehoshaphat said, Isn't there here a prophet of Yahweh, that we may inquire of Yahweh by him? One of the king of Israel's servants answered, Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah. ¹² Jehoshaphat said, The word of Yahweh is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. ¹³ Elisha said to the king of Israel, What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father, and to the prophets of your mother. The king of Israel said to him, No; for Yahweh

3:7 Jehoshaphat had been taught in 1 Kings 22:32 the error of association with the wicked kings of Israel; he learnt the lesson when it was repeated in 1 Kings 22:49; but now he fails the test again. Thus Jehoshaphat found himself repeating his words of 1 Kings 22:7 when he says "Isn't there here a prophet of Yahweh, that we may inquire of Yahweh by him?" (:11). This is too often the pattern of our lives; God brings repeat situations, in essence, into our lives; sometimes we learn the lesson, other times we don't. But through it all, He seeks to patiently teach us His principles and obedience to His ways. See on 7:18.

has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab. ¹⁴ Elisha said, As Yahweh of Armies lives, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I respect the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward you, nor see you. ¹⁵ But now bring me a minstrel. It happened, when the minstrel played, that the hand of Yahweh came on him. ¹⁶ He said, Thus says Yahweh, 'Make this valley full of trenches'. ¹⁷ For thus says Yahweh, 'You will not see wind, neither will you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, and you will drink, both you and your livestock and your animals. ¹⁸ This is but a light thing in the sight of Yahweh. He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand. ¹⁹ You shall strike every fortified city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all springs of water, and spoil every good piece of land with stones'. ²⁰ It happened in the morning, about the time of making the offering, that behold, water came by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

The Moabites Defeated

²¹ Now when all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, they gathered themselves together, all who were able to put on armour, young and older, and stood on the border. ²² They rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone on the water, and the Moabites saw the water over against them as red as blood. ²³ They said, This is blood. The kings are surely

destroyed, and they have struck each other. Now therefore, Moab, to the spoil! ²⁴ When they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and struck the Moabites, so that they fled before them; and they went forward into the land smiting the Moabites. ²⁵ They beat down the cities; and on every good piece of land they cast every man his stone, and filled it. They stopped all the springs of water, and felled all the good trees, until in Kir Hareseth only they left its stones; however the men armed with slings surrounded it, and struck it. ²⁶ When the king of Moab saw that the battle was too severe for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew sword, to break through to the king of Edom; but they could not. ²⁷ Then he took his eldest son who would have reigned in his place, and offered him for a burnt offering on the wall. There was great wrath against Israel, who departed from him, and returned to their own land.

CHAPTER 4 Aug. 30

Elisha Multiplies Oil

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets to Elisha, saying, Your servant my husband is dead. You know that your servant feared Yahweh. Now the creditor has come to take for himself my two children to be slaves. ² Elisha said to her, What shall I do for you? Tell me: what do you have in the house? She said, Your handmaid has nothing in the house, except a pot of oil. ³ Then he said, Go, borrow containers, empty

ones, from of all your neighbours. Don't borrow just a few. ⁴ You shall go in, and shut the door on yourself and on your sons, and pour out into all those containers; and you shall set aside that which is full. ⁵ So she went from him, and shut the door on herself and on her sons; they brought the containers to her, and she poured out. ⁶ It happened, when the containers were full, that she said to her son, Bring me another container. He said to her, There isn't another container. The oil stopped flowing. ⁷ Then she came and told the man of God. He said, Go, sell the oil, and pay your debt; and you and your sons shall live on the rest.

Elisha and the Shunammite Woman

⁸ It fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman; and she persuaded him to eat bread. So it was, that as often

as he passed by, he turned in there to eat bread. ⁹ She said to her husband, See now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God that passes by us continually. ¹⁰ Please let us make a little room on the wall. Let us set for him there a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp stand. It shall be, when he comes to us, that he shall turn in there. ¹¹ One day he came there, and he turned into the room and lay there. ¹² He said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. When he had called her, she stood before him. ¹³ He said to him, Say now to her, 'Behold, you have cared for us with all this care. What is to be done for you? Would you like to be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the army?' She answered, I dwell among my own people. ¹⁴ He said, What then is to be done for her? Gehazi answered, Most certainly she has no son, and her husband is old. ¹⁵ He said, Call her. When he

4:3 *Don't borrow just a few* – According to the level of our faith, so life will be unto us. The more and the larger the containers borrowed, the more oil they would have. God's power and ability is unlimited; it is us through our faith who control the extent of His activity (Mk. 9:23).

4:4 *Shut the door* – This is emphasized (:5). God's response to human faith is a very personal thing, not to be bragged about. Our relationship with Him is ultimately personal.

4:9 *I perceive that this is a holy man of God* – It seems Elisha said nothing of his ministry as a prophet; he simply stayed at the woman's house when travelling. But our relationship with God will be perceived by others in the end, even without our specific preaching (1 Pet. 3:1).

4:13 *This care* – The Hebrew word for "care" here also means "reverence". To reverence someone is to care for them. Care therefore comes out of a respect / reverence for the person. If we respect persons for who they are, we will care. Care in that sense can't in any sense be properly done or shown if it's simply from a sense of duty, because we're paid to do it, because we might get some benefit from doing so, etc. It arises out of a basic respect for the human person, made as we are in the image of God.

had called her, she stood in the door. ¹⁶ He said, At this season, when the time comes around, you will embrace a son. She said, No, my lord, you man of God, do not lie to your handmaid. ¹⁷ The woman conceived, and bore a son at that season, when the time came around, as Elisha had said to her. ¹⁸ When the child was grown, it happened one day that he went out to his father to the reapers. ¹⁹ He said to his father, My head! My head! He said to his servant, Carry him to his mother. ²⁰ When he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees until noon, and then died. ²¹ She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door on him, and went out. ²² She called to her husband and said, Please send me one of the servants, and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. ²³ He said, Why would you want go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath. She said, It's alright. ²⁴ Then she saddled a donkey, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward! Don't slow down for me, unless I ask you to. ²⁵ So she went, and came to the man of God to Mount Carmel. It happened, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, there is the Shunammite. ²⁶ Please run now to meet

her, and ask her, 'Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?' She answered, It is well. ²⁷ When she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. Gehazi came near to thrust her away; but the man of God said, Leave her alone; for her soul is troubled within her; and Yahweh has hidden it from me, and has not told me. ²⁸ Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? Didn't I say, Do not deceive me? ²⁹ Then he said to Gehazi, Tuck your cloak into your belt, take my staff in your hand, and go your way. If you meet any man, don't greet him; and if anyone greets you, don't answer him again. Then lay my staff on the face of the child. ³⁰ The mother of the child said, As Yahweh lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you. He arose, and followed her. ³¹ Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff on the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing. Therefore he returned to meet him, and told him, saying, The child has not awakened. ³² When Elisha had come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid on his bed. ³³ He went in therefore, and shut the door on them both, and prayed to Yahweh. ³⁴ He went up, and cast himself on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, and his eyes on his eyes,

4:29 Christ's command in Lk. 10:4 to go preach the Gospel and greet nobody by the way (greetings in the East can take a long time) clearly alludes here. We are all to have the urgent intensity of Gehazi in taking the hope of resurrection to others.

4:33 *Shut the door... and prayed* – Jesus as it were takes a snapshot of this moment and posts it as a pattern to each of us (Mt. 6:6). Biblical characters like Elisha thus cease to be distant figures, but are to be realistically followed by us as living examples.

and his hands on his hands. He lay upon him; and the flesh of the child grew warm. ³⁵ Then he returned, and walked in the house once back and forth; and went up, and cast himself on him. Then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. ³⁶ He called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite! So he called her. When she had come in to him, he said, Take up your son. ³⁷ Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground; and she took up her son, and went out.

Elisha's Miracles

³⁸ Elisha came again to Gilgal. There was a famine in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him. He said to his servant, Set

on the great pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets. ³⁹ One went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered of it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and shred them into the pot of stew; for they didn't recognize them. ⁴⁰ So they poured out for the men to eat. It happened, as they were eating of the stew, that they cried out, and said, Man of God, there is death in the pot! They could not eat of it. ⁴¹ But he said, Bring meal, then. He cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. There was now no harm in the pot. ⁴² A man from Baal Shalishah came, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and fresh ears of grain in his sack.

4:34, 35 1 Kings 18:42 says that Elijah *cast himself* down in prayer. The Hebrew word occurs again only here, as if it was Elijah's example which inspired Elisha likewise to cast himself down upon the child. The implication is that Elisha did so in prayer; and we wonder whether this implies that Elijah's stretching himself upon another child, although a different Hebrew word, was also in prayer (1 Kings 17:21). Elijah's prayerful example inspired another. Our attitude to prayer is so easily influential upon others, and we ourselves are likewise easily influenced. It should be no shame nor embarrassment to us to instantly break into prayer, nor to kneel down to further our intensity in prayer, regardless of the social embarrassment this may involve in some cultures. But we have to ask: Do we *cast ourselves down* in prayer as Elijah and Elisha? Do we know that kind of intensity in prayer?

4:42, 43 This incident presents Elisha as a clear type of Christ, who did the same in His feeding miracles (Mk. 8:6-8). Those who know God's word will find encouragement there in their experiences of life – but that encouragement is dependent upon their appreciation of the word, and their ability to see the similarities between their situation and that of others who have gone before. An example is to be found in the way the Lord told the disciples to feed the crowd, when they had nothing to give them (Mk. 6:37). He was actually quoting from :42, where the man of God told his servant to do the same. He gave what bread he had to the people, and miraculously it fed them. The disciples don't seem to have seen the point; otherwise, they would have realized that if they went ahead in faith, another such miracle would likely be wrought. But it seems that God almost over-ruled them to make the response of the faithless servant of :43: "Shall we... give them to eat?" (Mk. 6:37). They were almost 'made' to do this to make them later see the similarity with the 2 Kings 4 incident. If they

He said, Give to the people, that they may eat. ⁴³ His servant said, What should I set this before a hundred men? But he said, Give the people, that they may eat; for thus says Yahweh, 'They will eat, and will have some left over'. ⁴⁴ So he set it before them, and they ate, and left some of it, according to the word of Yahweh.

CHAPTER 5 Aug. 31

Elisha Heals Naaman

Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him Yahweh had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valour, but he was a leper. ² The Syrians had gone out in companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maiden; and she waited on Naaman's wife. ³ She said to her mistress, I wish that my lord would visit the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would heal him of his leprosy. ⁴ Someone went in, and told his lord, saying, The maiden who is from the land of Israel said this. ⁵ The king of

Syria said, Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel. He departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of clothing. ⁶ He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter has come to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy. ⁷ When the king of Israel had read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends to me to heal a man of his leprosy? Surely he is seeking a quarrel against me. ⁸ It was so, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king saying, Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. ⁹ So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. ¹⁰ Elisha sent a messenger to him saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean. ¹¹ But Naaman

had been more spiritually aware at the time, the Lord's quotation would have been an encouragement for their faith.

5:3 The girl said this in total faith; because at that time, no lepers had been healed by Elisha in Israel (Lk. 4:27). This girl had great spirituality; she had been taken captive by the Syrians (:2) and so had almost certainly been raped and abused, and now she was a domestic slave, possibly still liable to abuse. But she so loved her enemies that she wanted the army commander to be healed – when he was the visible figurehead of the organization (i.e. the Syrian army) which had abused her.

5:9, 10 Naaman was the chief of the Syrian army and could easily have killed Elisha or destroyed his home. But Elisha isn't courteous to him, doesn't open the door of his home, but just sends someone to Naaman to tell him to go and wash in Jordan. This wasn't rudeness, but rather a desire for Naaman to respond to God's word. Sometimes God presents His word to us in such a way, without any attractive packaging, just bald demands – to test and develop our obedience.

was angry, and went away, and said, I thought, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Yahweh his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy'.¹² Aren't Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.¹³ His servants came near and spoke to him and said, My father, if the prophet had asked you do some great thing, wouldn't you have done it? How much rather then, when he

says to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'¹⁴ Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.¹⁵ He returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and stood before him; and he said, See now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel. Now therefore, please take a gift from your servant.¹⁶ But he said, As Yahweh lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none. He urged him to take

5:14 The way Naaman was effectively born again by dipping in water looks forward to Christian baptism, which also requires humility to accept.

5:15, 16 Elisha was accustomed to thinking of himself in terms of a man who stood before Yahweh, in His presence, before His face (3:14 Hebrew). Naaman and his "company" 'stood before' Elisha. Remember that this was the Syrian army General, standing with a "company" in Israelite territory, at Elisha's house – at a time when 'companies' of Syrian soldiers carried out raids upon Israel (:2). Any Israelite would've been terrified. But Elisha responds that he 'stands before' *Yahweh* more than before Naaman (:16). Elisha was so aware of how we live in God's presence, before His very face, that he wasn't the least phased by this. If only we can share this sense, of standing in God's presence... the most frightening of human situations will have little effective 'presence' because we know we are ultimately in God's presence, 24/7. But how, concretely and actually, did Elisha come to have this serenity? A clue is to be found in how in 6:17, Elisha prays that God will open the eyes of his frightened servant to behold the Angelic horses and chariots around him. Elisha was *so* confident they were there, that he didn't ask to see them himself. He *knew* they were there; he simply asked that his servant be enabled to see the unseen reality which he calmly knew was there. He of course had had first hand experience of the Angelic horses and chariots (a kind of cherubim) when he had been parted from Elijah in 2:11. This must have left an abiding impression upon him – he knew that those Angelic horses and chariots were in fact permanently encamped around him (cp. Ps. 34:7). And so we see significance in the way that Naaman came to Elisha's house with *his* horses and chariot – for this is surely a development of a theme of connection between Elisha, horses and chariots (:9). Most other Israelites would've been petrified to have the horses and chariots of Naaman and a company of Syrians pull up at their door. But Elisha was quite unphased. He didn't even bother coming out to meet Naaman, knowing this was an insult to Naaman's pride, and was humanly certain to result in Naaman simply killing him and burning his house. Surely the horses-chariot-Elisha connection taught Elisha that in fact there were Angelic horses and chariots around him – he need

it; but he refused. ¹⁷ Naaman said, If not, then please let two mules' burden of earth be given to your servant; for your servant will from now on offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice to other gods, but to Yahweh. ¹⁸ In this thing may Yahweh pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon. When I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, may Yahweh pardon your servant in this thing. ¹⁹ He said to him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.

Gehazi's Greed

²⁰ But Gehazi the servant of Elisha the man of God said, My master has spared this Naaman the Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that

which he brought. As Yahweh lives, I will run after him, and take something from him. ²¹ So Gehazi followed after Naaman. When Naaman saw one running after him, he came down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well? ²² He said, All is well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Behold, even now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing'. ²³ Naaman said, Please take two talents. He urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothing, and laid them on two of his servants; and they carried them before him. ²⁴ When he came to the hill, he took them from their hand, and stored them in the house. Then he let the men go, and

not fear any human horse and chariot. There is no hint that Angelic activity is any less for us today.

5:17 This shows that Naaman was influenced by the surrounding superstition that one could only worship a god of another nation whilst on their soil. But this is not explicitly corrected by Elisha; he simply but powerfully comments: "Go in peace". In other words, Elisha was saying that the peace experienced by Naaman in his daily life was so wondrous that it obviated the need for worshipping on Israeli soil. This is a similar approach to that taken by Jesus with regard to demons. See on 5:27.

5:18 This disproves the theory of guilt by association. God was willing to tolerate this believer in Him still being associated with a pagan religion. This concession to weakness shouldn't be used to justify us in living lives which are indistinguishable from those of unbelievers; we are the light of the world, and if we hide that light, then it will go out (Mt. 5:14). But there are times when our faith in the true God is a matter of the heart, and our external appearance may have to be otherwise because of the life situation we are in; and God is understanding of that, as we should be towards other believers. And yet Naaman chose a lower level of serving God than he could have chosen. The higher level would surely have been, as Daniel's friends, not to bow down to an idol. And when we ask what the rest of the Jews in Babylon did on that occasion, it seems hard to avoid the conclusion that they took the lower level which Naaman did – and bowed down. But when we choose a lower level of service, God works to inspire us to take higher levels – see on 6:11.

they departed. ²⁵ But he went in, and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, Where did you come from, Gehazi? He said, Your servant went nowhere. ²⁶ He said to him, Didn't my heart go with you, when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive money, to receive garments and olive groves and vineyards, sheep and cattle, and male servants and female servants? ²⁷ Therefore the leprosy of Naaman will cling to you and to your seed forever. He went out from his presence a leper, as white as snow.

CHAPTER 6 Sep. 1

The Iron Floats

The sons of the prophets said to Elisha, See now, the place where we dwell before you is too small for us. ² Please let us go to the Jordan, and every man take a beam from there, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. He answered, Go! ³ One said, Please go with your servants. He answered, I will go. ⁴ So

he went with them. When they came to the Jordan, they cut down wood. ⁵ But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water. Then he cried and said, Alas, my master! For it was borrowed. ⁶ The man of God asked, Where did it fall? He showed him the place. He cut down a stick, threw it in there, and made the iron float. ⁷ He said, Take it. So he put out his hand and took it.

Elisha Traps the Syrians

⁸ Now the king of Syria was warring against Israel; and he took counsel with his servants, saying, My camp will be in such and such a place. ⁹ The man of God sent to the king of Israel saying, Beware that you not pass such a place; for the Syrians are coming that way. ¹⁰ The king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of; and he saved himself there, not once nor twice. ¹¹ The heart of the king of Syria was very troubled about this. He called his servants, and said to

5:27 The idea of transference of disease from one to another was a common Semitic perception, and it's an idea accommodated by God although it's incorrect. God threatened to make the diseases of the inhabitants of Canaan and Egypt to cleave to Israel if they were disobedient (Dt. 28:21,60). Here too, as with the curing of Legion, there is Divine accommodation to the ideas of disease transference which people had at the time. This explains why the New Testament can speak of 'demons' whilst also denying their actual existence – it's an accommodation to the ideas of the time. This is in harmony with similar accommodations in the Old Testament. See on 5:17.

6:11 Naaman wanted to be a secret believer, even bowing down to Rimmon to keep his boss happy. God seems to have allowed this, but He worked in Naaman's life, so that his faith was no longer secret. For soon after his conversion, his master got the hunch that one of his courtiers was "for the king of Israel". And Naaman would have been the obvious suspect, as he had gone to Israel and been cured of his leprosy by an Israeli prophet. We then read that the army of Syria came against Elisha the prophet and sought to surround him in order to capture him. They were then judged by God. Could it really be so that Naaman would have led that army? Surely the situation arose

them, Won't you show me which of us is for the king of Israel? ¹² One of his servants said, No, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom. ¹³ He said, Go and see where he is, that I may send and get him. It was told him saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. ¹⁴ Therefore he sent horses, chariots and a great army there. They came by night, and surrounded the city. ¹⁵ When the servant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was around the city. His servant said to him, Alas, my master! What shall we do? ¹⁶ He answered, Don't be afraid; for those who are with us are more than those who are with them. ¹⁷ Elisha prayed and said, Yahweh, please open his eyes, that he may see. Yahweh opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around Elisha. ¹⁸ When they came down to him, Elisha prayed to

Yahweh, and said, Please strike this people with blindness. He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. ¹⁹ Elisha said to them, This is not the way, neither is this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek. He led them to Samaria. ²⁰ It happened, when they had come into Samaria, that Elisha said, Yahweh, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. Yahweh opened their eyes, and they perceived that they were in the midst of Samaria. ²¹ The king of Israel said to Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I strike them? Shall I strike them? ²² He answered, You shall not strike them. Would you strike those whom you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. ²³ He prepared a great feast for them. When they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. The bands of Syria stopped raiding the land of Israel.

so as to force Naaman to resign the job. Thus God worked to stop him being a secret believer, and to remove him from a position where he could not live with a free conscience before the Father. And so God will do in our lives – if we respond.

6:17 Elisha saw with the eyes of faith that the horses and chariots of their enemies were matched by the Angel cherubim around them. He was so certain they were there that he didn't need to physically see them for himself, but he asked that the eyes of his servant would be opened to see them. We imagine Peter walking confidently through the dark streets with his Angel next to him, and then perhaps phased for a moment by the Angel's disappearance. But the truth is that the Angel walked with him through every street he ever walked along (Acts 12:10). The actual presence of the Angels in our lives ought to motivate us to live as in the presence of God; the fact we don't physically see them doesn't mean they aren't literally present (1 Cor. 11:10; 1 Tim. 5:21; see on 1 Kings 18:15). See on 5:15,16.

6:23 The showing of such great grace, to the extent of making a feast for them, stopped the aggression recurring. Grace is ultimately the only way to conflict resolution.

Samaria Besieged

²⁴ It happened after this, that Ben Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. ²⁵ There was a great famine in Samaria. Behold they besieged it, until a donkey's head was sold for eighty pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a kab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver. ²⁶ As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried to him saying, Help, my lord, O king! ²⁷ He said, If Yahweh doesn't help you, how could I help you? From the threshing floor, or from the winepress? ²⁸ The king said to her, What ails you? She answered, This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow'. ²⁹ So we boiled my son, and ate him. I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him;' and she has hidden her son. ³⁰ It happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he tore his clothes (now he was passing by on the wall); and the people looked, and behold, he had sackcloth underneath on his

flesh. ³¹ Then he said, God do so to me, and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stay on him this day. ³² But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. Then the king sent a man from before him; but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent to take away my head? When the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold it shut against him. Isn't the sound of his master's feet behind him? ³³ While he was still talking with them, the messenger came down to him. Then he said, This evil is from Yahweh. Why should I wait for Yahweh any longer?

CHAPTER 7 Sep. 2***The Syrians Destroyed***

Elisha said, Hear the word of Yahweh. Thus says Yahweh, 'Tomorrow about this time a measure of fine flour will be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria'. ² Then the captain on whose hand the king leaned

6:33 *This evil is from Yahweh* – Evil in the sense of disaster comes from God; it's not true that only good things come from God and all negative things from some cosmic 'Satan'; both good and "evil" come from God (Is. 45:5-7).

Why should I wait for Yahweh any longer? – Elisha here has an apparent roughness with the Almighty that could only surely come from his knowing that God fully viewed and knew his inner feelings; and so like David in some of the Psalms, he speaks his rough thoughts before God just as they are, because he knows God sees them anyway. Elisha's roughness with God isn't good, but it does reflect a level of intimacy with God which is commendable.

7:2 *If Yahweh made windows in heaven* – He forgot that there *are* windows in Heaven (Gen. 7:11; Mal. 3:10) through which blessing can be given. He believed in God's existence. But he didn't think this God could do much, and he doubted whether He would ever practically intervene in human affairs. We must be aware of this same tendency.

answered the man of God and said, Behold, if Yahweh made windows in heaven, could this thing be? He said, You shall see it with your eyes, but shall not eat of it. ³ Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate. They said one to another, Why do we sit here until we die? ⁴ If we say, ‘We will enter into the city’, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. If we sit still here, we also die. Now therefore come, and let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they save us alive, we will live; and if they kill us, we will only die. ⁵ They rose up in the twilight, to go to the camp of the Syrians. When they had come to the outermost part of the camp of the Syrians, behold, there was no man there. ⁶ For the Lord had made the army of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great army. They said one to another, Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come on us. ⁷ Therefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their donkeys, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life. ⁸ When these lepers came to the outermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and ate

and drank, and carried from there silver, and gold, and clothing, and went and hid it. Then they came back and entered into another tent, and carried from there also, and went and hid it. ⁹ Then they said one to another, We aren’t doing the right thing. This day is a day of good news, and we keep silent. If we wait until the morning light, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore come, let us go and tell the king’s household. ¹⁰ So they came and called to the porter of the city and said, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but the horses tied, and the donkeys tied, and the tents as they were. ¹¹ He called the porters; and they told it to the king’s household within. ¹² The king arose in the night and said to his servants, I’ll tell you what the Syrians are doing to us. They know that we are hungry. Therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field saying, ‘When they come out of the city, we shall take them alive, and get into the city’. ¹³ One of his servants answered, Please let some men take five of the horses that remain in the city. Behold, they are like all the multitude of Israel who are left in it. They would perish anyway, like all the many Israelites

7:4 These utterly desperate men were chosen by God to be the heralds of good news (:9) – the Gospel. He uses desperate people today, even middle class comfortable people who perceive their desperation, as the means of His witness.

7:8 Jesus used this as the basis for His parable about the man who finds the Gospel, as the treasure in a field, and hides it (Mt. 13:44). But surely He intended us to think of what those men did afterwards. They even felt that woe would be unto them if they did not share the good news of what they had found. The same joyful urgency must be ours; and there is a “woe” unto us if we don’t share that good news (1 Cor. 9:16).

who have already died. Let us send and see. ¹⁴ They took therefore two chariots with horses; and the king sent after the army of the Syrians saying, Go and see. ¹⁵ They went after them to the Jordan; and behold, all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. The messengers returned and told the king. ¹⁶ The people went out, and plundered the camp of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of Yahweh. ¹⁷ The king appointed the captain on whose hand he leaned to be in charge of the gate; and the people trod on him in the gate, and he died as the man of God had said when the king came down to him. ¹⁸ (It happened, as the man of God had spoken to the king saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria; ¹⁹ and that captain answered the man of God and said, Now, behold, if Yahweh should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, you shall see it with your eyes, but shall not eat of it. ²⁰ It happened like that to him; for the people trod on him in the gate, and he died.)

CHAPTER 8 Sep. 3

A Divinely Arranged Coincidence

Now Elisha had spoken to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise and go, you and your household, and stay for a while wherever you can; for Yahweh has called for a famine. It shall also come on the land seven years. ² The woman arose, and did according to the word of the man of God. She went with her household, and lived in the land of the Philistines seven years. ³ It happened after the seven years, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines. Then she went forth to plead to the king for her house and for her land. ⁴ Now the king was talking with Gehazi the servant of the man of God saying, Please tell me all the great things that Elisha has done. ⁵ It happened, as he was telling the king how he had restored to life him who was dead, that the woman whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life. ⁶ When the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed to her a certain officer saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

7:18 Jehoshaphat was on balance a righteous man, but his association with the sinful family of Ahab (see on 3:7) led to his children going astray from God because of his weakness in that area, which they repeated (:28). Whilst we may retain the faith, our spiritual weaknesses can lead to our children losing it.

8:5 There are no coincidences in the lives of those with whom God is working; there is meaning attached to events, and perceiving this will preserve us from the sense of meaninglessness and pointlessness which afflicts so many unbelievers.

The Death of Ben Hadad

⁷ Elisha came to Damascus; and Ben Hadad the king of Syria was sick. It was told him saying, The man of God has come here. ⁸ The king said to Hazael, Take a present in your hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of Yahweh by him, saying, 'Will I recover from this sickness?' ⁹ So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him and said, Your son Ben Hadad king of Syria has sent me to you, saying, 'Will I recover from this sickness?' ¹⁰ Elisha said to him, Go, tell him, 'You shall surely recover;' however Yahweh has shown me that he shall surely die. ¹¹ He settled his gaze steadfastly on him, until he was ashamed. Then the man of God wept. ¹² Hazael said, Why do you weep, my lord? He answered, Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel. You will set their strongholds on fire, kill their young men with the sword, dash in pieces their little ones and rip up their women with child. ¹³ Hazael said, But what is your servant, is he a dog, that he should do this awful thing? Elisha answered, Yahweh has shown me that you will be king over Syria. ¹⁴ Then he departed from Elisha, and

came to his master, who said to him, What did Elisha say to you? He answered, He told me that you would surely recover. ¹⁵ It happened on the next day, that he took a thick cloth, dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died. Then Hazael reigned in his place.

Jehoram Becomes King

¹⁶ In the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being king of Judah then, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign. ¹⁷ He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign. He reigned eight years in Jerusalem. ¹⁸ He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab; for he had the daughter of Ahab as wife. He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh. ¹⁹ However, Yahweh would not destroy Judah, for David His servant's sake, as He promised him to give to him a lamp for his children always. ²⁰ In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. ²¹ Then Joram passed over to Zair, and all his chariots with him. He rose up by night, and struck the Edomites who surrounded him, and the captains of the chariots; and the people fled to their tents. ²² So Edom revolted from under the hand

8:9 Even unbelievers in their extremity try to turn to God; there is in all people some level of conscience toward God, a sense of their need for Him, however deeply buried it is. The task of preaching is to reach down through their defences and connect with that sense.

8:10 Here we see how God is aware of multiple possible futures. To see individuals time and again messing up what He has made potentially possible must be so sad for Him (see too Mt. 11:21,22).

of Judah to this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time. ²³ The rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ²⁴ Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place. ²⁵ In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah began to reign. ²⁶ Twenty-two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah the daughter of Omri king of Israel. ²⁷ He walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, as did the house of Ahab; for he was the son-in-law of the house of Ahab. ²⁸ He went with Joram the son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. ²⁹ King Joram returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

CHAPTER 9 Sep. 4

Jehu Is Anointed

Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets and said

to him, Put your belt on your waist, take this vial of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth Gilead. ² When you come there, find Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brothers, and carry him to an inner room. ³ Then take the vial of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, 'Thus says Yahweh, I have anointed you king over Israel'. Then open the door, flee, and don't wait. ⁴ So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. ⁵ When he came, behold, the captains of the army were sitting. Then he said, I have a message for you, captain. Jehu said, To which of us all here? He said, To you, O captain. ⁶ He arose, and went into the house. Then he poured the oil on his head and said to him, Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, 'I have anointed you king over the people of Yahweh, even over Israel. ⁷ You shall strike the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of Yahweh, at the hand of Jezebel. ⁸ For the whole house of Ahab shall perish. I will cut off from Ahab every male, both him who is shut up and him who is left at large in Israel. ⁹ I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah. ¹⁰ The dogs will eat Jezebel on the plot of

9:2 Jehu arising from amongst his brethren and being anointed pointed forward to how Christ was anointed with oil above His brethren – for He was of our nature, one of us (Heb. 1:9). Jehu could have been a Messiah figure, but his pride in later life stopped him realizing his potential.

ground of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her'. He opened the door, and fled. ¹¹ Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord; and one said to him, Is all well? Why did this mad fellow come to you? He said to them, You know the man and what his talk was. ¹² They said, That is a lie. Tell us now. He said, He told me, 'Thus says Yahweh, I have anointed you king over Israel'. ¹³ Then they hurried, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs and blew the trumpet, saying, Jehu is king.

Jehu Kills Joram, Ahaziah and Jezebel

¹⁴ So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram was keeping Ramoth Gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria; ¹⁵ but king Joram had returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria). Jehu said, If this is your thinking, then let no one escape and go out of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel. ¹⁶ So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. Ahaziah king of Judah had come down to see Joram. ¹⁷ Now the watchman was standing on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company

of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. Joram said, Take a horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, 'Is it peace?' ¹⁸ So there went one on horseback to meet him and said, Thus says the king, 'Is it peace?' Jehu said, What do you have to do with peace? Fall in behind me! The watchman said, The messenger came to them, but he isn't coming back. ¹⁹ Then he sent out a second on horseback, who came to them, and said, Thus says the king, 'Is it peace?' Jehu answered, What do you have to do with peace? Fall in behind me! ²⁰ The watchman said, He came to them, and isn't coming back. The driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he drives angrily. ²¹ Joram said, Get ready! They got his chariot ready. Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out to meet Jehu, and found him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. ²² It happened, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? He answered, What peace, so long as the prostitution of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft abound? ²³ Joram turned around to flee, and said to Ahaziah, There is treason, Ahaziah! ²⁴ Jehu drew his bow with his full strength, and struck Joram between his arms; and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down

9:19 *Fall in behind me* – The emphasis is on the word “me” (:18,32; 10:6). Jehu did God's work at this time, and yet he was very self-centred in doing it, seeking a personal following and glory to himself rather than to God. Our involvement in God's work doesn't automatically make our attitudes correct in all ways. Jehu seems to have used his service of God as an outlet for his anger (:20). See on 10:11.

9:20 Truly our style of driving often reflects our inner state of mind.

in his chariot. ²⁵ Then Jehu said to Bidkar his captain, Pick him up, and throw him in the plot of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember how, when you and I rode together after Ahab his father, Yahweh laid this burden on him: ²⁶ ‘Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons’, says Yahweh; ‘and I will repay you in this plot of ground’, says Yahweh. Now therefore take and cast him onto the plot of ground, according to the word of Yahweh. ²⁷ But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house. Jehu followed after him, and said, Strike him also in the chariot! They struck him at the ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. He fled to Megiddo, and died there. ²⁸ His servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his tomb with his fathers in the city of David. ²⁹ In the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah. ³⁰ When Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her eyes, and attired her head, and looked out at the window. ³¹ As Jehu entered in at the gate she said, Do you come in peace, Zimri, you murderer of your master? ³² He lifted up his face to the window and said, Who is on my side? Who? Two or three eunuchs looked out at him. ³³ He said, Throw her

down! So they threw her down; and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses. Then he trampled her under foot. ³⁴ When he had come in, he ate and drank; and he said, See now to this cursed woman, and bury her; for she is a king’s daughter. ³⁵ They went to bury her; but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. ³⁶ Therefore they came back, and told him. He said, This is the word of Yahweh which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite saying, ‘The dogs will eat the flesh of Jezebel on the plot of Jezreel, ³⁷ and the body of Jezebel shall be as dung on the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel, so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel’.

CHAPTER 10 Sep. 5

Jehu Kills Ahab’s Family

Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. Jehu wrote letters and sent to Samaria, to the rulers of Jezreel, even the elders, and to those who brought up the sons of Ahab, saying, ² Now as soon as this letter comes to you, since your master’s sons are with you, and there are with you chariots and horses, a fortified city also, and armour: ³ Select the best and fittest of your master’s sons, set him on his father’s throne, and fight for your master’s house. ⁴ But

9:27 Ahaziah failed to learn from Biblical history – that association with the wicked kings of Israel would be to his own hurt (see on 3:7; 7:18). The Bible is largely history, specially selected for us to learn from and discern the relevance to our own lives (Rom. 15:4).

9:36 *This is the word of Yahweh* – God’s word is put for its fulfilment – so certain is it of fulfilment.

they were exceedingly afraid and said, Behold, the two kings didn't stand before him! How then shall we stand? ⁵ He who was over the household, and he who was over the city, the elders also, and those who raised the children, sent to Jehu saying, We are your servants, and will do all that you ask us. We will not make any man king. You do that which is good in your eyes. ⁶ Then he wrote a letter the second time to them saying, If you are on my side, and if you will listen to my voice, take the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by tomorrow this time. Now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city who brought them up. ⁷ It happened, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons and killed them, all seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent them to him to Jezreel. ⁸ A messenger came and told him, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. He said, Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until the morning. ⁹ It happened in the morning, that he went out and stood and said to all the people, You are righteous. Behold, I conspired against my master, and killed him; but who

struck all these? ¹⁰ Know now that nothing shall fall to the earth of the word of Yahweh, which Yahweh spoke concerning the house of Ahab. For Yahweh has done that which He spoke by His servant Elijah. ¹¹ So Jehu struck all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, with all his great men, his familiar friends, and his priests, until he left him none remaining. ¹² He arose and departed, and went to Samaria. As he was at the shearing house of the shepherds on the way, ¹³ Jehu met with the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah and said, Who are you? They answered, We are the brothers of Ahaziah. We are going down to greet the children of the king and the children of the queen. ¹⁴ He said, Take them alive! They took them alive, and killed them at the pit of the shearing house, even forty-two men. He didn't leave any of them. ¹⁵ When he had departed from there, he met Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him. He greeted him and said to him, Is your heart right, as my heart is with your heart? Jehonadab answered, It is. If it is, give me your hand. He gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot. ¹⁶ He said, Come with me, and see

10:11 This would seem unethical; Jehu was being wilfully aggressive and bloodthirsty, justifying it in the name of zeal for God. Likewise he killed Ahaziah simply on the basis of 'guilt by association' with Joram, and then killed 42 of Ahaziah's relatives by taking 'guilt by association' to yet another degree (:14). Defence of God's Truth must never become an outlet for our native anger and dysfunction; see on 9:19.

10:16 *See my zeal for Yahweh* – True zeal for God is never so overtly self projected. Pride in spirituality means we're not spiritual and simply 'don't get it'. Claiming to be obedient to God's word (:17) can never justify such spiritual pride; pride is utterly reprehensible to God and we likewise should turn away from it when we encounter it.

my zeal for Yahweh. So they made him ride in his chariot. ¹⁷ When he came to Samaria, he struck all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of Yahweh, which He spoke to Elijah.

Jehu Kills the Baal Worshipers

¹⁸ Jehu gathered all the people together and said to them, Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu will serve him much. ¹⁹ Now therefore call to me all the prophets of Baal, all of his worshippers, and all of his priests. Let none be absent; for I have a great sacrifice to Baal. Whoever is absent, he shall not live. But Jehu did it in subtlety, intending that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal. ²⁰ Jehu said, Sanctify a solemn assembly for Baal! They proclaimed it. ²¹ Jehu sent through all Israel; and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that didn't come. They came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was filled from one end to the other. ²² He said to him who was over the vestry, Bring out robes for all the worshippers of Baal! He brought robes out to them. ²³ Jehu went with Jehonadab the son of Rechab into the house of Baal. Then he said to the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that

there are here with you none of the servants of Yahweh, but the worshippers of Baal only. ²⁴ They went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had appointed him eighty men outside and said, If any of the men whom I bring into your hands escape, he who lets him go, his life shall be for the life of him. ²⁵ It happened, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, and kill them! Let none escape. They struck them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went into the inner room of the house of Baal. ²⁶ They brought out the pillars that were in the house of Baal, and burned them. ²⁷ They broke down the pillar of Baal, and broke down the house of Baal and made it a latrine, to this day. ²⁸ Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.

Jehu's Weakness

²⁹ However Jehu didn't depart from following the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel to sin: the golden calves that were in Bethel, and in Dan. ³⁰ Yahweh said to Jehu, Because you have done well in executing that which is right in My eyes, and have done to the house of Ahab according to

10:18 This deceitful behaviour is surely unethical. We cannot justify unethical behaviour in the name of obeying God and defending His Truth against apostasy. So many sins have been committed in the name of this. Elijah gathered together all the Baal worshippers to a showdown on Carmel, but he did so on a transparent basis.

10:30 Hosea says that the blood of Jezreel would be visited upon the house of Jehu (Hos. 1:4). At Jezreel, Jehu had killed Ahab's family in a quite literal bloodbath. And God had commented that because Jehu had done this and thus fulfilled His word, Je-

all that was in My heart, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel. ³¹ But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of Yahweh, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He didn't depart from the sins of Jeroboam, with which he made Israel to sin. ³² In those days Yahweh began to weaken Israel; and Hazael struck them in all the borders of Israel: ³³ from the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the valley of the Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan. ³⁴ Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ³⁵ Jehu slept with his fathers;

and they buried him in Samaria. Jehoahaz his son reigned in his place. ³⁶ The time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty-eight years.

CHAPTER 11 Sep. 6

Joash Is Crowned King

Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal. ² But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were slain, even him and his nurse, and put them in the bedroom. They hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not slain; ³ he was with her hidden

hu's family would reign for the next four generations. So why, then, does Hosea start talking about punishing the house of Jehu for what they did to the house of Ahab? Jehu became proud about the manner in which he had been the channel for God's purpose to be fulfilled, inviting others to come and behold his zeal for God (:16). Jehu and his children showed themselves to not really be spiritually minded, and yet they prided themselves in having physically done God's will. And because of this, Hosea talks in such angry terms about retribution for what they had done; the house of Jehu's act of obedience to God actually became something his family had to be punished for, because they had done it in a proud spirit. We see this all the time around us. Men and women who clearly are instruments in God's hand, like the Assyrians were, doing His will... but being proud about it and becoming exalted in their own eyes because of it. And God through Hosea is so sensitive to the awfulness of this.

10:31 *Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of Yahweh* – Jehu had been obedient to God's word about Ahab's family and Baal as an outlet for his own aggression, anger and pride. But Jehu clearly didn't really have a heart for God, because he only focused on those aspects of God's word which were convenient to him and reinforced his own personality type. An obsession with criticism of others for their doctrinal and moral weaknesses has often been passed off as zeal for God's word, when the whole spirit of God's word in other matters has been totally ignored. God asks for our devotion to His word in every part of our hearts and living, not just as a justification for what we naturally would like to do.

11:1 In response to the murder of her son, Athaliah murdered others. The cycle of hurt continues like this in so many lives, doing to others what was done to us. Only the gospel of grace in Christ can break this cycle.

in the house of Yahweh six years. Athaliah reigned over the land. ⁴ In the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the captains over hundreds of the Carites and of the guard, and brought them to him into the house of Yahweh. He made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of Yahweh, and showed them the king's son. ⁵ He commanded them saying, This is the thing that you shall do: a third part of you, who come in on the Sabbath, shall be keepers of the watch of the king's house; ⁶ a third part shall be at the gate Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard. So you shall keep the watch of the house, and be a barrier. ⁷ The two companies of you, even all who go out on the Sabbath, shall keep the watch of the house of Yahweh around the king. ⁸ You shall surround the king, every man with his weapons in his hand; and he who comes within the ranks, let him be slain. Be with the king when he goes out, and when he comes in. ⁹ The captains over hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded; and they took every man his men, those who were to come in on the Sabbath, with those who were to go out on the Sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. ¹⁰ The priest delivered to the captains over hundreds the spears and shields that had been king David's,

which were in the house of Yahweh. ¹¹ The guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, along by the altar and the house, around the king. ¹² Then he brought out the king's son and put the crown on him, and gave him the testimony. They made him king and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, Long live the king! ¹³ When Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the house of Yahweh. ¹⁴ She looked, and behold, the king stood by the pillar, as the tradition was, and the captains and the trumpets near the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew trumpets. Then Athaliah tore her clothes and cried, Treason! Treason! ¹⁵ Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of hundreds who were set over the army, and said to them, Bring her out between the ranks. Kill him who follows her with the sword. For the priest said, Don't let her be slain in the house of Yahweh. ¹⁶ So they made way for her; and she went by the way of the horses' entry to the king's house. She was slain there. ¹⁷ Jehoiada made a covenant between Yahweh and the king and the people, that they should be Yahweh's people; also between the king and the people. ¹⁸ All the people of the land went to the house

11:17 The covenant between Yahweh and the king was related to the covenant between the king and the people. Our covenant relationship with God isn't just between Him and us. It demands that we are in covenant with His people; we can't love Him that begat without loving those others begotten by Him (1 Jn. 4:9).

11:18 This purge of Baal worship came soon after Jehu's purge of Baal worship

of Baal, and broke it down. They broke his altars and his images in pieces thoroughly, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. The priest appointed officers over the house of Yahweh. ¹⁹ He took the captains over hundreds, and the Carites, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of Yahweh, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house. He sat on the throne of the kings. ²⁰ So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet. Athaliah they had slain with the sword at the king's house. ²¹ Jehoash was seven years old when he began to reign.

CHAPTER 12 Sep. 6

Joash Repairs the Temple

In the seventh year of Jehu began Jehoash to reign; and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. ² Jehoash did that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. ³ However the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high

places. ⁴ Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the holy things that is brought into the house of Yahweh, in current money, the money of the persons at which each man is rated, and all the money that it comes into any man's heart to bring into the house of Yahweh, ⁵ let the priests take it to them, every man from his acquaintance; and they shall repair the breaches of the house, wherever any breach shall be found. ⁶ But, in the twenty third year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house. ⁷ Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and for the other priests, and said to them, Why don't you repair the breaches of the house? Now therefore take no more money from your treasurers, but deliver it for the breaches of the house. ⁸ The priests agreed that they should take no more money from the people, neither repair the breaches of the house themselves. ⁹ Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the house of Yahweh. The priests who kept the threshold put therein all the money that was brought into the

(10:18). The reforms were obviously never far reaching. We can remove the external appearance of sin from our lives, but it will come back quickly unless we replace sinful practices with dedication to the true God. Otherwise, the void created will again be filled by sin, in one form or another. Breaking sinful habits must be followed up by replacing them with something spiritual, or else we will revert again to sin.

12:2 Our spirituality can be dominated by others for a time, but in the end, God wants us to have a personal relationship with Him – and therefore He has a way of removing all the props which we have had holding up our faith, and then we are left alone to directly engage with Him totally on our own initiative. This may account for some of the midlife crises of faith which there are amongst believers who were raised in the Faith.

house of Yahweh. ¹⁰ It was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags and counted the money that was found in the house of Yahweh. ¹¹ They gave the money that was weighed out into the hands of those who did the work, who had the oversight of the house of Yahweh. They paid it out to the carpenters and the builders, who worked on the house of Yahweh, ¹² and to the masons and the stone cutters, and for buying timber and cut stone to repair the breaches of the house of Yahweh, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it. ¹³ But there were not made for the house of Yahweh cups of silver, snuffers, basins, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of Yahweh; ¹⁴ for they gave that to those who did the work, and repaired therewith the house of Yahweh. ¹⁵ Moreover they didn't demand an accounting from the men into whose hand they delivered the money to give to those who did the work; for they dealt faithfully. ¹⁶ The money for the trespass offerings, and the money for the sin offerings, were not brought into the house of Yahweh: it was the priests'.

The Death of Jehoash

¹⁷ Then Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it; and Hazael set his face to go

up to Jerusalem. ¹⁸ Jehoash king of Judah took all the holy things that Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own holy things, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of Yahweh, and of the king's house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria; and he went away from Jerusalem. ¹⁹ Now the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ²⁰ His servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and struck Joash at the house of Millo, on the way that goes down to Silla. ²¹ For Jozacar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, struck him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David. Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

CHAPTER 13 Sep. 7

Jehoahaz's Reign

In the twenty-third year of Joash son of Ahaziah king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria for seventeen years. ² He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, in which he made Israel to sin. He didn't depart from it. ³ The anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel, and He delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben Hadad

12:18 *He went away from Jerusalem* – Sometimes our faithless actions appear to have worked out and bought us the deliverance we sought, but the parallel record in Chronicles makes it clear that Jehoash paid for this with the loss of his personal faith.

the son of Hazael, continually. ⁴ Jehoahaz begged Yahweh, and Yahweh listened to him; for He saw the oppression of Israel, how that the king of Syria oppressed them. ⁵ Yahweh gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians; and the children of Israel lived in their tents as before. ⁶ Nevertheless they didn't depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, with which he made Israel to sin, but walked therein. There remained the Asherah also in Samaria. ⁷ For the king of Syria didn't leave to Jehoahaz of the people any more than fifty horsemen, ten chariots and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria destroyed them, and made them like the dust in threshing. ⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ⁹ Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his place.

Jehoash's Reign

¹⁰ In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz began to reign over Israel in Samaria for sixteen years. ¹¹ He did that which was evil in the sight of

Yahweh; he didn't depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel to sin; but he walked therein. ¹² Now the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, and his might with which he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ¹³ Joash slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam sat on his throne. Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. ¹⁴ Now Elisha contracted a sickness of which he would die. Joash the king of Israel came down to him and wept over him and said, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen! ¹⁵ Elisha said to him, Take bow and arrows; and he took to him bow and arrows. ¹⁶ He said to the king of Israel, Put your hand on the bow; and he put his hand on it. Elisha laid his hands on the king's hands. ¹⁷ He said, Open the window eastward; and he opened them. Then Elisha said, Shoot! And he shot. He said, Yahweh's arrow of victory, even the arrow of victory over Syria; for you shall strike the Syrians in Aphek, until you have consumed them. ¹⁸ He said, Take the arrows; and he took them. He said to the king of Israel, Strike the ground; and he struck three times,

13:14 Elijah's example clearly influenced Elisha, both in the nature of the miracles which he performed, and in how when Elisha died, he was likewise seen as "My father, the chariot of Israel, and the horseman thereof". How Elisha related to Elijah, was how people came to relate to Elisha. This is not only a neat cameo of the immense personal influence which we have upon each other; it reflects how Elisha learnt the lesson from Elijah, which we too must learn, of freely and totally absorbing ourselves in the progress of God's Angelic, cherubic work to bring about *His* glory and not our own. See on 2:12.

and stopped. ¹⁹ The man of God was angry with him and said, You should have struck five or six times. Then you would have struck Syria until you had consumed it, whereas now you shall strike Syria just three times.

The Death of Elisha and of Hazael

²⁰ Elisha died, and they buried him. Now the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. ²¹ It happened, as they were burying a man, that behold, they spied a band; and they cast the man into the tomb of Elisha. As soon as the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet. ²² Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. ²³ But Yahweh was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and had respect to them because of His cove-

nant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither did He cast them out from His presence at that time. ²⁴ Hazael king of Syria died; and Ben Hadad his son reigned in his place. ²⁵ Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Ben Hadad the son of Hazael the cities which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Joash struck him three times, and recovered the cities of Israel.

CHAPTER 14 Sep. 8

Amaziah Becomes King of Judah

In the second year of Joash son of Joahaz king of Israel began Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah to reign. ² He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Jehoaddin of Jerusalem. ³ He

13:19 Yahweh in some ways and at some times allows Himself to be limited by the perceptions and faith of His people. If Joash had perceived deeper what Elisha meant and discerned the symbolism of the arrows, he would have smitten many times and the Syrian threat would have been eliminated entirely. But he didn't, and therefore Elijah was frustrated with him; the great potential victory was limited by a man's lack of spiritual perception. Whilst theoretical understanding alone can't save anyone, it plays a part in the quality and nature of a person's relationship with their God.

13:21 Jesus was the first person to be given immortality (1 Cor. 15:20,23); the people resurrected before His time must therefore have died again. God's plan is that all His people will be rewarded with immortality together, at the final resurrection and judgment (Heb. 11:39,40; 2 Tim. 4:8).

14:2 *His mother's name* – So often this is mentioned in the records of the kings, teaching us the huge spiritual influence of a mother upon her children throughout their lives.

14:3 There are levels of devotion to God, reflected in the different levels of reward at the last day (Lk. 19:17-19; 1 Cor. 15:41). If we have a heart for God, we won't be minimalists in His service; motivated by love for Him rather than any seeking of personal glory in the future, we will seek to always serve Him on the highest level we can. Amaziah served God on the same level as his father; our service of God shouldn't be a living out of parental expectation, nor should we feel content and self satisfied

did that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh, yet not like David his father: he did according to all that Joash his father had done. ⁴ However the high places were not taken away. The people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places. ⁵ As soon as the kingdom was established in his hand, he killed his servants who had slain the king his father. ⁶ But the children of the murderers he didn't put to death; as written in the book of the law of Moses, that Yahweh commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall die for his own sin. ⁷ He killed

of Edom in the Valley of Salt ten thousand and took Sela by war, and called its name Joktheel to this day. ⁸ Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face. ⁹ Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon saying, 'Give your daughter to my son as wife. Then a wild animal that was in Lebanon passed by, and trampled down the thistle. ¹⁰ You have indeed struck Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Enjoy the glory of it, and stay at home; for why should you

because we serve God on the level of our parents. We are to be motivated by our personal engagement with the fact God has loved us and His Son died for us, rather than comparing ourselves amongst ourselves; for Christ is to be for us the only standard of comparison (2 Cor. 10:12). The common phrase in the record of the Kings of Judah "he did that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh", used here in :3 about both Joash and Amaziah, is hard to conclusively interpret. Many of the men of whom this was said were not very righteous, and some (e.g. Uzziah, 15:34) were punished for their later apostasy. Possible explanations are that they repented at the end, although unrecorded; or that they were initially righteous; or that God counted them as righteous although they did wrong things. Or perhaps a man can *do* (and maybe this is the word that needs emphasis) what is right in God's eyes, but still ultimately be condemned because his *heart* is far from God. Amaziah "*did* that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh, yet not like (i.e. he didn't do his works like) David his father" must be paralleled with 2 Chron. 25:2: "he did that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh, but not with a perfect heart". Working for God as David did therefore involved doing the works with a perfect heart, the open conscience which David so often displayed in the Psalms. But Amaziah was deceived by the fact he was doing good works, and the real essence of his relationship with God was thereby overlooked. And we too can project a shadow-self to others, an image of spirituality, which eventually we come to believe ourselves; when our heart is far from God. This feature of human nature explains why a man or woman can reach such heights of devotion and then turn round and walk away from it all, out into the darkness of the world.

14:10 Success in the cut and thrust of worldly life shouldn't lead us to have the same attitude to our brethren, even if we consider ourselves stronger than them spiritually. We shouldn't treat our weaker brethren as if they are unbelieving worldlings; that was the mistake Amaziah made here.

meddle to your harm, that you should fall, even you, and Judah with you?’

¹¹ But Amaziah would not listen. So Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah faced each other at Beth Shemesh, which belongs to Judah. ¹² Judah was defeated by Israel; and they fled each man to his tent. ¹³ Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth Shemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, four hundred cubits.

¹⁴ He took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of Yahweh and in the treasures of the king’s house, with hostages also, and returned to Samaria. ¹⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, aren’t they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ¹⁶ Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his place. ¹⁷ Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years. ¹⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, aren’t

they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ¹⁹ They made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and killed him there. ²⁰ They brought him on horses; and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. ²¹ All the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah. ²² He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

Jeroboam’s Reign

²³ In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria for forty-one years. ²⁴ He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh: he didn’t depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel to sin. ²⁵ He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of Yahweh, the God of Israel, which He spoke by His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was of Gath Hepher. ²⁶ For Yahweh saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter; for

14:12 *Each man to his tent* – Although by this time the people were living in houses, their home was described idiomatically as their ‘tent’ (8:21). This was a reflection of the fact that God always wants His people to live in recognition of the fact that this life isn’t permanent, we are travellers on a journey towards His future Kingdom, which will be our permanent home (Heb. 13:14). We need to bear this in mind in how we perceive our room, apartment, house or mansion in which we live. All is temporary, a mere tent on the journey; and our resources of time and money should go towards the final destination rather than our temporary abode.

14:26 We must watch out for the tendency to think that because a man has dug a hole and then fallen into it, well, that’s his problem. But we have all done this, hopelessly

there was none shut up nor left at large, neither was there any helper for Israel. ²⁷ Yahweh didn't say that He would blot out the name of Israel from under the sky; but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash. ²⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered for Israel Damascus and Hamath, which had belonged to Judah, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ²⁹ Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zechariah his son reigned in his place.

CHAPTER 15 Sep. 9
The Reigns of Azariah and Zechariah

In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign. ² Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah of

Jerusalem. ³ He did that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. ⁴ However the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places. ⁵ Yahweh struck the king, so that he was a leper to the day of his death, and lived in a separate house. Jotham the king's son was over the household, judging the people of the land. ⁶ Now the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ⁷ Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David. Jotham his son reigned in his place. ⁸ In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria six months. ⁹ He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, as his fathers had done: he didn't depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel to sin. ¹⁰ Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against

so. We only have ourselves to blame. And yet God has rushed to us in Christ. He was grieved for the affliction of Israel, even though it was purely due to their own sin and wilful rebellion. If a man has fallen into his own hole, he is still down there and needs help, however he got there.

15:3 *According to all that his father Amaziah had done* – See on 14:3.

15:9 *The sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel to sin* – This phrase runs like a refrain throughout the record of Israel's kings. The sinfulness of sin is that it leads others into sin; Jeroboam's sin influenced many generations to sin in the same way. The Biblical record so strongly emphasizes this. Our behaviour has more influence upon others, for good or for bad, than we may realize; and it continues after our death, even if in this life we may consider ourselves insignificant to others. Jeroboam's sin was in creating another centre of worship apart from the temple; thus he divided God's people. It could be argued that this sin of division was what was so extremely serious to God. Our divisive behaviour, or upholding the divisions created by others, will have serious consequence to the next generation of believers.

him, and struck him before the people, and killed him, and reigned in his place. ¹¹ Now the rest of the acts of Zechariah, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. ¹² This was the word of Yahweh which He spoke to Jehu, saying, Your sons to the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel. So it came to pass.

Wicked Kings of Israel

¹³ Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the thirty-ninth year of Azariah king of Judah; and he reigned for a month in Samaria. ¹⁴ Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and struck Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and killed him, and reigned in his place. ¹⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. ¹⁶ Then Menahem struck Tiphseh, and all who were therein, and its borders, from Tirzah, because they didn't open to him. Therefore he struck it; and all the women therein who were with child he ripped up. ¹⁷ In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem the son of Gadi began to reign over Israel for ten years in Samaria. ¹⁸ He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh. He didn't depart all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel to sin. ¹⁹ There came against the land Pul the king of Assyria; and Menahem gave Pul one thousand talents of silver, that

he might help him to confirm the kingdom in his hand. ²⁰ Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and didn't stay there in the land. ²¹ Now the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ²² Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his place. ²³ In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria for two years. ²⁴ He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh. He didn't depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel to sin. ²⁵ Pekah the son of Remaliah, his captain, conspired against him and struck him in Samaria, in the castle of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah; and with him were fifty men of the Gileadites. He killed him, and reigned in his place. ²⁶ Now the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. ²⁷ In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria for twenty years. ²⁸ He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh. He didn't depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel to sin. ²⁹ In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath Pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah,

Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, Galilee all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria. ³⁰ Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and struck him, and killed him, and reigned in his place, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah. ³¹ Now the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

Jotham's Reign

³² In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign. ³³ He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Jerusha the daughter of Zadok. ³⁴ He did that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. ³⁵ However the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the high places. He built the upper gate of the house of Yahweh. ³⁶ Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ³⁷ In those days Yahweh began to send against Judah Rezin the king

of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah. ³⁸ Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father; and Ahaz his son reigned in his place.

CHAPTER 16 Sep. 10

Ahaz's Reign

In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. ² Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign; and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. He didn't do that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh his God, like David his father. ³ But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yes, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations, whom Yahweh cast out from before the children of Israel. ⁴ He sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places and on the hills, and under every green tree. ⁵ Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war; and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. ⁶ At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath; and the Syrians came to Elath, and lived there, to this day. ⁷ So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath Pileser king of As-

16:2 *In the eyes of Yahweh* – This could be a reference to the Angels. Although God can see and know and do all things directly of Himself, it seems He always prefers to work through some kind of mechanism. The Angels are perhaps the mechanism by which He is aware of all things in the lives of people on earth; we are continually in their presence, with them feeding back to God the situations on earth, and perhaps discussing them in the court of Heaven (1 Kings 22:22).

16:7 *I am your servant and your son* – Ahaz ought to have been aware that he was

syria saying, I am your servant and your son. Come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me. ⁸ Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of Yahweh, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria. ⁹ The king of Assyria listened to him. The king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried its people captive to Kir, and killed Rezin. ¹⁰ King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath Pileser king of Assyria, and saw the altar that was at Damascus; and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and its pattern, according to all its workmanship. ¹¹ Urijah the priest built an altar: according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus, so Urijah the priest made it for the coming of king Ahaz from Damascus. ¹² When the king had come from Damascus, the king saw the altar, and the king drew near to the altar, and offered on it. ¹³ He burnt his burnt offering and his meal offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings on the altar. ¹⁴ The

bronze altar, which was before Yahweh, he brought from the forefront of the house, from between his altar and the house of Yahweh, and put it on the north side of his altar. ¹⁵ King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest saying, On the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meal offering, and the king's burnt offering, and his meal offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meal offering and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice; but the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire by. ¹⁶ Urijah the priest did so, according to all that king Ahaz commanded. ¹⁷ King Ahaz cut off the panels of the bases, and removed the basins from off them, and took down the sea from off the bronze oxen that were under it, and put it on a pavement of stone. ¹⁸ The covered way for the Sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry outside the house of Yahweh, he changed because of the king of Assyria. ¹⁹ Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ²⁰ Ahaz

Yahweh's servant and son, and that Yahweh's claims upon us are total. We can't serve two masters. Ahaz likely justified himself by arguing that this was merely a form of words which was common at the time; but words have meanings and power, and by them we shall be judged at the last day (Mt. 12:37). We use so many of them each day that we can forget their colossal significance to God.

16:13 He offered a peace offering, when actually he was not at peace with God at all (other examples in 1 Sam. 13:9; Prov. 7:14; Am. 5:22). We must examine ourselves to know whether we are at peace with God before offering the "peace offering" of the breaking of bread service.

16:20 Wicked kings usually had wicked sons, but good king Hezekiah demonstrates that bad parents don't have to have bad children; the power of God's word is such that

slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

CHAPTER 17 Sep. 11

Israel Are Taken Captive into Assyria

In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah began to reign in Samaria over Israel for nine years. ² He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, yet not as the kings of Israel who were before him. ³ Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and brought him tribute. ⁴ The king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and offered no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. ⁵ Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. ⁶ In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah,

and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. ⁷ It was so, because the children of Israel had sinned against Yahweh their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They had feared other gods, ⁸ and walked in the statutes of the kings of Israel which they had made, and of the nations, whom Yahweh cast out from before the children of Israel. ⁹ The children of Israel did secretly things that were not right against Yahweh their God. They built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city; ¹⁰ and they set them up pillars and Asherim on every high hill, and under every green tree. ¹¹ There they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the nations whom Yahweh carried away before them; and they worked wicked things to provoke Yahweh to anger; ¹² and they served idols, of which Yahweh had said to them, You shall not do this thing. ¹³ Yet Yahweh testified to Israel and to Judah, by every prophet and every seer, saying, Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My stat-

the vicious circle can be broken. For in God's word and for those baptized into Christ, there is the power of new creation whereby we can be genuinely born again (Jn. 3:3-5; 2 Cor. 5:17).

17:13-18 Sinfulness is sometimes attached to people apart from the things which they currently do wrong. Sin is serious. The last generation of Israel were judged for their sins not because they had sinned more than any other generation, but because the collective, unforgiven sin of Israel had accumulated with God to such an extent that His judgments fell (:2,13-18; Ez. 9:9). God is not passive and overlooking of unrepented sin, even though His patience and the high threshold level He sets before releasing judgment may make it look like this. The Amorites were likewise only judged once the cup of their iniquities reached a certain level (Gen. 15:16). The passage of time doesn't work some kind of atonement for our sins.

utes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets. ¹⁴ Notwithstanding, they would not listen, but stiffened their neck, like the neck of their fathers, who didn't believe in Yahweh their God. ¹⁵ They rejected His statutes and His covenant that He made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified to them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom Yahweh had commanded them that they should not do like them. ¹⁶ They forsook all the commandments of Yahweh their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah, and worshipped all the army of the sky, and served Baal. ¹⁷ They caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, to provoke Him to anger. ¹⁸ Therefore Yahweh was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight. There was none left but the tribe of Judah only. ¹⁹ Also Judah didn't keep the commandments of Yahweh their God, but walked in the

statutes of Israel which they made. ²⁰ Yahweh rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until He had cast them out of His sight. ²¹ For He tore Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Jeroboam drove Israel from following Yahweh, and made them sin a great sin. ²² The children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they didn't depart from them; ²³ until Yahweh removed Israel out of His sight, as He spoke by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away out of their own land to Assyria to this day. ²⁴ The king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they possessed Samaria, and lived in the cities of it. ²⁵ So it was, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they didn't fear Yahweh; therefore Yahweh sent lions among them, which killed some of them. ²⁶ Therefore they spoke to the king of Assyria saying, The nations which you have carried away and placed in the cities of Samaria, don't know the law of the god of the land. Therefore

17:15 *They followed vanity, and became vain* – The idols are referred to as ‘vanities’; those who served them became like them (Ps. 115:8; 135:18). Whilst we may not worship pieces of wood and stone, modern society is full of vain things such as never before. The internet has encouraged this to a huge extent, so that by the end of many modern lives all a person has done is to click a mouse and hit some keys millions of times in vain entertainment and frivolous social commentary, and watched thousands of hours of movies flickering on a screen. Yet the service of the true God provides us with opportunities to use our lives with ultimate, eternal significance and purpose. If we serve Him, the God of ultimate purpose, the antithesis of vanity, we shall become like Him.

he has sent lions among them, and behold, they kill them, because they don't know the law of the god of the land. ²⁷ Then the king of Assyria commanded saying, Carry there one of the priests whom you brought from there; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the law of the god of the land. ²⁸ So one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and lived in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear Yahweh. ²⁹ However every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities in which they lived. ³⁰ The men of Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, ³¹ the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burnt their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. ³² So they feared Yahweh, and made to them from among themselves priests of the high places, who sac-

rificed for them in the houses of the high places. ³³ They feared Yahweh, and served their own gods, after the ways of the nations from among whom they had been carried away.

The Broken Covenant

³⁴ To this day they do what they did before: they don't fear Yahweh, neither do they follow their statutes, or their ordinances, or the law or the commandment which Yahweh commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel. ³⁵ Yahweh had made a covenant with them and commanded them saying, You shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them; ³⁶ but you shall fear Yahweh, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and with an outstretched arm, and you shall bow yourselves to Him, and you shall sacrifice to Him. ³⁷ The statutes and the ordinances, the law and the commandment which He wrote for you, you shall observe to do for evermore. You shall not fear other

17:33, 34 *They feared Yahweh... they don't fear Yahweh* – To serve God and also other gods isn't serving God at all – because we simply can't serve two masters (Mt. 6:24). There is no third way – devotion to God must be total, for anything less than that is effectively not serving Him at all. This explains the apparently exaggerated language of :15,16 – that Israel rejected all God's laws and broke every one of His commandments. It's clear they didn't become atheists, they didn't formally reject Yahweh, they kept some of His laws. But because their obedience was so incomplete, God counted them as effectively not being obedient at all. Clearly enough, our relationship with God can't be a mere hobby, an intellectual assent, an occasional fascination, a Sundays only affair. It has to be of the heart.

17:37 *The commandment which He wrote for you* – God's word is personally written to each generation; the words of the Bible aren't of merely historical interest. God's word is a living word, speaking to and written for each generation in a way which human words and documents can never be. Because the Bible is literature, we can too

gods. ³⁸ You shall not forget the covenant that I have made with you; neither shall you fear other gods. ³⁹ But you shall fear Yahweh your God; and He will deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. ⁴⁰ However they did not listen, but they did what they did before. ⁴¹ So these nations feared Yahweh, and served their engraved images. Their children likewise, and their children's children, as their fathers did, so they do to this day.

CHAPTER 18 Sep. 12

Hezekiah Becomes King of Judah

Now it happened in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. ² He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. ³ He did that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh, according to all that David his father had done. ⁴ He removed the high places, and broke the pillars, and cut down the Asherah. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for in those days the children

of Israel burned incense to it; and he called it Nehushtan. ⁵ He trusted in Yahweh the God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among them that were before him. ⁶ For he joined with Yahweh; he didn't depart from following Him, but kept His commandments which Yahweh commanded Moses. ⁷ Yahweh was with him; wherever he went forth he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria, and didn't serve him. ⁸ He struck the Philistines to Gaza and its borders, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city. ⁹ It happened in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. ¹⁰ At the end of three years they took it: in the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. ¹¹ The king of Assyria carried Israel away to Assyria, and put them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, ¹² because they didn't obey the voice of Yahweh their God,

easily assume it is *only* literature. As a genre of communication, it is unique; such is the wonder of the inspired Bible.

18:4 The bronze serpent had become a totem and idol, it was worshipped for what it physically was rather than there being any perception of the salvation in Christ which it had prefigured. The cross has been likewise abused in many Christian traditions.

18:6 *He joined with Yahweh* – This is what God seeks – that we should intertwine our life and spirit with His. The Hebrew idea of ‘joining’ suggests marriage (Mt. 19:6), and by entering covenant relationship with God through joining to Christ in baptism, this is effectively what we have done. This is an amazing concept – that the God of the universe would join in such intimate relationship with tiny people on this earth. The difference between us is huge beyond words; no wonder we have such difficulty in understanding and responding to His love.

but transgressed His covenant, even all that Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded, and would not hear it, nor do it.

The Assyrian Invasion

¹³ Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and took them. ¹⁴ Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish saying, I have offended; return from me. That which you put on me, I will bear. The king of Assyria appointed to Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. ¹⁵ Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of Yahweh, and in the treasures of the king's house. ¹⁶ At that time, Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of Yahweh's temple, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. ¹⁷ The king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-

shakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great army to Jerusalem. They went up and came to Jerusalem. When they had come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field. ¹⁸ When they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebnah the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.

Rabshakeh's Speech

¹⁹ Rabshakeh said to them, Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this in which you trust? ²⁰ You say (but they are but vain words), 'There is counsel and strength for war'. Now on whom do you trust, that you have rebelled against me? ²¹ Now, behold, you trust in the staff of this bruised reed, even in Egypt. If a man leans on it, it will go into his hand, and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all

18:13 This stands in intended contrast to the chapter so far, which has described Hezekiah's obedience in such stellar language. The point simply is that bad things happen to good people; commitment to God doesn't shield us from disaster.

In the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah – Hezekiah was mortally sick but then healed by God and given an extra 15 years to live (2 Kings 20:6). He reigned 29 years (:2); therefore this sickness was also in the fourteenth year of his reign. The invasion and his sickness were at the same time. Sometimes the coincidence of serious trials in our lives is such that we are left with no other conclusion but that this has to be God's hand; of itself this destroys any possibility that God gives only the good and there is some cosmic 'Satan' being bringing the evil. Hezekiah's sickness may explain his uncharacteristic lack of faith displayed in :14-16 and :21; or it could be that those decisions were taken in his name by others due to his sickness.

18:20 In the face of overwhelming human odds against him, Hezekiah trusted in the more abstract things of faith in God's word; to the eyes of the world, this is simply laughable. But in life after life, situation after situation, such faith is justified – not only in Biblical history but in examples of faithful believers all around us.

who trust on him. ²² But if you tell me, ‘We trust in Yahweh our God’; isn’t that He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, ‘You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?’ ²³ Now therefore, please give pledges to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them. ²⁴ How then can you turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master’s servants, and put your trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? ²⁵ Have I now come up without Yahweh against this place to destroy it? Yahweh said to me, ‘Go up against this land, and destroy it’. ²⁶ Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, Shebnah and Joah said to Rabshakeh, Please speak to your servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it. Don’t speak with us in the Jews’ language, in the hearing of the people who are on the wall. ²⁷ But Rabshakeh said to them, Has my master sent me to your master, and to you, to speak these words? Hasn’t he sent me to the men who sit on the wall, to eat their own dung, and to drink their own water with you? ²⁸ Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a

loud voice in the Jews’ language, and spoke, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria: ²⁹ Thus says the king, ‘Don’t let Hezekiah deceive you; for he will not be able to deliver you out of his hand. ³⁰ Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in Yahweh saying, Yahweh will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. ³¹ Don’t listen to Hezekiah’. For thus says the king of Assyria, ‘Make your peace with me, and come out to me; and every one of you will eat of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and everyone will drink the waters of his own cistern; ³² until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and of honey, that you may live, and not die. Don’t listen to Hezekiah when he persuades you saying, Yahweh will deliver us. ³³ Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? ³⁴ Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? ³⁵ Who are they among all the gods of the

18:26 The fact Rabshakeh spoke Hebrew suggests he was a Jew who had turned traitor. Hence he was aware of the prophet Micah’s words (see on :31).

18:31 Eating from one’s own vine and fig tree is the very language which the contemporary prophet Micah had used to describe God’s Kingdom on earth (Mic. 4:4). Rabshakeh was presenting the kingdom of Assyria as being the promised Kingdom of God on earth. The kingdoms of this world stand as an imitation Kingdom of God; the subliminal message of advertising and much human reasoning is that if we go the way of the world, we can have our promised Kingdom here and now. This was the very temptation with which Jesus struggled and overcame in the wilderness (Mt. 4:8).

countries, that have delivered their country out of my hand, that Yahweh should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?’³⁶ But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word; for the king’s commandment was, Don’t answer him.³⁷ Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, came with Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

CHAPTER 19 Sep. 13

Isaiah Prophecies Deliverance

It happened, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of Yahweh.² He sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.³ They said to him, Thus says Hezekiah, ‘This day is a

day of trouble, of rebuke, and of rejection; for the children have come to the point of birth, and there is no strength to deliver them.⁴ It may be Yahweh your God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master has sent to defy the living God, and will rebuke the words which Yahweh your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left’. So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.⁶ Isaiah said to them, Thus you shall tell your master, ‘Thus says Yahweh, Don’t be afraid of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me.⁷ Behold, I will put a spirit in him, and he will hear news, and will return to his own land. I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land’.⁸ So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah; for he had heard that he had departed from Lachish.⁹ When

19:1, 2 Our response to crisis should be like Hezekiah’s – to turn to God in prayer, and to His word and His people, rather than to desperate worldly alternatives.

19:3 *A day of trouble* – The phrase in the Greek Septuagint version is that also used in Dan. 12:1 and Mt. 24:21 about the latter day “time of trouble” for Israel. There will therefore be an equivalent of the Assyrian invader in the last days, and Jerusalem’s deliverance will be by means of God’s dramatic intervention in the return of Christ to earth to save Israel from their Middle Eastern invaders. The whole incident can be read as a detailed type of the latter day invasion of Israel before Christ returns.

19:4 *The words which Yahweh your God has heard* – God hears every word and is fully aware of the detail of every situation which we face. Isaiah picks up this sentence and rephrases it by telling Hezekiah to not “be afraid of the words that *you* have heard” (:6). The words *we* hear which so frighten us are in fact heard by *God*.

19:7 *I will put a spirit in him* – The Hebrew word translated “spirit” in the Old Testament has a wide range of meaning, but here it refers to the mind. God can give people an attitude of mind; He can give us a holy spirit or mindset if we seek it. And He can just as easily give people a spirit of fear, making them turn away from doing what is the humanly obvious thing to do, as He did here with Rabshakeh.

he heard it said of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he has come out to fight against you, he sent messengers again to Hezekiah saying, ¹⁰ Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah saying, Don't let your God in whom you trust deceive you saying, Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. ¹¹ Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly. Will you be delivered? ¹² Have the gods of the nations delivered them, which my fathers have destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph and the children of Eden that were in Telassar? ¹³ Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena and Ivvah?

Hezekiah's Prayer and God's Response

¹⁴ Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it. Then Hezekiah went up to

the house of Yahweh, and spread it before Yahweh. ¹⁵ Hezekiah prayed before Yahweh and said, Yahweh, the God of Israel, Who sits above the cherubim, You are the God, even You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. ¹⁶ Incline Your ear, Yahweh, and hear. Open your eyes, Yahweh, and see. Hear the words of Sennacherib, with which he has sent to defy the living God. ¹⁷ Truly, Yahweh, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, ¹⁸ and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they have destroyed them. ¹⁹ Now therefore, Yahweh our God, save us, I beg You, out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You, Yahweh, are God alone. ²⁰ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah saying, Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, 'Whereas you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib

19:14 Whilst God sees and knows all things, it can be psychologically good for us to place the documents which are causing us grief 'before the Lord' and pray over them. God hears and reads those words just as much as we do (see on :4).

19:16 *Hear the words of Sennacherib* – On one level, Hezekiah knew that Yahweh had heard those words (:4), but he still asks God to hear them and respond to them. And God patiently assures him, that He has indeed heard (:20). Our faith is rarely if ever total; we know of God's possibilities on one level, and yet doubt them in practice. When the disciples prayed "Look upon their threatenings..." (Acts 4:29), they were surely inspired by the praying of Hezekiah here, and used the same words. Daniel seems to also have paraphrased Hezekiah's prayer in his prayer of Dan. 9:18. And these examples ought to specifically fire our prayer life, too, quoting words of Biblical prayers as part of *our* prayers. And yet Hezekiah's prayer had been inspired by the prayers of those who had in turn gone before *him* – he is alluding to the prayers of repentant Israel (1 Kings 18:39), Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:6) and Solomon (2 Chron. 6:40).

19:19 *That all the kingdoms of the earth may know* – The motivation for our prayer requests should always be the ultimate glory of God.

king of Assyria, I have heard you. ²¹ This is the word that Yahweh has spoken concerning him: The virgin daughter of Zion has despised you and ridiculed you. The daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head at you. ²² Whom have you defied and blasphemed? Against whom have you exalted your voice and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel. ²³ By your messengers you have defied the Lord, and have said, ‘With the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, to the innermost parts of Lebanon; and I will cut down its tall cedars, and its choice fir trees; and I will enter into His deepest dwelling place, the forest of His fruitful field. ²⁴ I have dug and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet will I dry up all the rivers of Egypt’. ²⁵ Haven’t you heard how I have done it long ago, and formed it of ancient times? Now have I brought it to pass, that it should be yours to lay waste fortified cities into ruinous heaps. ²⁶ Therefore their inhabitants were of small power. They were dismayed and confounded. They were like the grass of

the field, and like the green herb, like the grass on the housetops, and like grain blasted before it has grown up. ²⁷ But I know your sitting down, and your going out, and your coming in, and your raging against Me. ²⁸ Because of your raging against Me, and because your arrogance has come up into My ears, therefore will I put my hook in your nose and My bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way by which you came. ²⁹ This shall be the sign to you: You shall eat this year that which grows of itself, and in the second year that which springs of the same; and in the third year sow, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat its fruit. ³⁰ The remnant that has escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. ³¹ For out of Jerusalem a remnant will go out, and out of Mount Zion those who shall escape. The zeal of Yahweh will perform this’. ³² Therefore thus says Yahweh concerning the king of Assyria, ‘He shall not come to this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it. ³³ By the way that he came, by

19:21 The “daughter of Zion” refers to the faithful remnant within Jerusalem, centred around Hezekiah. But they hardly appeared to be confidently ridiculing the Assyrians; they were scared and doubting whether God really could save them (see on :16). But because they did have some faith, God counted this as total faith, in the same way as He imputes righteousness to those in Christ. Their weak faith was counted by God as utter confidence.

19:22 That attitudes are read as prayers is reflected in the way that Rabshakeh’s arrogance against Yahweh is described as him lifting up his eyes against God. By contrast, Hezekiah prayed at the same time: “Unto you do I lift up my eyes” (Ps. 123:1). ‘Lifting up eyes’ is therefore an idiom for prayer. Rabshakeh didn’t consciously pray blasphemous words to God, but his attitude was counted as a prayer.

the same shall he return, and he shall not come to this city', says Yahweh. ³⁴ 'For I will defend this city to save it, for My own sake and for My servant David's sake'. ³⁵ It happened that night, that the angel of Yahweh went out and struck one hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. When men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. ³⁶ So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and lived at Nineveh. ³⁷ It happened, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Esar Haddon his son reigned in his place.

CHAPTER 20 Sep. 14

Hezekiah's Illness

In those days was Hezekiah sick to death. Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, Thus says Yahweh, 'Set your house in order; for you shall die, and not live'. ² Then he turned his face

to the wall, and prayed to Yahweh saying, ³ Remember now, Yahweh, I beg You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Your sight. Hezekiah wept bitterly. ⁴ It happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle part of the city, that the word of Yahweh came to him saying, ⁵ Turn back and tell Hezekiah the prince of My people, 'Thus says Yahweh the God of David your father, I have heard your prayer. I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day, you shall go up to the house of Yahweh. ⁶ I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for My own sake, and for My servant David's sake'. ⁷ Isaiah said, Take a cake of figs. They took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered. ⁸ Hezekiah said to Isaiah, What shall be the sign that Yahweh will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of Yahweh the third day? ⁹ Isaiah said, This

20:1-3 Here we see how God can state an intended purpose of His in very definite terms, as if there is no changing it – and yet such is His sensitivity to human prayer and love for Him, that He is willing to change it. He did the same when Moses persuaded Him not to destroy Israel as He planned (Ex. 32). There is often a gap between God's statement of His purpose and the fulfilment of it, and during that gap period we can reason with Him to act otherwise. His purpose is perhaps structured this way so that we can learn to pray more intensely and connect with Him more intimately than would otherwise be the case. It also inspires us to be spiritually ambitious enough to think of changing God's intended plan of action.

20:5 Prayer isn't always specific words; God understands situations as prayers. Thus here we see Hezekiah's tears paralleled with his words. God interpreted his tears as a prayer. Hezekiah had earlier requested for God to both hear and see the words of Sennacherib (19:26), as if these too were to be read as a prayer for Divine intervention.

20:8 Like Gideon wanting a sign, Hezekiah's faith wasn't total; and yet God still counted it as faith.

shall be the sign to you from Yahweh, that Yahweh will do the thing that He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or go back ten steps? ¹⁰ Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go forward ten steps. Nay, but let the shadow return backward ten steps. ¹¹ Isaiah the prophet cried to Yahweh; and He brought the shadow ten steps backward, by which it had gone down on the dial of Ahaz.

Hezekiah's Failure

¹² At that time Berodach Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah; for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. ¹³ Hezekiah listened to them, and showed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, the house of his armour and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah didn't show them. ¹⁴ Then Isaiah the prophet came to king Hezekiah and said to him, What did these men say? From where did they come to you? Hezekiah said, They have come from a far country, even from Babylon. ¹⁵ He said, What have they seen in your house? Hezekiah answered, They have seen all that is in my house. There is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them. ¹⁶ Isaiah

said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of Yahweh. ¹⁷ 'Behold, the days come, that all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have laid up in store to this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left', says Yahweh. ¹⁸ 'Of your sons who shall issue from you, whom you shall father, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon'. ¹⁹ Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, The word of Yahweh which you have spoken is good. He said moreover, Isn't it so, if peace and truth shall be in my days? ²⁰ Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and all his might, and how he made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ²¹ Hezekiah slept with his fathers; and Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

CHAPTER 21 Sep. 15

Manasseh's Reign

Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah. ² He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, after the abominations of the nations whom Yahweh cast out before the children of Israel. ³ For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for

20:19 This seems a very selfish and short termist thing to say. It seems Hezekiah overcame so much – bad parental background, apostasy in his nation, terminal sickness, invasion – and yet failed to get through the hoop of materialism, acclaim, acceptance and the soft life. Many modern disciples are challenged likewise. We must realize the massive power of these temptations. See on 23:3.

Baal, and made an Asherah, as did Ahab king of Israel, and worshiped all the host of the sky, and served them. ⁴ He built altars in the house of Yahweh, of which Yahweh said, I will put My name in Jerusalem. ⁵ He built altars for all the host of the sky in the two courts of the house of Yahweh. ⁶ He made his son to pass through the fire, and practised sorcery, used enchantments and dealt with those who had familiar spirits and with wizards. He worked much evil in the sight of Yahweh, to provoke Him to anger. ⁷ He set the engraved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which Yahweh said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put My name forever; ⁸ neither will I cause the feet of Israel to wander any more out of the land which I gave their fathers, if only they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them. ⁹ But they didn't listen: and

Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations did whom Yahweh destroyed before the children of Israel. ¹⁰ Yahweh spoke by His servants the prophets saying, ¹¹ Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, and has done wickedly above all that the Amorites did who were before him, and has made Judah also to sin with his idols; ¹² therefore thus says Yahweh the God of Israel, 'Behold, I bring such evil on Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears shall tingle. ¹³ I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab; and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. ¹⁴ I will cast off the remainder of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies. They will become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; ¹⁵ because they have done that which is evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt even to this day'. ¹⁶ Moreover Manasseh shed

21:4, 7 Because the Name was called upon the temple, therefore it should have been simply impossible that those who realized this could worship idols in it; whatever has God's Name called upon it, whatever bears His image, must be devoted to Him alone. We who are baptized into His Name, who have that Name called upon us, cannot have idols in our lives.

21:14 *I will cast off* – God has cast off His people (see too Zech. 10:6); and yet, because a minority of them will always accept Christ, it is not true that God has cast off His people in a total sense (Rom. 11:1). It was only because of this remnant that Israel have not become like Sodom (Rom. 9:29) – even though Old Testament passages such as Ezekiel 16 clearly liken Jerusalem to Sodom. Yet they are not as Sodom ultimately, for the sake of the remnant who will believe. In all this we see the very real tension within God, reflective of His extreme love for His wayward people.

21:16 2 Chron. 33:13,23 describe Manasseh's repentance and humbling of himself; but that isn't mentioned in the record here in 2 Kings. We learn from this the impor-

very much innocent blood, until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; besides his sin with which he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh. ¹⁷ Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ¹⁸ Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza; and Amon his son reigned in his place.

Amon's Reign

¹⁹ Amon was twenty-two years old when he began to reign; and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. ²⁰ He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, as Manasseh his father did. ²¹ He walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: ²² and he forsook Yahweh the God of his fathers, and didn't walk in the way of Yahweh. ²³ The servants of Amon conspired against him and put the king to death in his own house. ²⁴ But the people of the land killed all those who had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his place. ²⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, aren't they written in the book of

the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ²⁶ He was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza; and Josiah his son reigned in his place.

CHAPTER 22 Sep. 16

Josiah's Reign

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign; and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. ² He did that which was right in the eyes of Yahweh, and walked in all the way of David his father, and didn't turn aside to the right hand or to the left. ³ It happened in the eighteenth year of king Josiah that the king sent Shaphan, the son of Azaliah the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of Yahweh, saying, ⁴ Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest, that he may sum the money which is brought into the house of Yahweh, which the keepers of the threshold have gathered of the people. ⁵ Let them deliver it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of Yahweh; and let them give it to the workmen who are in the house of Yahweh, to repair the breaches of the house, ⁶ to the carpenters, to the builders and to the masons, and for buying timber and cut stone to repair the house. ⁷ However there was no accounting made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand; for they dealt faithfully.

tance of comparing Scripture with Scripture in order to build up a more complete picture. Perhaps God wrote the Bible in this way in order to reveal things in truth to those who humbly and sensitively read *all* His word, and to confuse those who read partially without due reverence toward it.

The Book of the Law Is Found

⁸ Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Yahweh. Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan, and he read it. ⁹ Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again and said, Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of Yahweh. ¹⁰ Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, Hilkiah the priest has delivered a book to me. Shaphan read it before the king. ¹¹ It happened, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he tore

his clothes. ¹² The king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant saying, ¹³ Go inquire of Yahweh for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found; for great is the wrath of Yahweh that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that which is written concerning us. ¹⁴ So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Je-

22:11 Josiah lived a life pleasing to God, as did others of his generation, and yet he was in ignorance of all the details of God's law. Full knowledge, even of some quite important things, didn't stop Josiah from being credited with doing what was right before God and not 'turning aside to the right hand or to the left' (:2). He was judged according to how well he responded to that which he *did* know. And this may be a helpful window for us into how we should feel towards those who sincerely seek to follow the Lord and yet with imperfect knowledge. Time and again the prophets judged Israel according to their "ways", rather than according to their theological or academic knowledge (Ez. 18:30). We must bear this in mind in considering the status of those who only have partial access to or understanding of God's word. And yet once Josiah knew these words of God, he eagerly obeyed them as far as he could and asked for forgiveness for his disobedience to them – thus recognizing that sins of ignorance are still a felt offence against God. Our ignorance doesn't stop Him being hurt by our disobedience, just as others' ignorance doesn't mean they don't hurt us by their inappropriate words or actions. Hence sins of ignorance still required atonement under the Law of Moses.

22:13 It would seem that the part of the book of the law which was found included God's threatened judgments against Israel for their disobedience; it was "the book of the covenant" (23:2) and likely included the curses of Lev. 26 and Dt.28. Yet Jeremiah comments that when this was discovered, this word of God was for him the joy and rejoicing of his heart and he fed on it with joy (Jer. 15:16). All of God's word, including those parts of the Old Testament which some may consider as repetitive judgments which we'd rather not read, should be fed on by us and be some source of joy to us.

22:14 The fact that a woman was a prophetess at this time shows that women aren't always disqualified from speaking forth God's word.

rusalem in the second quarter); and they talked with her. ¹⁵ She said to them, Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel: ‘Tell the man who sent you to Me, ¹⁶ Thus says Yahweh, Behold, I will bring evil on this place and on its inhabitants, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read. ¹⁷ Because they have forsaken Me, and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore My wrath shall be kindled against this place, and it shall not be quenched. ¹⁸ But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of Yahweh, thus you shall tell him, Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel: Concerning the words which you have heard, ¹⁹ because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before Yahweh when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and have torn your clothes, and wept before Me; I also have heard you, says Yahweh. ²⁰ There-

fore behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, neither shall your eyes see all the evil which I will bring on this place’. They brought back this message to the king.

CHAPTER 23 Sep. 16

Josiah’s Reforms

The king sent, and they gathered to him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. ² The king went up to the house of Yahweh, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great. He read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of Yahweh. ³ The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before Yahweh, to walk after Yahweh and to keep His commandments, His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to confirm the words of this covenant that were written in this book; and all the people stood to the covenant. ⁴ The king

22:19 *Your heart was tender* – How is our response when a new understanding of the word’s teaching in practical, everyday issues stares us in the face from the pages of Scripture?

23:3 God had promised Josiah that all would be well in his lifetime, but He would judge the next generation for their sins. Josiah learnt the lesson of Hezekiah, who appeared to be satisfied with that (see on 20:19); for Josiah launches a major campaign to return Judah to Yahweh and to re-enter covenant with Him. It seems that Josiah believed that Judah’s repentance could really change the intention of God to destroy Israel in the next generation. We too should have this kind of concern for the body of believers in the next generation, rather than being merely content that we ourselves remain in fellowship with God.

23:4 When last did you read / understand something from Scripture, and then get up and *do something real, concrete and actual about it*? Josiah discovered the book of the Law – and he then went on to do something about it in practice. Reflect through what he did: Passover kept in Jerusalem (23:21-23) = Dt. 16:1-8; removed Asherahs

commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the threshold, to bring forth out of Yahweh's temple all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the Asherah, and for all the host of the sky; and he burned them outside of Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. ⁵ He put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places around Jerusalem; those also who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, the moon, to the planets and to all the host of the sky. ⁶ He brought out the Asherah from the house of Yahweh, outside of Jerusalem, to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and beat it to dust, and cast its dust on the graves of the common people. ⁷ He broke down the houses of the sodomites that were in the house of Yahweh, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah. ⁸ He brought all

the priests out of the cities of Judah and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; and he broke down the high places of the gates that were at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city. ⁹ Nevertheless the priests of the high places didn't come up to the altar of Yahweh in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brothers. ¹⁰ He defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. ¹¹ He took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entrance of the house of Yahweh, by the room of Nathan Melech the officer, who was in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. ¹² The king broke down the altars that were on the roof of the upper room of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and

(23:4,6,14) = Dt. 12:3; 16:21; star worship (23:4,11) = Dt. 17:3; the 'high places' and cults (23:8-20) = Dt. 12; child sacrifice (23:10) = Dt. 12:31; 18:10; the cultic stones (23:14) = Dt. 12:3; 16:22; conjuring up the dead (23:24) = Dt. 18:11. It would seem that Josiah was motivated by Deuteronomy 12-18, perhaps this was part of the book of the covenant which was discovered. Here we have a man who allowed Scripture to live in his life, and who was immediately motivated by it to tangible action. His was not a religion of fine Sunday morning words, intellectually admired and aesthetically pleasing. The word should likewise be made flesh in us as it was in Christ. What is required is passionate, real, actual, tangible, concrete action and re-action to what we read and understand.

23:7 The fact these sexual abominations were committed within the temple of God suggests that they had become part of the ritual of Yahweh worship, in the same way as the letters of Paul and Christ to the churches suggest that sexual immorality became part of apostate Christian worship in the first century. The tendency to mix spirituality with illicit sexuality has always been a temptation for the people of God and one of their most persistent weaknesses; we must beware of it.

the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of Yahweh, and beat them down from there, and cast their dust into the brook Kidron. ¹³ The king defiled the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mountain of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon. ¹⁴ He broke in pieces the pillars, and cut down the Asherim, and filled their places with the bones of men. ¹⁵ Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, even that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and beat it to dust, and burned the Asherah. ¹⁶ As Josiah turned himself, he spied the tombs that were there in the mountain; and he sent, and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them on the altar and defiled it, according to the word of Yahweh which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these things. ¹⁷ Then he said, What monument is that which I see? The men of the city told him, It is the tomb of the man of God, who came

from Judah, and proclaimed these things that you have done against the altar of Bethel. ¹⁸ He said, Let him be! Let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came out of Samaria. ¹⁹ All the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke Yahweh to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel. ²⁰ He killed all the priests of the high places that were there, upon the altars, and burned men's bones on them; and he returned to Jerusalem.

Josiah's Passover

²¹ The king commanded all the people saying, Keep the Passover to Yahweh your God, as it is written in this book of the covenant. ²² Surely there was not kept such a Passover from the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; ²³ but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah was this Passover kept to Yahweh in Jerusalem. ²⁴ Moreover Josiah removed those who had familiar spirits, and the wizards, the teraphim, the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might con-

23:21 The Law of Moses stated that Israel must keep the Passover, and if they didn't, or kept it incorrectly, then their covenant relationship with God would be fractured (Num. 9:13). But it seems that whilst the legislation about the Passover had been lost, they hadn't kept the Passover properly, if at all. And yet there were many faithful individuals who lived during that time when the book was lost who still retained relationship with God. This is no reason to conclude that obedience to God's covenant is irrelevant, or that it's all simply a matter of the heart and conscience; but it does show the extent of God's eager acceptance of people despite their ignorance of His word.

firm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of Yahweh. ²⁵ Like him was there no king before him, who turned to Yahweh with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him. ²⁶ Notwithstanding, Yahweh didn't turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocation with which Manasseh had provoked Him. ²⁷ Yahweh said, I will remove Judah also out of My sight as I have removed Israel, and I will cast off this city which I have chosen, even Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, 'My name shall be there'. ²⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ²⁹ In his days Pharaoh Necoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. King Josiah went against him; and Pharaoh Necoh killed him at Megiddo when he had seen him. ³⁰ His servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. The people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's place.

The Reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim

³¹ Jehoahaz was twenty-three years

old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ³² He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, according to all that his fathers had done. ³³ Pharaoh Necoh put him in bonds at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. ³⁴ Pharaoh Necoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the place of Josiah his father, and changed his name to Jehoiakim; but he took Jehoahaz away; and he came to Egypt, and died there. ³⁵ Jehoiakim gave silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh. He exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of each one according to his taxation, to give it to Pharaoh Necoh. ³⁶ Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebidah the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. ³⁷ He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, according to all that his fathers had done.

CHAPTER 24 Sep. 17

The Last Kings of Judah

In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years, then rebelled against him. ² Yahweh sent against him bands of the Chaldeans,

24:1 *Three years* – During which time the attacks of :2 occurred. This corresponds exactly with other indications that in the latter day judgment of Israel there will be an

the Syrians, Moabites and of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of Yahweh, which He spoke by His servants the prophets. ³ Surely at the commandment of Yahweh came this on Judah, to remove them out of His sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did, ⁴ and also for the innocent blood that he shed; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which Yahweh would not pardon. ⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ⁶ So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers; and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place. ⁷ The king of Egypt didn't come again out of his land any more; for the king of Babylon had taken, from the brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the king of Egypt. ⁸ Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign; and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. ⁹ He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, according to all that his father had done. ¹⁰ At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. ¹¹ Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the

city while his servants were besieging it; ¹² and Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, his mother, his servants, his princes and his officers; and the king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign. ¹³ He carried out from there all the treasures of the house of Yahweh and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold, which Solomon king of Israel had made in Yahweh's temple, as Yahweh had said. ¹⁴ He carried away all Jerusalem, all the princes and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths; none remained, except the poorest sort of the people of the land. ¹⁵ He carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon; and the king's mother, the king's wives, his officers and the chief men of the land, he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. ¹⁶ All the men of might, even seven thousand, and the craftsmen and the smiths one thousand, all of them strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. ¹⁷ The king of Babylon made Mataniah, Jehoiachin's father's brother, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah. ¹⁸ Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was

extended period of Arab raiding and desolation of Israel (for three and a half years?), culminating in the final invasion of the land by 'Babylon' and her smaller Arab allies in order to take Jerusalem.

24:3 *For the sins of Manasseh* – A whole community can be damaged by the long term influence and consequence of one man's sin, even if he later repents as Manasseh did.

Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ¹⁹ He did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. ²⁰ For through the anger of Yahweh, it happened in Jerusalem and Judah, until He had cast them out from His presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

CHAPTER 25 Sep. 17

The Fall of Jerusalem

It happened in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and encamped against it; and they built forts against it around it.

² So the city was captured, by the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. ³ On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was severe in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. ⁴ Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden (now the Chaldeans were against the city around it); and the king went by the way of the Arabah. ⁵ But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. ⁶ Then they took the king, and carried him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment on

24:20 God's anger was such that He propelled Zedekiah and Judah further down the downward spiral they had chosen. He has the ability to give people mindsets and to make decisions which are humanly unwise; and we see Him doing this here, by making Zedekiah rebel against the king of Babylon, when this was political suicide. And yet as the book of Jeremiah makes clear, God at the same time was pleading with Zedekiah through the prophet Jeremiah to repent. So whilst God confirms people in the downward spiral in which they chose to go, He still earnestly seeks their repentance and doesn't abandon them totally until they themselves have totally broken away from Him and He can do no more without excessively controlling their own freewill.

25:2 *The city was entered into* – Judging Israel like this wasn't done by God in a flash of anger, but after huge internal turmoil. He had passionately declared in an outburst of love for His wayward people "I will not enter into the city" (Hos. 11:9 – the same Hebrew word is used as here). His condemnation of His people is very hard for Him, and is a result of much thinking, re-thinking and struggle about it (Hos. 11:8). Those believers who fear God will condemn them should take comfort from this – that He reveals Himself as struggling within Himself about doing this, and it is not something He wishes to do.

25:5 *Overtook him in the plains of Jericho* – The parable of the good Samaritan speaks about a man taking this same journey, from Jerusalem to Jericho, and being attacked and overcome on the way – and yet restored by grace (Lk. 10:30). The injured man of the parable represents each of us; and yet he is based upon Zedekiah, who had been given every opportunity to heed God's word through Jeremiah and yet through human weakness and peer pressure had not done so. Zedekiah in all his pathetic weakness represents each of us; Christ, the good Samaritan, really does save each of us by grace alone.

him. ⁷ They killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon. ⁸ Now in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, to Jerusalem. ⁹ He burnt the house of Yahweh and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, even every great house, burnt he with fire. ¹⁰ All the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem. ¹¹ Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the residue of the people who were left in the city, and those who fell away, who fell to the king of Babylon, and the remainder of the multitude of the people. ¹² But the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to work the vineyards and fields. ¹³ The Chaldeans broke up the pillars of brass that were in the house of Yahweh and the bases and the bronze sea that were in the house of Yahweh, and carried the brass pieces to Babylon. ¹⁴ They took away the pots, the shovels, the snuffers, the spoons, and all the vessels of brass with which they ministered. ¹⁵ The captain of the guard took away the fire pans, the

basins, whatever was of gold, and of silver. ¹⁶ The two pillars, the one sea and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of Yahweh, the brass of all these things was without weight. ¹⁷ The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and a capital of brass was on it; and the height of the capital was three cubits, with network and pomegranates on the capital around it, all of brass, similarly the second pillar with its network. ¹⁸ The captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the threshold; ¹⁹ and out of the city he took an officer who was set over the men of war; and five men of those who saw the king's face, who were found in the city; and the scribe, the captain of the army, who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of the people of the land, who were found in the city. ²⁰ Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah. ²¹ The king of Babylon struck them, and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away captive out of his land. ²² As for the people who were left in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor.

25:19 *Those who saw the king's face* – This is a technical term describing the king's inner circle. Yet we are promised that we shall see God's face at Christ's return (Job 19:25-27; Rev. 22:4). The prospect is wonderful, almost beyond our grasp to comprehend – that we shall be as it were in God's inner circle, at the very hub of all existence, His special friends. We who are so weak, dysfunctional, often disinterested and limited; we shall be His special people, forever and ever. See on :29.

God's Grace

²³ Now when all the captains of the bands of soldiers, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of the Maacathite, they and their men. ²⁴ Gedaliah swore to them and to their men and said to them, Don't be afraid because of the servants of the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you. ²⁵ But it happened in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal seed, came with ten men and struck Gedaliah so that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldeans

that were with him at Mizpah. ²⁶ All the people, both small and great, and the captains of the forces, arose and came to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans. ²⁷ It happened in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison. ²⁸ He spoke kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings who were with him in Babylon, ²⁹ and changed his prison garments. Jehoiachin ate bread before him continually all the days of his life. ³⁰ For his allowance, there was a continual allowance given him of the king, every day a portion, all the days of his life.

25:25 The fact Ishmael, one of the royal family of Judah still at large, killed the Chaldean garrison would have suggested that the response of the Chaldeans would have been to destroy all the Jews who were left in the land. But strangely there's no record of this. Coupling this with the information in :28 that the king of Babylon for no apparent reason showed great kindness to the king of Judah, we are left with the impression that despite all Judah's sin and the inevitable punishment, God's grace shone through and He didn't punish them as their iniquities deserved, but in wrath remembered mercy and grace (Ezra 9:13), perhaps in specific response to Habakkuk's prayer for this to be the case (Hab. 3:2).

25:29 To eat bread at the king's table was a sign of special favour. And yet Jesus, King of the cosmos, invites us to do this weekly, as if we are His specially favoured inner circle of friends; to refuse the table is strange indeed, and rejecting an amazing grace. See on :19.

THE FIRST BOOK OF CHRONICLES

CHAPTER 1 Sep. 18

Israel's Roots

Adam, Seth, Enosh, ²Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, ³Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, ⁴Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ⁵The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras. ⁶The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Diphath and Togarmah. ⁷The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim and Rodanim. ⁸The sons of Ham: Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan. ⁹The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah: Sheba, and Dedan. ¹⁰Cush became the

father of Nimrod, who began to be a mighty one in the earth. ¹¹Mizraim became the father of Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, ¹²Pathrusim, Casluhim (where the Philistines came from) and Capthorim. ¹³Canaan became the father of Sidon his firstborn, Heth, ¹⁴the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Girgashite, ¹⁵the Hivite, the Arkite, the Sinite, ¹⁶the Arvadite, the Zemarite and the Hamathite. ¹⁷The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshech. ¹⁸Arpachshad became the father of Shelah, and Shelah became the father

It seems the genealogies of 1 Chron. 1-9 were completed at the time of the restoration from Babylon, when there was a problem in finding a High Priest and priesthood because it was hard to prove who was descended from Aaron, presumably because the genealogies were destroyed when the temple was burnt. The genealogies give much emphasis to the descendants of Aaron, far more than to the other tribes. There are a number of references to faithless men being punished by invasions (e.g. 5:6). Ezra 8 contains a genealogy recorded in similar style and language to these in Chronicles. Nehemiah made a special study of the genealogies in order to find an acceptable priesthood (Neh. 7:5,64). So there were Israel returning from captivity, led by a faithful remnant of the priests, looking back through their history, right back to Abraham and beyond, and seeing that their history was shot through with failure. Such self-examination extended even to considering the names parents gave their children, which frequently included the names of false gods like Baal. Marriage out of the faith was a problem at the time of the restoration (Ezra 9:1,2), and therefore the records of the genealogies stress how this had been a problem in the past – and had still not been forgotten by God. The prophets foretold that Israel's restoration would only come once they achieved a suitable recognition of their sinfulness. The priests who wrote those records in Chronicles were writing down the result of their national self-examination. This was the record of their lessons from Chronicles. Ezra 2:62 records Judah being 'reckoned by genealogies', using the same Hebrew word which is the hallmark of 1 Chronicles (4:33; 5:1,7,17; 7:5,7,9,40; 9:1,22). And in this context, Is. 40:26 compares God's 'bringing out' of Judah from Babylon with His 'bringing out' the stars by their individual names, all wonderfully known to Him. Ps. 87:6 had prophesied something similar about the restoration of Zion's fortunes: "Yahweh shall count, when He writes up the people, that this man was born there". Each individual was and is significant to God.

of Eber. ¹⁹ To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg; for in his days the land was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan. ²⁰ Joktan became the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²¹ Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²² Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, ²³ Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan. ²⁴ Shem, Arpachshad, Shealah, ²⁵ Eber, Peleg, Reu, ²⁶ Serug, Nahor, Terah, ²⁷ Abram (the same is Abraham). ²⁸ The sons of Abraham: Isaac, and Ishmael. ²⁹ These are their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ³⁰ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, ³¹ Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael. ³² The sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bore Zimran, Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. The sons of Jokshan: Sheba and Dedan. ³³ The sons of Midian: Ephah, Epher, Hanoah, Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah. ³⁴ Abraham became the father of Isaac. The sons of Isaac: Esau and Israel. ³⁵ The sons of Esau: Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam

and Korah. ³⁶ The sons of Eliphaz: Teman, Omar, Zephi, Gatam, Kenaz, Timna and Amalek. ³⁷ The sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. ³⁸ The sons of Seir: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. ³⁹ The sons of Lotan: Hori, and Homam; and Timna was Lotan's sister. ⁴⁰ The sons of Shobal: Alian, Manahath, Ebal, Shephi and Onam. The sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah. ⁴¹ The son of Anah: Dishon. The sons of Dishon: Hamran, Eshban, Ithran and Cheran. ⁴² The sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan and Jaakan. The sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

The Kings of Edom

⁴³ Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel: Bela the son of Beor; and the name of his city was Dinhabah. ⁴⁴ Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. ⁴⁵ Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. ⁴⁶ Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who struck Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place;

1:19 *The land was divided* – This doesn't refer to any movement of the earth's plates. Rather is it a reference to the division of languages at the time of Babel, as recorded in Gen. 11. It seems that any revival of God's Truth has given way to apostacy within two or three generations. Gen.11:11-16 shows that from the time of Shem (living after the flood) to Peleg was three generations. Thus in the three generations from the time of the flood to Babel, the revival of God's people had faded away again.

1:43 The point is being made that Israel's desire for a king was influenced by the fact the surrounding peoples had kings. The world is always trying to conform us into its mould, whereas we are to be transformed by the Spirit (Rom. 12:1,2).

1:44, 45 The Septuagint states that Job was the "Jobab" of :44,45, who lived five generations after Abraham. Job lived in the land of Uz (1:1) mentioned in :17,42. The books of the Bible aren't always in chronological order, and it's likely that the book of Job is set quite early on in Biblical history.

and the name of his city was Avith. ⁴⁷ Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. ⁴⁸ Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth by the River reigned in his place. ⁴⁹ Shaul died, and Baal Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. ⁵⁰ Baal Hanan died, and Hadad reigned in his place; and the name of his city was Pai: and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab. ⁵¹ Hadad died. The chiefs of Edom were: chief Timna, chief Aliah, chief Jetheth, ⁵² chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, ⁵³ chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, ⁵⁴ chief Magdiel, chief Iram. These are the chiefs of Edom.

CHAPTER 2 Sep. 19

These are the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, ² Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

The Children of Judah

³ The sons of Judah: Er, Onan and Shelah; which three were born to him

of Shua's daughter the Canaanitess. Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of Yahweh; and He killed him. ⁴ Tamar his daughter-in-law bore him Perez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah were five. ⁵ The sons of Perez: Hezron, and Hamul. ⁶ The sons of Zerah: Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol and Dara; five of them in all. ⁷ The sons of Carmi: Achar the troubler of Israel, who committed a trespass in the devoted thing. ⁸ The son of Ethan: Azariah. ⁹ The sons also of Hezron, who were born to him: Jerahmeel, Ram and Chelubai.

The Children of Ram

¹⁰ Ram became the father of Aminadab, and Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, prince of the children of Judah; ¹¹ and Nahshon became the father of Salma, and Salma became the father of Boaz, ¹² and Boaz became the father of Obed, and Obed became the father of Jesse; ¹³ and Jesse became the father of his firstborn Eliab, Abinadab the second, Shimea the third, ¹⁴ Nethanel the

2:4 Israel's sinfulness seems to be emphasized in the various 'interruptions' in the flowing list of names. Thus it is sometimes stressed that a man did not have many children (e.g. :4,6,16), as if to indicate that God's blessing was not with him (there seems an undoubted connection in Old Testament times between blessing and number of sons). Thus information such as that Jetheth died without children, Sheshan had no sons but daughters, Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brothers had few children (2:32,34; 4:27) ... all this would have been read as highly significant in spiritual terms. Some outstanding weaknesses amongst the patriarchs are recorded (e.g. 5:1), and the fact that the duty of the priests was to make an atonement for Israel (6:49) appears to be an obvious detail added in passing – until it is appreciated that these genealogies are highlighting the historical weakness of Israel. This is one of the major lessons from Chronicles.

2:12 Boaz's marriage to a Gentile is not highlighted; simply "Boaz begat Obed", whereas others' marriage out of the faith is recorded in the same chapter (2:3,34). The same action – in this case, marriage to a Gentile – can be done by different people

fourth, Raddai the fifth,¹⁵ Ozem the sixth, David the seventh;¹⁶ and their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. The sons of Zeruiah: Abishai, Joab and Asahel, three.¹⁷ Abigail bore Amasa; and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmaelite.

The Children of Caleb

¹⁸ Caleb the son of Hezron fathered children by Azubah his wife, and by Jerioth; and these were her sons: Jeshur, Shobab and Ardon.¹⁹ Azubah died, and Caleb took to him Ephrath, who bore him Hur.²⁰ Hur became the father of Uri, and Uri became

the father of Bezalel.²¹ Afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, whom he took as wife when he was sixty years old; and she bore him Segub.²² Segub became the father of Jair, who had twenty-three cities in the land of Gilead.²³ Geshur and Aram took the towns of Jair from them, with Kenath, and its villages, even sixty cities. All these were the sons of Machir the father of Gilead.²⁴ After that Hezron was dead in Caleb Ephrathah, then Abijah Hezron's wife bore him Ashhur the father of Tekoa.

with different motives. For one it may be an act of righteousness, for another – a sin. Thus when Uzziah acted as a priest he was condemned for it (2 Chron. 26:17-21), but when David (as a non-Levite also) did the same, it was a reflection of his spirituality. Seeing the inner motives and spirituality of others are hidden to us, we must be very careful not to judge by outward appearances; and we must resign all ultimate judgment to God, not least because of our total inability to make it.

2:16 Zeruiah was a sister of David, and David laments how her sons were very “hard” (2 Sam. 3:39; 16:10; 19:22). The fact that the hardness of those three men seems to be associated with their mother would lead us to conclude that David's sister Zeruiah was an extremely hard woman. Inevitably there must have been strands of hardness in David too (consider his treatment of Uriah, his intended massacre of Nabal's encampment, torturing the Ammonites etc.); and yet more often than not, we get the impression that David was a real softy. His experience of life made him progressively more soft, whilst his sister and nephews went the other way. Truly could he comment towards the end of it all that God's gentleness had made him great (2 Sam. 22:36).

2:18 It's unusual for the name of the wives or mothers to be recorded as we have here and in :24; perhaps the idea is to show the significance of women in Caleb's family.

2:22 Some Jews reject our belief that Jesus is the promised seed of Abraham and David by claiming that Hebrew genealogy wasn't reckoned through women in Biblical times. But that isn't the case. We see here that Jair's father was of the tribe of Judah, yet in Num.32:41 he is described as “the son of Manasseh”, showing that his mother must have been of the tribe of Manasseh. His descent was reckoned through his mother rather than his father. Likewise :34 records that Sheshan “had no sons, but daughters”. According to the objection that genealogy cannot be reckoned through the woman, Sheshan would have no subsequent genealogy. However, he is described in :31 as having a son, presumably from the fact that he gave his daughter in marriage to his Egyptian servant (:34). Thus his seed was still reckoned through a woman. Note that Hiram is described as “the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan” (2 Chron.2:14).

The Children of Jerahmeel

²⁵ The sons of Jerahmeel the firstborn of Hezron were Ram the firstborn, Bunah, Oren, Ozem and Ahijah. ²⁶ Jerahmeel had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam. ²⁷ The sons of Ram the firstborn of Jerahmeel were Maaz, Jamin and Eker. ²⁸ The sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada. The sons of Shammai: Nadab and Abishur. ²⁹ The name of the wife of Abishur was Abihail; and she bore him Ahban and Molid. ³⁰ The sons of Nadab: Seled and Appaim; but Seled died without children. ³¹ The sons of Appaim: Ishi. The sons of Ishi: Sheshan. The sons of Sheshan: Ahlai. ³² The sons of Jada the brother of Shammai: Jether and Jonathan; and Jether died without children. ³³ The sons of Jonathan: Peleth and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel. ³⁴ Now Sheshan had no sons, but daughters. Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha. ³⁵ Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant as wife; and she bore him Attai. ³⁶ Attai became

the father of Nathan, and Nathan became the father of Zabad, ³⁷ Zabad became the father of Ephlal, Ephlal became the father of Obed, ³⁸ Obed became the father of Jehu, Jehu became the father of Azariah, ³⁹ Azariah became the father of Helez, Helez became the father of Eleasah, ⁴⁰ Eleasah became the father of Sismai, Sismai became the father of Shallum, ⁴¹ Shallum became the father of Jekamiah and Jekamiah became the father of Elishama. ⁴² The sons of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel were Mesha his firstborn, who was the father of Ziph. The son of Mareshah was Hebron. ⁴³ The sons of Hebron: Korah, Tappuah, Rekem and Shema. ⁴⁴ Shema became the father of Raham, the father of Jorkeam; and Rekem became the father of Shammai. ⁴⁵ The son of Shammai was Maon; and Maon was the father of Beth Zur. ⁴⁶ Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bore Haran, Moza and Gazez; and Haran became the father of Gazez. ⁴⁷ The sons of Jahdai: Regem, Jothan, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah and Shaaph. ⁴⁸ Maacah, Caleb's con-

2:46 Some of the names given to children seem to hint at a weakness in the parents. One wonders why Caleb called his illegitimate son "Haran", after the city which Abraham left behind in order to attain God's promises.

2:48 *Caleb's concubine* – The genealogies seem to stress the weakness and occasional strength of the people of God. Occasionally the list of names is interrupted by a piece of information which indicates God's awareness of their spirituality. For example, the fact some men had more than one wife or a wife from a nation other than Israel is often recorded (as here and also in 1:32; 2:3,26,35; 4:18; 5:1; 7:14; 8:8). The way these interruptions occur in the lists of names stands out. This is surely to indicate two things: that many faithful men made mistakes in this area of life, and secondly that all down the centuries God has not forgotten that they married out of the faith, or that they allowed the pressures of their surrounding world to influence them to break away from the ideal one man: one woman standard of Eden. These two facts provide us with both warning and comfort, in that although God is sensitive to failure, He is still able to justify men, to count them as if they are righteous for the sake of their cov-

cubine, bore Sheber and Tirhanah. ⁴⁹ She bore also Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbena, and the father of Gibeah; and the daughter of Caleb was Achsah. ⁵⁰ These were the sons of Caleb, the son of Hur, the firstborn of Ephraim: Shobal the father of Kiriath Jearim, ⁵¹ Salma the father of Bethlehem, Hareph the father of Beth Gader. ⁵² Shobal the founder of Kiriath Jearim was the ancestor of the people Haroeh and half of the people of Menuthoth. ⁵³ The families of Kiriath Jearim: The Ithrites, Puthites, Shumathites and the Mishraites; of them came the Zorathites and the Eshtaolites. ⁵⁴ The sons of Salma: Bethlehem and the Netophathites, Atroth Beth Joab, and half of the Manahathites, the Zorites. ⁵⁵ The families of scribes who lived at Jabez: the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, the Sucathites. These are the Kenites who came of Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.

CHAPTER 3 Sep. 20

The Children of David

Now these were the sons of David, who were born to him in Hebron: the firstborn, Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second, Daniel, of Abigail the Carmelitess; ² the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; ³ the fifth, Shephatiah of Abital; the sixth, Ithream by Eglah his wife. ⁴ Six were born to him in Hebron; and there he reigned seven years and six months. In Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. ⁵ These were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon, four, of Bathshua the daughter of Ammiel; ⁶ and Ithar, Elishama, Eliphelet, ⁷ Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, ⁸ Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet, nine. ⁹ All these were the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines; and Tamar was

enant relationship with Him, even though (e.g.) their married life was not completely in order.

2:54 Bethlehem clearly refers to the city rather than a person of that name. Chronicling which Israelite families came from which towns in Judah confirms the suggestion made on 1:1 that these records were written up in the context of the return from exile clarifying who came from which town (see too 4:28-34).

3:3 Solomon wished to imitate his father David; his own real personality only came out in the Ecclesiastes years, when he took to alcohol, materialism, women and idolatry. It took the influence of his parents many years to wear off. David had weaknesses for horses (2 Sam. 8:4) and many wives; and Solomon followed in these steps too. Note here that David had six sons in seven years by six different women, including Gentiles. And in addition to these, David had children by “the concubines” (:9). Doubtless Solomon reasoned, albeit deep within his psyche, that such behaviour was legitimate because David his father had done it.

3:9 The repeated reference to the possession of concubines can be read as an indication of Israel’s weakness in abandoning the ideal standards of God regarding marriage. Yet we read that even David had concubines – as if to show the extent of Israel’s weakness in the area of marriage.

their sister. ¹⁰ Solomon's son was Rehoboam, Abijah his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, ¹¹ Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, ¹² Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son, ¹³ Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, ¹⁴ Amon his son, Josiah his son. ¹⁵ The sons of Josiah: the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum. ¹⁶ The sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son. ¹⁷ The sons of Jeconiah the captive: Shealtiel his son, ¹⁸ and Malchiram, and Pedaiah, and Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. ¹⁹ The sons of Pedaiah: Zerubbabel, and Shimei. The sons of Zerubbabel: Meshullam, and Hananiah; and Shelomith was their sister; ²⁰ and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah and Jushab Hessed, five. ²¹ The sons of Hananiah: Pelatiah and Jeshaiah; the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shecaniah. ²² The sons of Shecaniah: Shemaiah. The sons of Shemaiah: Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah and Shaphat, six. ²³ The sons of Neariah: Elioenai, Hizkiah and Azrikam, three. ²⁴ The sons of Elioenai: Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah and Anani, seven.

CHAPTER 4 Sep. 21

The Children of Judah

The sons of Judah: Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur and Shobal. ² Reaiah

the son of Shobal became the father of Jahath; and Jahath became the father of Ahumai and Lahad. These are the families of the Zorathites. ³ These were the sons of the father of Etam: Jezreel, Ishma and Idbash; and the name of their sister was Hazzeleponi; ⁴ and Penuel the father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah. These are the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, the founder of Bethlehem. ⁵ Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah. ⁶ Naarah bore him Ahuzzam, Hephher, Temeni and Haahashtari. These were the sons of Naarah. ⁷ The sons of Helah were Zereth, Izhar and Ethnan. ⁸ Hakkoz became the father of Anub, Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum. ⁹ Jabez was more honourable than his brothers: and his mother named him Jabez saying, Because I bore him with sorrow. ¹⁰ Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, Oh that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that Your hand might be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that it not be to my sorrow! God granted him that which he requested. ¹¹ Chelub the brother of Shuhah became the father of Mehir, who was the father of Eshton. ¹² Eshton became the father of Beth Rapha, Paseah and Tehinnah the father of Ir Nahash. These are the men of Recah. ¹³ The sons of Kenaz: Othniel, and Seraiah. The son of Othniel: Hathath. ¹⁴ Meonothai became the father of Ophrah: and Seraiah

4:10 This is an example of spiritual ambition, requesting that their border be enlarged, at the expense of driving out neighbouring Canaanite tribes. Jesus uses Jabez's phrase "Keep me from evil" and inserts it into His model prayer, "deliver us from evil" (Mt. 6:13).

became the father of Joab the father of Ge Harashim; for they were craftsmen. ¹⁵ The sons of Caleb the son of Jephunneh: Iru, Elah and Naam; and the son of Elah: Kenaz. ¹⁶ The sons of Jehallelel: Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria and Asarel. ¹⁷ The sons of Ezra: Jether, Mered, Ephraim and Jalon; and she bore Miriam, Shammai and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. ¹⁸ His wife the Jewess bore Jered the father of Gedor, Heber the father of Soco and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. These are the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took. ¹⁹ The sons of the wife of Hodiah, the sister of Naham, were the fathers of Keilah the Garmite and Eshtemoa the Maacathite. ²⁰ The sons of Shimon: Amnon, Rinnah, Ben Hanan and Tilon. The sons of Ishi: Zoheth and Ben Zoheth. ²¹ The sons of Shelah the son of Judah: Er the father of Lecah, Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of those who worked fine linen, of the house of Ashbea; ²² and Jokim, the men of Cozeba, Joash and Saraph, who had dominion in Moab, and Jashubilehem. The records are ancient. ²³ These were the potters, and the inhabitants of Netaim and Gederah where they lived and worked for the king.

The Children of Simeon

²⁴ The sons of Simeon: Nemuel,

Jamin, Jarib, Zerah and Shaul; ²⁵ Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son. ²⁶ The sons of Mishma: Hammuel his son, Zaccur his son, Shimei his son. ²⁷ Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brothers didn't have many children, neither did all their family multiply like the children of Judah. ²⁸ They lived at Beersheba, Moladah and Hazarshual, ²⁹ and at Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, ³⁰ Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, ³¹ Beth Marcaboth and Hazar Susim, Beth Biri and at Shaaraim. These were their cities to the reign of David. ³² Their villages were Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen and Ashan, five cities; ³³ and all their villages that were around the same cities, to Baal. These were their habitations, and they have their genealogy. ³⁴ Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah the son of Amaziah, ³⁵ Joel, Jehu the son of Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel, ³⁶ and Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, ³⁷ Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah— ³⁸ these mentioned by name were princes in their families; and their fathers' houses increased greatly. ³⁹ They went to the entrance of Gedor, even to the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks. ⁴⁰ They found fat pasture and

4:24 *The sons of Simeon were Nemuel, Jamin... and Shaul* – But Gen. 46:10 shows that Shaul was Simeon's son by a wrong, casual relationship. Yet this is not recorded in Chronicles, even though so many other weaknesses are. Perhaps this is to demonstrate how if God imputes righteousness for a repented of sin, there really is no record of this kept by Him.

4:32 See on 6:61.

good, and the land was wide, quiet and peaceable; for those who lived there before were of Ham. ⁴¹ These written by name came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and attacked their tents, and the Meunim who were found there, and destroyed them utterly to this day, and lived in their place; because there was pasture there for their flocks. ⁴² Some of them, even of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to Mount Seir, having for their captains Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. ⁴³ They struck the remnant of the Amalekites who escaped, and have lived there to this day.

CHAPTER 5 Sep. 22

The Children of Reuben

The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn; but, because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. ² For Judah prevailed above his brothers, and of him came the prince; but the birthright was Joseph's): ³ the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. ⁴ The sons of Joel: Shemaiah his son, Gog his

son, Shimei his son, ⁵ Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, ⁶ and Beerah his son, whom Tiglath Pileser king of Assyria carried away captive: he was prince of the Reubenites. ⁷ His brothers by their families, when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned: the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah, ⁸ and Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, who lived in Aroer, even up to Nebo and Baal Meon: ⁹ and eastward he lived even to the entrance of the wilderness from the river Euphrates, because their livestock were multiplied in the land of Gilead. ¹⁰ In the days of Saul, they made war with the Hagrites, who fell by their hand; and they lived in their tents throughout all the land east of Gilead.

The Children of Gad

¹¹ The sons of Gad lived over against them, in the land of Bashan to Salecah: ¹² Joel the chief, Shapham the second, Janai and Shaphat, in Bashan. ¹³ Their brothers of their fathers' houses: Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia and Eber, seven. ¹⁴ These were the sons of Abihail, the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz; ¹⁵ Ahi the

5:4 Gog is mentioned in Ez. 38 as leading a latter day invasion of Israel. The background to 'Gog' given here is that he was an apostate Jew who went away from the God of Israel, attracted by the grazing grounds to the north east of Israel, and who eventually ended up living permanently in the land of Israel's enemies, the land of the Hagarenes (sons of Hagar) and Assyria. The Gog of Ez. 38 may well be an apostate Jew (after the pattern of Rabshakeh) who leads an invasion of his ancient homeland. He attacks because he loves cattle (Ez. 38:11,12) – which was a characteristic of the Gog of 1 Chron. 5.

son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, chief of their fathers' houses. ¹⁶ They lived in Gilead in Bashan, and in its towns, and in all the suburbs of Sharon, as far as their borders. ¹⁷ All these were reckoned by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel. ¹⁸ The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, were forty-four thousand seven hundred and sixty, that were able to go forth to war. ¹⁹ They made war with the Hagarites, with Jetur, Naphish and Nodab. ²⁰ They were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all who were with them; for they cried to God in the battle, and He was entreated of them, because they put their trust in Him. ²¹ They took away their livestock; of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of donkeys two thousand, and of men one hundred thousand. ²² For there fell many slain, because the war was of God. They lived in their place until the captivity.

The Children of Manasseh

²³ The children of the half-tribe of Manasseh lived in the land: they

increased from Bashan to Baal Hermon, Senir and Mount Hermon. ²⁴ These were the heads of their fathers' houses: even Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah and Jahdiel, mighty men of valour, famous men, heads of their fathers' houses. ²⁵ They trespassed against the God of their fathers, and played the prostitute after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God destroyed before them. ²⁶ The God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tiglath Pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them to Halah, Habor and Hara, and to the river of Gozan, to this day.

CHAPTER 6 Sep. 23

The Children of Levi

The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. ² The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. ³ The children of Amram: Aaron, Moses and Miriam. The sons of Aaron: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ⁴ Eleazar became the father of Phinehas, Phinehas became the father of Abishua, ⁵ Abishua became the father of Bukki, Bukki became the father of Uzzi, ⁶ Uzzi became the father of Zerariah, Zerariah became

5:26 *God... stirred up the spirit of Pul* – God is able to work directly on the mind or spirit of people, even of unbelievers. What we are desperate for is spiritual mindedness, strength of mind / spirit against the flesh; and surely God is willing to give this to us if we ask Him.

To this day – This implies the Chronicles were written whilst Judah were in captivity; the genealogical records therefore had primary relevance to the exiles returning to Judah.

the father of Meraioth, ⁷ Meraioth became the father of Amariah, Amariah became the father of Ahitub, ⁸ Ahitub became the father of Zadok, Zadok became the father of Ahimaaz, ⁹ Ahimaaz became the father of Azariah, Azariah became the father of Johanan, ¹⁰ Johanan became the father of Azariah (he it is who executed the priest's office in the house that Solomon built in Jerusalem), ¹¹ Azariah became the father of Amariah, Amariah became the father of Ahitub, ¹² Ahitub became the father of Zadok, Zadok became the father of Shallum, ¹³ Shallum became the father of Hilkiah, Hilkiah became the father of Azariah, ¹⁴ Azariah became the father of Seraiah, Seraiah became the father of Jehozadak. ¹⁵ Jehozadak went into captivity when Yahweh carried away Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁶ The sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath and Merari. ¹⁷ These are the names of the sons of Gershom: Libni and Shimei. ¹⁸ The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. ¹⁹ The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their fathers' households. ²⁰ Of Gershom: Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, ²¹ Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeatherai his son. ²² The sons of Kohath: Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, ²³ Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son and Assir his son, ²⁴ Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziyah his son and Shaul his son. ²⁵ The sons of Elkanah: Amasai and Ahimoth. ²⁶ As for Elkanah,

the sons of Elkanah: Zophai his son, and Nahath his son, ²⁷ Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son. ²⁸ The sons of Samuel: the firstborn Joel and the second Abijah. ²⁹ The sons of Merari: Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzzah his son, ³⁰ Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son.

The Temple Musicians

³¹ These are they whom David set over the service of song in the house of Yahweh, after that the ark had rest. ³² They ministered with song before the tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting, until Solomon had built the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem; and they served in their office according to their order. ³³ These are those who waited, and their sons. Of the sons of the Kohathites: Heman the singer, the son of Joel, son of Samuel, ³⁴ son of Elkanah, son of Jeroham, son of Eliel, son of Toah, ³⁵ son of Zuph, son of Elkanah, son of Mahath, son of Amasai, ³⁶ son of Elkanah, son of Joel, son of Azariah, son of Zephaniah, ³⁷ son of Tahath, son of Assir, son of Ebiasaph, son of Korah, ³⁸ son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, the son of Israel. ³⁹ His brother Asaph, who stood on his right hand, even Asaph the son of Berechiah, son of Shimea, ⁴⁰ son of Michael, son of Baaseiah, son of Malchijah, ⁴¹ son of Ethni, son of Zerah, son of Adaiyah, ⁴² son of Ethan, son of Zimmah, son of Shimei, ⁴³ son of Jahath, son of Gershom, the son of Levi. ⁴⁴ On the left hand were their brothers the sons of Merari: Ethan the son of

Kishi, son of Abdi, son of Malluch,⁴⁵ son of Hashabiah, son of Amaziah, son of Hilkiyah,⁴⁶ son of Amzi, son of Bani, son of Shemer,⁴⁷ son of Mahli, son of Mushi, son of Merari, the son of Levi.⁴⁸ Their brothers the Levites were appointed for all the service of the tabernacle of God's house.⁴⁹ But Aaron and his sons offered on the altar of burnt offering, and on the altar of incense, for all the work of the most holy place, and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.⁵⁰ These are the sons of Aaron: Eleazar, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son,⁵¹ Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son,⁵² Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son,⁵³ Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son.⁵⁴ Now these are their dwelling places according

to their encampments in their borders: to the sons of Aaron, of the families of the Kohathites (for theirs was the first lot),⁵⁵ to them they gave Hebron in the land of Judah, and its suburbs around it;⁵⁶ but the fields of the city, and its villages, they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh.⁵⁷ To the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of refuge: Hebron; Libnah also with its suburbs, Jattir, Eshtemoa with its suburbs;⁵⁸ Hilen with its suburbs; Debir with its suburbs;⁵⁹ Ashan with its suburbs and Beth Shemesh with its suburbs;⁶⁰ and out of the tribe of Benjamin, Geba with its suburbs; Allemeth with its suburbs and Anathoth with its suburbs. All their cities throughout their families were thirteen cities.⁶¹ To the rest of the sons of Kohath were given by lot, out of the family of the tribe, out of

6:57, 58 The cities of refuge represented Christ as the ultimate place of refuge for those like us who have sinned, deserve to die, and yet didn't wilfully sin (Heb. 6:18). It should be noted that these cities were generally in areas which required some effort to get to – in the wilderness, in the mountains (:67) etc. This teaches that there must be some conscious effort on our side in fleeing to Christ; repentance and entry into Christ aren't momentary actions, they are highly deliberate and conscious acts from us. Jesus likewise went up into a mountain and invited those seriously interested in Him to come to Him there (Mk. 3:13).

6:61 *Ten cities* – The parable of the pounds describes the reward of the faithful in terms of being given ten or five cities (Lk. 19:17). This idea of dividing up groups of cities was surely meant to recall the way Israel in their wilderness years were each promised their own individual cities and villages, which they later inherited. The idea of inheriting “ten cities” occurs here and in Josh. 15:57; 21:5,26, all in the context of the priests receiving their cities, and “five cities” in 4:32. As each Israelite was promised some personal inheritance in the land, rather than some blanket reward which the whole nation received, so we too have a personal reward prepared. The language of inheritance (e.g. 1 Pet. 1:4) and preparation of reward (Mt. 25:34; Jn. 14:1) in the New Testament is alluding to this Old Testament background of the land being prepared by the Angels for each person amongst God's people to specifically inherit (Ex. 15:17; 23:20; Ps. 68:9,10). Our promised inheritance is not *only* eternal life; it is something being personally prepared for each of us. The language of preparation seems inap-

the half-tribe, the half of Manasseh, ten cities. ⁶² To the sons of Gershom, according to their families, out of the tribe of Issachar, out of the tribe of Asher, out of the tribe of Naphtali and out of the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities. ⁶³ To the sons of Merari were given by lot, according to their families, out of the tribe of Reuben, out of the tribe of Gad and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities. ⁶⁴ The children of Israel gave to the Levites the cities with their suburbs. ⁶⁵ They gave by lot out of the tribe of the children of Judah, out of the tribe of the children of Simeon and out of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, these cities which are mentioned by name. ⁶⁶ Some of the families of the sons of Kohath had cities of their borders out of the tribe of Ephraim. ⁶⁷ They gave to them the cities of refuge: Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim with its suburbs; Gezer also with its suburbs; ⁶⁸ Jokmeam with its suburbs; Beth Horon with its suburbs; ⁶⁹ Aijalon with its suburbs and Gath Rimmon with its suburbs; ⁷⁰ and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Aner with its suburbs and Bileam with its suburbs, for the rest of the family of the sons of Kohath. ⁷¹ To the sons of Gershom were given, out of the family of the half-tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan with its suburbs, and Ashtaroth with its suburbs; ⁷² and out of the tribe of Issachar: Kedesh with its suburbs; Daberath with its suburbs; ⁷³ Ramoth with its suburbs; Anem with its sub-

urbs; ⁷⁴ and out of the tribe of Asher: Mashal with its suburbs; Abdon with its suburbs; ⁷⁵ Hukok with its suburbs and Rehob with its suburbs; ⁷⁶ and out of the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee with its suburbs; Hammon with its suburbs and Kiriathaim with its suburbs. ⁷⁷ To the rest of the Levites, the sons of Merari, were given, out of the tribe of Zebulun: Rimmono with its suburbs; Tabor with its suburbs; ⁷⁸ and beyond the Jordan at Jericho, on the east side of the Jordan, were given them, out of the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the wilderness with its suburbs; Jahzah with its suburbs, ⁷⁹ Kedemoth with its suburbs and Mephaath with its suburbs; ⁸⁰ and out of the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead with its suburbs; Mahanaim with its suburbs; ⁸¹ Heshbon with its suburbs and Jazer with its suburbs.

CHAPTER 7 Sep. 24

The Children of Issachar

Of the sons of Issachar: Tola, Puah, Jashub and Shimron, four. ² The sons of Tola: Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam and Shemu-el, heads of their fathers' houses, of Tola; mighty men of valour in their generations. Their number in the days of David was twenty-two thousand six hundred. ³ The son of Uzzi: Izrahiah. The sons of Izrahiah: Michael, Obadiah, Joel and Isshiah, five; all of them chief men. ⁴ With them, by their generations, after their fathers' houses, were bands of

appropriate if our reward is simply eternal life; it is the nature of that life which is of the essence.

the army for war, thirty-six thousand; for they had many wives and sons. ⁵ Their brothers among all the families of Issachar, mighty men of valour, reckoned in all by genealogy, were eighty-seven thousand.

The Children of Benjamin

⁶ The sons of Benjamin: Bela, Becher and Jediael, three. ⁷ The sons of Bela: Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth and Iri, five; heads of fathers' houses, mighty men of valour. They were reckoned by genealogy twenty-two thousand and thirty-four. ⁸ The sons of Becher: Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth and Alemeth. All these were the sons of Becher. ⁹ They were reckoned by genealogy, after their generations, heads of their fathers' houses, mighty men of valour, twenty thousand two hundred. ¹⁰ The son of Jediael: Bilhan. The sons of Bilhan: Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chanaanah, Zethan, Tarshish and Ahishahar. ¹¹ All these were sons of Jediael, according to the heads of their fathers' households, mighty men of valour, seventeen thousand and two

hundred, who were able to go forth in the army for war. ¹² Shuppim also, and Huppim, the sons of Ir, Hushim, the sons of Aher.

The Children of Naphtali

¹³ The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shallum, the sons of Bilhah.

The Children of Manasseh

¹⁴ The sons of Manasseh: Asriel, whom his concubine the Aramitess bore. She bore Machir the father of Gilead. ¹⁵ Machir took a wife of Huppim and Shuppim, whose sister's name was Maacah; and the name of the second was Zelophehad: and Zelophehad had daughters. ¹⁶ Maacah the wife of Machir bore a son, and she named him Peresh; and the name of his brother was Sheresh; and his sons were Ulam and Rakem. ¹⁷ The son of Ulam: Bedan. These were the sons of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh. ¹⁸ His sister Ham-molecheth bore Ishhod, and Abiezer, and Mahlah. ¹⁹ The sons of Shemida were Ahian, and Shechem, and Likhi, and Aniam.

7:14 *His concubine the Aramitess* – Here and so often in the genealogies we have evidence that from earliest times, the Jews weren't ethnically pure. And intermarriage with Gentiles has continued to be a feature of the community throughout the millenia. Jewishness is therefore cultural more than genetic; which provides another perspective on Paul's argument that fleshly descent from Abraham counts for nothing.

7:15 Zelophehad had only daughters; usually, in his context, a man would have taken concubines in order to produce sons. The record of his only having daughters is presented in the context of genealogies which show that many Israelite men had more than one wife. But Zelophehad wasn't dragged down by this; God inspired him to maintain the higher level which he had chosen to live by. We too must seek to do what is ultimately right before God and not be influenced by the standards of our brethren who surround us in the body of believers.

he Children of Ephraim

²⁰ The sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eleadah his son, Tahath his son, ²¹ Zabad his son, Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead, whom the men of Gath who were born in the land killed, because they came down to take away their livestock. ²² Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brothers came to comfort him. ²³ He went in to his wife, and she conceived and bore a son, and he named him Beriah, because it went evil with his house. ²⁴ His daughter was Sheerah, who built Beth Horon the lower and the upper, and Uzzen Sheerah. ²⁵ Rephah was his son, and Resheph, and Telah his son, and Tahan his son, ²⁶ Ladan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, ²⁷ Nun his son, Joshua his son. ²⁸ Their possessions and habitations were Bethel and its towns, and eastward Naaran, and westward Gezer, with its towns; Shechem also and its towns, to Azzah and its towns; ²⁹ and by the borders of the children of Manasseh, Beth Shean and its towns, Taanach and its towns, Megiddo and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these lived the children of Joseph the son of Israel.

The Children of Asher

³⁰ The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ish-

vah, Ishvi, Beriah, and Serah their sister. ³¹ The sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel, who was the father of Birzaith. ³² Heber became the father of Japhlet, Shomer, Hotham and Shua their sister. ³³ The sons of Japhlet: Pasach, Bimhal and Ashvath. These are the children of Japhlet. ³⁴ The sons of Shemer: Ahi, Rohgah, Jehubbah and Aram. ³⁵ The sons of Helem his brother: Zophah, Imna, Shelesh and Amal. ³⁶ The sons of Zophah: Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah, ³⁷ Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran and Beera. ³⁸ The sons of Jether: Jephunneh, Pispah and Ara. ³⁹ The sons of Ulla: Arah, Hanniel and Rizia. ⁴⁰ All these were the children of Asher, heads of the fathers' houses, choice and mighty men of valour, chief of the princes. The number of them reckoned by genealogy for service in war was twenty-six thousand men.

CHAPTER 8 Sep. 25*More Children of Benjamin*

Benjamin became the father of Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, Aharah the third, ² Nohah the fourth and Rapha the fifth. ³ Bela had sons: Addar, Gera, Abihud, ⁴ Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, ⁵ Gera, Shephuphan and Huram. ⁶ These are the sons of Ehud, who are the heads

7:24 One feature of these genealogies is that they mention the significance of women as mothers and wives by naming them; and the achievements of women like Sherah, who built Beth-Horon. This sharply contrasts with contemporary king lists of the time, which mention only the males and their exploits. This indicates that the Bible isn't as it were anti-women, as has been ignorantly claimed, but rather God's perception of the value and meaning of the human person is such that His word is very positive about women.

of fathers' households of the inhabitants of Geba, and they carried them captive to Manahath: ⁷ Naaman, Ahijah and Gera. He carried them captive, and he became the father of Uzza and Ahihud. ⁸ Shaharaim divorced his two wives, Hushim and Baara. Later, when he lived in the country of Moab, he married Hodesh ⁹ his wife and had seven sons: Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, ¹⁰ Jeuz, Shachia and Mirmah. These were his sons, heads of fathers' households. ¹¹ By Hushim he became the father of Abitub and Elpaal. ¹² The sons of Elpaal: Eber, Misham and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod with its towns; ¹³ and Beriah and Shema, who were heads of fathers' households of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who put to flight the inhabitants of Gath; ¹⁴ and Ahio, Shashak, Jeremoth, ¹⁵ Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, ¹⁶ Michael, Ishpah and Joha, the sons

of Beriah, ¹⁷ and Zebadiah, Meshulam, Hizki, Heber, ¹⁸ Ishmerai, Izliah and Jobab, the sons of Elpaal, ¹⁹ and Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi, ²⁰ Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, ²¹ Adaiah, Beraiah and Shimrath, the sons of Shimei, ²² and Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, ²³ Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, ²⁴ Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah, ²⁵ Iphdeiah, and Penuel the sons of Shashak, ²⁶ and Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, ²⁷ Jaareshiah, Elijah and Zichri, the sons of Jeroham. ²⁸ These were heads of fathers' households throughout their generations, chief men: these lived in Jerusalem. ²⁹ In Gibeon there lived the father of Gibeon, whose wife's name was Maacah; ³⁰ and his firstborn son Abdon, and Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab, ³¹ Gedor, Ahio and Zecher. ³² Mikloth became the father of Shimeah. They also lived with their brothers in Jerusalem, over against their brothers. ³³ Ner became the father of

8:8 It would seem that the genealogies of the books of Chronicles, with all their emphasis on the priesthood and temple service under Solomon, were produced at the time of the restoration – in order to encourage the people to restore the Kingdom of God as it had been, and thereby bring in the Kingdom. References to “Jecooniah the captive” (3:17) make sense in the context of the records being written up in the captivity. And we can understand why the story of Shaharaim is mentioned here – a Jewish refugee in Moab, who sent away his two Gentile wives [cp. what was done in Ezra 10:44] but ended up being blessed with more children. “Seven sons” would’ve been understood as a completeness of blessing. Note that God still recognized his later wife as just that – his wife, even though he had been married previously. No sin or failure leads to a position whereby someone is intrinsically unable to be accepted by God.

8:30-34 When a passage is repeated twice, surely God wishes us to perceive something. 8:30-34 is repeated in 9:36-40. The reason may be that the name ‘Baal’ was used by the leaders of Israel. Gibeon’s children included Kish and *Baal*, Kish’s son was king Saul, Saul had a son called *Eshbaal* as well as Jonathan, David’s beloved friend; and Jonathan had a son called Merib *Baal*. These are not the names as recorded elsewhere; the Chronicles record is highlighting the fact that there was a strand of weakness for idols in the family of Saul, including in faithful Jonathan. We note that his love of God, of David, his appreciation of David’s righteousness, his belief that

Kish; and Kish became the father of Saul; and Saul became the father of Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab and Eshbaal. ³⁴ The son of Jonathan was Merib Baal; and Merib Baal became the father of Micah. ³⁵ The sons of Micah: Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz. ³⁶ Ahaz became the father of Jehoaddah; and Jehoaddah became the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and Zimri; and Zimri became the father of Moza. ³⁷ Moza became the father of Binea; Raphah was his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. ³⁸ Azel had six sons, whose names are these: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah and Hanan. All these were the sons of Azel. ³⁹ The sons of Eshek his brother: Ulam his firstborn, Jeush the second, and Eliphelet the third. ⁴⁰ The sons of Ulam were mighty men of valour, archers, and had many sons, and sons' sons, one hundred and fifty. All these were of the sons of Benjamin.

CHAPTER 9 Sep. 26

The Exiles Who Returned

So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies — they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. Judah was carried away captive to Babylon for their disobedience. ² Now the first inhabitants who lived in their posses-

sions in their cities were Israel, the priests, the Levites and the Nethinim. ³ In Jerusalem lived of the children of Judah, of the children of Benjamin and of the children of Ephraim and Manasse: ⁴ Uthai the son of Amihud, son of Omri, son of Imri, son of Bani, of the children of Perez son of Judah. ⁵ Of the Shilonites: Asaiah the firstborn, and his sons. ⁶ Of the sons of Zerah: Jeuel, and their brothers, six hundred and ninety. ⁷ Of the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, son of Hodaviah, son of Hassenuah, ⁸ and Ibneiah son of Jeroham, and Elah the son of Uzzi, son of Michri, and Meshullam the son of Shephatiah, son of Reuel, son of Ibnijah; ⁹ and their brothers, according to their generations, nine hundred and fifty-six. All these men were heads of fathers' households by their fathers' houses. ¹⁰ Of the priests: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jachin, ¹¹ and Azariah son of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, the ruler of God's house; ¹² and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah, and Maasai son of Adiel, son of Jahzerah, son of Meshullam, son of Meshillemith, son of Immer; ¹³ and their brothers, heads of their fathers' houses, one thousand seven

David would have the future Kingdom, struggled against the fact that the worldly influence of his father and great-grandfather still rubbed off upon him. We find ourselves so often in similar situations.

8:33 In all close friendships there are some aspects which just could not have been contrived by human arrangement, and which add to the closeness and sense of specialness which those relationships have. There were such aspects with David and Jonathan, intensifying the love of David for Jonathan. For example, it was a beautiful coincidence that they both happened to have a brother called Abinadab (1 Sam. 16:8).

hundred and sixty; very able men for the work of the service of God's house. ¹⁴ Of the Levites: Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; ¹⁵ and Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattaniah son of Mica, son of Zichri, son of Asaph, ¹⁶ and Obadiah son of Shemaiah, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun, and Berechiah son of Asa, son of Elkanah, who lived in the villages of the Netophathites. ¹⁷ The porters: Shallum, Akkub, Talmon and Ahiman, and their brothers (Shallum was the chief), ¹⁸ who previously served in the king's gate eastward: they were the porters for the camp of the children of Levi. ¹⁹ Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brothers, of his father's house, the Korahites, were over the work of the service, keepers of the thresholds of the tent. Their fathers had been

over the camp of Yahweh, keepers of the entry. ²⁰ Phinehas the son of Eleazar was ruler over them in time past, and Yahweh was with him. ²¹ Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah was porter of the door of the Tent of Meeting. ²² All these who were chosen to be porters in the thresholds were two hundred and twelve. These were reckoned by genealogy in their villages, whom David and Samuel the prophet ordained in their office of trust. ²³ So they and their children had the oversight of the gates of the house of Yahweh, even the house of the tent, as guards. ²⁴ On the four sides were the porters, toward the east, west, north, and south. ²⁵ Their brothers, in their villages, were to come in every seven days from time to time to be with them; ²⁶ for the four chief porters, who were Levites, were in an office of trust, and were over the rooms and over the treasur-

9:17-19 The genealogy of the sons of Korah is significant in that Korah was the ringleader of the rebellion against Moses which led to his destruction. His children however obeyed the command to leave the tents of their father Korah when he was consumed in the earthquake. Num. 16:27 mentions Dathan and Abiram's children standing outside their tents at this time, but there is the pointed omission of Korah's children; they had left the tents, in recognition of Korah's sin and dissociation from it. The descendants of Korah wrote at least 11 of the Psalms and protected the purity of temple worship. Conscious dissociation from sin is required of us; and it's often very hard, especially when it concerns family members. We also learn from this family that the spiritual failure of a father figure doesn't have to mean that the rest of the family likewise fail; in fact, they can learn from the tragedy and become strengthened spiritually by responding to God's judgment of sin as He intends.

9:22 *Their office of trust* – As any employer soon learns, delegation is a risk. We have been “entrusted with the Gospel” (Tit. 1:3); the world God so wants to love, the world God is appealing to, do not directly see Him; for He makes His appeal through us. We are all that many people will ever see of Christ; for we are His body. God has trusted us with representing Him, and put His work into our hands. Those who did God's work in the Old Testament temple were similarly given a “trust”, they were entrusted with God's work.

ies in God's house. ²⁷ They lodged around God's house, because that duty was theirs. To them pertained its opening morning by morning. ²⁸ Certain of them were in charge of the vessels of service; for by count were these brought in and by count were these taken out. ²⁹ Some of them also were appointed over the furniture, and over all the vessels of the sanctuary, and over the fine flour, the wine, the oil, the frankincense and the spices. ³⁰ Some of the sons of the priests prepared the mix of the spices. ³¹ Mattithiah, one of the Levites, who was the firstborn of Shalum the Korahite, had the office of trust over the things that were baked in pans. ³² Some of their brothers, of the sons of the Kohathites, were over the show bread, to prepare it every Sabbath. ³³ These are the singers, heads of fathers' households of the Levites, who lived in the rooms and were free from other service; for they were employed in their work day and night. ³⁴ These were heads of fathers' households of the Levites, throughout their generations, chief men. They lived at Jerusalem.

The Children of Jeiel

³⁵ In Gibeon there lived the father of Gibeon, Jeiel, whose wife's name was Maacah. ³⁶ His firstborn son Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, ³⁷ Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah

and Mikloth. ³⁸ Mikloth became the father of Shimeam. They also lived with their brothers in Jerusalem, over against their brothers. ³⁹ Ner became the father of Kish; and Kish became the father of Saul; and Saul became the father of Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab and Eshbaal. ⁴⁰ The son of Jonathan was Merib Baal; and Merib Baal became the father of Micah. ⁴¹ The sons of Micah: Pithon, Melech, Tahrea and Ahaz. ⁴² Ahaz became the father of Jarah; and Jarah became the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and Zimri; and Zimri became the father of Moza; ⁴³ and Moza became the father of Binea, and Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. ⁴⁴ Azel had six sons, whose names are: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah and Hanan. These were the sons of Azel.

CHAPTER 10 Sep. 27

The Death of Saul

Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain on Mount Gilboa. ² The Philistines followed hard after Saul and after his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. ³ The battle went hard against Saul, and the archers overtook him; and he was badly wounded by the archers. ⁴ Then Saul said to his armour

9:40 There are clear connections between Jonathan and Gideon; compare 1 Sam.14:10-20 with Jud.7:3,10,11,14,22. Jonathan's son was called Merib Baal, meaning 'rebellion against Baal', an epithet for 'Gideon'. It's not wrong to have Biblical heroes, and to be inspired by their examples in the life decisions we make, even to the naming of our children.

bearer, Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and abuse me. But his armour bearer would not; for he was terrified. Therefore Saul took his sword and fell on it. ⁵ When his armour bearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell on his sword and died. ⁶ So Saul died, and his three sons; and all his family died together. ⁷ When all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that they fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; and the Philistines came and lived in them. ⁸ It happened on the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. ⁹ They stripped him, and took his head, and

his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines all around, to carry the news to their idols, and to the people. ¹⁰ They put his armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the house of Dagon. ¹¹ When all Jabesh Gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, ¹² all the valiant men arose and took away the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days. ¹³ So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against Yahweh, against the word of Yahweh, which he didn't keep; and also because he asked counsel of one who had a familiar spirit, to inquire, ¹⁴ and didn't inquire of Yahweh. Therefore He

10:4 Although the armour bearer was one of Saul's men, in the anti-David camp, yet David's example of not killing Saul must have deeply influenced him. We do make a difference. We have more influence upon others than we may think. It can be that an illiterate sister in a male dominated society can think that her attendance at church meetings cannot encourage anyone. It can be that the Christian stockbroker feels that it is impossible for him to influence those he works with. But we do have influence. We have become so humiliated by a shame based society that we can underestimate the value and power of our own personhood.

10:13 *Against Yahweh, against the word of Yahweh* – God and His word are here paralleled; for “the word was [and is] God” (Jn. 1:1). Our attitude to God's word is our attitude to Him.

10:13, 14 Just before his final fight with the Philistines, “Saul enquired of Yahweh (but) Yahweh answered him not” (1 Sam. 28:6), and therefore he went to a witch. But in God's final analysis of Saul, Yahweh says that He smote Saul because Saul sinned against God's word by *not* enquiring of God, but of a witch. But Saul *did* enquire of God (see 1 Sam. 14:27 s.w.; 28:6), but God didn't answer him (note how often in the records it is stated by contrast that David enquired successfully of Yahweh). The point is that although Saul prayed to God and enquired of His word on the surface, in his heart, he did nothing of the sort; and therefore his prayer and enquiry was reckoned never to have happened. And we must ask how much of our prayer and Bible study is seen by God as being only spoken and read on a surface level. This was exactly the problem of natural Israel. “They have not cried unto Me with their heart, when they howled (in prayer) upon their beds” (Hos. 7:14). “Though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt Him” (Hos. 11:7).

killed him, and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse.

CHAPTER 11 Sep. 28

David Is Made King

Then all Israel gathered themselves to David to Hebron saying, Behold, we are your bone and your flesh. ²In times past, even when Saul was king, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. Yahweh your God said to you, ‘You shall be shepherd of My people Israel, and you shall be prince over My people Israel’. ³So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Yahweh; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of Yahweh by Samuel. ⁴David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (the same is Jebus). The Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, were there. ⁵The inhabitants of Jebus said to David, You shall not come in here. Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion. The same is the city of David. ⁶David said, Whoever strikes the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and was made

chief. ⁷David lived in the stronghold; therefore they called it the city of David. ⁸He built the city all around, from Millo and all around; and Joab repaired the rest of the city. ⁹David grew greater and greater; for Yahweh of Armies was with him.

David's Mighty Men

¹⁰Now these are the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who showed themselves strong with him in his kingdom, together with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of Yahweh concerning Israel. ¹¹This is the number of the mighty men whom David had: Jashobeam, the son of a Hachmonite, the chief of the thirty; he lifted up his spear against three hundred and killed them at one time. ¹²After him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighty men. ¹³He was with David at Pasdammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where there was a plot of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines. ¹⁴They stood in the midst of the plot, and defended it, and killed the Philistines; and

11:1 *We are your bone and your flesh* – An idiom meaning that they were in every sense his brethren. Here and in 2 Sam. 19:12 the phrase is used in the context of human beings wanting to have someone exactly like them, of their ‘bone and flesh’, as their leader. We find the same term used in Eph. 5:30, where we are told that those who are baptized into the body of Christ have in Him someone of their own bone and flesh; He urges His disciples to physically touch His bones and flesh after His resurrection to make the same point, that despite His changed nature, we can totally identify with Him and He with us because He too was totally human (Lk. 24:39). Hence Hebrews 2 labours the point that because Jesus was of our nature, therefore and thereby is He our inspiration and spiritual leader. In this we see the importance of understanding the nature of Christ properly, and the practical spiritual advantage of rejecting the Trinitarian view of Jesus.

Yahweh saved them by a great victory. ¹⁵ Three of the thirty chief men went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the army of the Philistines were encamped in the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁶ David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. ¹⁷ David was thirsty and said, Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! ¹⁸ The three broke through the army of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David. David would not drink of it, but poured it out to Yahweh, ¹⁹ and said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this! Shall I drink the blood of these men who have put their lives in jeopardy? For they risked their lives to bring it. Therefore he would not drink it. The three mighty men did these things. ²⁰ Abishai, the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three; for he lifted up his spear against three hundred and killed them, and had a name among the three. ²¹ Of the three, he was more honourable than the two, and was made their

captain: however he didn't attain to the three. ²² Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, had done mighty deeds. He killed two lion-like men of Moab. He went down also and killed a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow. ²³ He killed an Egyptian, a man of great stature, five cubits high; and in the Egyptian's hand was a spear like a weaver's beam; and he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. ²⁴ Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did these things, and had a name among the three mighty men. ²⁵ Behold, he was more honourable than the thirty, but he didn't attain to the three; and David set him over his guard. ²⁶ Also the mighty men of the armies: Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, ²⁷ Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite, ²⁸ Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anathothite, ²⁹ Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, ³⁰ Maharai the Netophathite, Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite, ³¹ Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeath of the children of Benjamin, Benai-

11:18 David is a type of Christ; the loyalty he inspired amongst his men was a foretaste of the effect Christ should have upon us. See on :23.

11:19 That water came to represent the lives or blood of those men. We see here a basis for understanding the wine at the communion service; it represents life, the life of Christ; the water here was just water, and the wine we drink is just wine, but it represents the life of another.

11:22 Benaiah killed a lion in order to prepare him for killing two lionlike men. God often works like this, using one experience in life to prepare us for another one.

11:23 This act of bravery was clearly inspired by how David had killed Goliath, which speaks of Christ's victory over sin on the cross. This should be repeated in essence by us in our spiritual battles. See on :18.

ah the Pirathonite, ³² Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite, ³³ Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliabha the Shaalbonite, ³⁴ the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shagee the Hararite, ³⁵ Ahiam the son of Sacar the Hararite, Eliphah the son of Ur, ³⁶ Hephher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, ³⁷ Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai, ³⁸ Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Hagri, ³⁹ Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite, the armour-bearer of Joab the son of Zeruah, ⁴⁰ Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, ⁴¹ Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai, ⁴² Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a chief of the Reubenites, and thirty with him, ⁴³ Hanan the son of Maacah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite, ⁴⁴ Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite, ⁴⁵ Jediel the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite, ⁴⁶ Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai, and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite, ⁴⁷ Eliel, and Obed, and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

CHAPTER 12 Sep. 29

The Names of David's Followers

Now these are those who came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself in secret because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were

among the mighty men, his helpers in war. ² They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in slinging stones and in shooting arrows from the bow. They were of Saul's brothers of Benjamin. ³ The chief was Ahiezer; then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite, and Jeziel, and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth, and Beracah, and Jehu the Anathothite, ⁴ and Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty, and Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Jozabad the Gederathite, ⁵ Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite, ⁶ Elkanah, and Isshiah, and Azarel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korahites, ⁷ and Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor. ⁸ Of the Gadites there separated themselves to David to the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valour, men trained for war, that could handle shield and spear; whose faces were like the faces of lions, and they were as swift as the roes on the mountains: ⁹ Ezer the chief, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, ¹⁰ Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, ¹¹ Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, ¹² Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, ¹³ Jeremiah the tenth, Machbannai the eleventh. ¹⁴ These of the sons of Gad were captains of the

12:1 Those who followed David in his wilderness years were remembered by God by name for millennia afterwards. They became leaders in David's Kingdom after the death of Saul. We who follow Christ now, even though at times it may seem we are supporting a humanly hopeless case, will finally be rewarded in the future Kingdom.

12:14 This alludes to how one faithful man would chase one thousand unbelievers (Dt. 32:30). We could infer that those who followed David in the wilderness years

army: he who was least was equal to one hundred, and the greatest to one thousand. ¹⁵ These are those who went over the Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all its banks; and they put to flight all them of the valleys, both toward the east, and toward the west. ¹⁶ There came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the stronghold to David. ¹⁷ David went out to meet them and responded to them: If you have come peaceably to me to help me, my heart shall be knit to you; but if you have come to betray me to my adversaries, since there is no wrong in my hands, may the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it. ¹⁸ Then the Spirit came on Amasai, who was chief of the thirty, and he said, We are yours, David, and on your side, you son of Jesse. Peace, peace be to you, and peace be to your helpers; for your God helps you. Then David received

them, and made them captains of the band. ¹⁹ Of Manasseh also there fell away some to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle; but they didn't help them; for the lords of the Philistines sent him away after consultation, saying, He will fall away to his master Saul to the jeopardy of our heads. ²⁰ As he went to Ziklag, there joined him of Manasseh, Adnah, Jozabad, Jedaiel, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu and Zillethai, captains of thousands who were of Manasseh. ²¹ They helped David against the band of rovers; for they were all mighty men of valour, and were captains in the army. ²² For from day to day men came to David to help him, until there was a great army, like the army of God.

The Numbers of David's Supporters

²³ These are the numbers of the heads of those who were armed for

came to faith in God although perhaps they initially came to him more because of their own dissatisfaction with life (1 Sam. 22:2; Ps. 57:4). Some start their spiritual journey with one motivation and yet become more spiritual over time, influenced by Godly examples like David.

12:17 *There is no wrong in my hands* – Saul had falsely accused David of many things, but he refused to take false guilt because of them. When we are under false accusation, we tend to become very self-justificatory and refuse to accept true guilt before God (as opposed to before men) for our real sins, for which we should feel guilty. David sets a great example to us here and in his Psalms about these matters; he refuses to accept he had done anything wrong to Saul, and yet openly confesses his real sins to God.

12:22 David's army increased, until it became "a great army, like the army of God". The parallel between David's men and the Angelic hosts is clear. Significantly, the Angelic armies that destroyed the Syrians are called 'a great army' in 2 Kings 7:6. Asa and his army defeated the Ethiopians – and it's described as them being "destroyed before Yahweh and before His army" (2 Chron. 14:13). Again, the hosts of Israel become the hosts of God. Significantly in this context, 11:9 speaks of David's God as Yahweh of Armies. As the cherubim visions demonstrated, we on earth are to be reflective of God's heavenly armies, and if we walk in step with them, victory is assured. See on 14:15.

war, who came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of Yahweh. ²⁴ The children of Judah who bore shield and spear were six thousand eight hundred, armed for war. ²⁵ Of the children of Simeon, mighty men of valour in war, seven thousand one hundred. ²⁶ Of the children of Levi four thousand six hundred. ²⁷ Jehoiada was the leader of the household of Aaron; and with him were three thousand seven hundred, ²⁸ and Zadok, a young man mighty of valour, and of his father's house twenty-two captains. ²⁹ Of the children of Benjamin, the brothers of Saul, three thousand; for hitherto the majority of them had kept their allegiance to the house of Saul. ³⁰ Of the children of Ephraim twenty thousand eight hundred, mighty men of valour, famous men in their fathers' houses. ³¹ Of the half-tribe of Manasseh eighteen thousand, who were mentioned by name, came and made David king. ³² Of the children of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their heads were two hundred; and all their brothers were under their command. ³³ Of Zebulun, such as were able to go out in the army, who could set the battle in array, with all kinds of instruments of war, fifty thousand, who could command and were not of double heart. ³⁴ Of Naphtali one

thousand captains, and with them with shield and spear thirty-seven thousand. ³⁵ Of the Danites who could set the battle in array, twenty-eight thousand six hundred. ³⁶ Of Asher, such as were able to go out in the army, who could set the battle in array, forty thousand. ³⁷ On the other side of the Jordan, of the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and of the half-tribe of Manasseh, with all kinds of instruments of war for the battle, one hundred and twenty thousand. ³⁸ All these being men of war, who could order the battle array, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel. All the rest of Israel were also of one heart to make David king. ³⁹ They were there with David three days, eating and drinking; for their brothers had made preparation for them. ⁴⁰ Moreover those who were near to them, as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on donkeys, and on camels, mules and oxen, food of meal, cakes of figs, and clusters of raisins, and wine and oil, and cattle and sheep in abundance; for there was joy in Israel.

CHAPTER 13 Sep. 30

David Takes the Ark of God

David consulted with the captains of thousands and of hundreds, even with every leader. ² David said to all the assembly of Israel, If it

12:23 Those who supported David at this time were very significant to God, and their numbers have been recorded for millennia in His word. Our support for Christ's cause in this world is highly significant to God, and He likewise remembers all the moments when we have in one way or another stood up for His cause in an unbelieving and spiritually hostile world.

seems good to you, and if it is of Yahweh our God, let us send abroad everywhere to our brothers who are left in all the land of Israel, with whom the priests and Levites are in their cities that have suburbs, that they may gather themselves to us. ³ Let us bring again the ark of our God to us; for we didn't seek it in the days of Saul. ⁴ All the assembly said that they would do so; for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. ⁵ So David assembled all Israel together, from Shihor the brook of Egypt even to the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriath Jearim. ⁶ David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kiriath Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of Yahweh God who dwells between the cherubim, that is called by the Name. ⁷ They carried the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. ⁸ David and all Israel played before God with all their might, even with songs, harps, stringed instruments, tambourines, cymbals and

trumpets. ⁹ When they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. ¹⁰ The anger of Yahweh was kindled against Uzza, and He struck him, because he put forth his hand to the ark; and there he died before God. ¹¹ David was displeased, because Yahweh had broken forth on Uzza; and he called that place Perez Uzza, to this day. ¹² David was afraid of God that day saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me? ¹³ So David didn't move the ark to him into the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. ¹⁴ The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house three months; and Yahweh blessed the house of Obed-Edom, and all that he had.

CHAPTER 14 Sep. 30

David Defeats the Philistines

Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and masons, and carpenters, to build him a house. ² David perceived that Yahweh had established him king

13:2 *If it seems good to you, and if it is of Yahweh our God* – Alluded to in Acts 15:25,28, where the elders of the new Israel, the church, said that it 'seemed good unto them and to the Holy Spirit' to bring Gentiles into the church. We see that in both cases, decisions weren't taken just because it seemed right to a majority; they weren't pure democrats. They recognized another, Divine, element in decision making which was over and above the simple will of men, even if they were believers.

13:10 Uzza was a Levite but not a priest; and the Law clearly emphasized that the sons of Kohath were to carry the ark on staves on their shoulders, not on a cart as David was doing (Num. 4:15). David almost boasted in Ps. 119 that he studied God's law day and night, but he obviously didn't see the obvious; he blanked off those commands in his mind, assuming the spirit of serving God would make the details of God's requirements superfluous. Because of our inattention to God's word, others may die; and we also see that God's holiness is never to be simply disregarded because we in one sense love Him and are joyful before Him. See on 15:2.

over Israel; for his kingdom was exalted on high, for His people Israel's sake. ³ David took more wives at Jerusalem; and David became the father of more sons and daughters. ⁴ These are the names of the children whom he had in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ⁵ Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, ⁶ Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, ⁷ Elishama, Beelida and Eliphelet. ⁸ When the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David. David heard of it, and went out against them. ⁹ Now the Philistines had come and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁰ David inquired of God saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand? Yahweh said to him, Go up; for I will deliver them into your hand. ¹¹ So they came up to Baal Perazim, and David struck them there; and David said, God has broken my enemies by my hand, like the breach of waters. Therefore they called the name of that place Baal Perazim. ¹² They left their gods there; and David

gave commandment, and they were burned with fire. ¹³ The Philistines yet again made a raid in the valley. ¹⁴ David inquired again of God; and God said to him, You shall not go up after them. Turn away from them, and come on them opposite the mulberry trees. ¹⁵ It shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then you shall go out to battle; for God has gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines. ¹⁶ David did as God commanded him; and they struck the army of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gezer. ¹⁷ The fame of David went out into all lands; and Yahweh brought the fear of him on all nations.

CHAPTER 15 Oct. 1

The Ark Is Brought to Zion

David made himself houses in the city of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it. ² Then David said, No one ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for Yahweh has chosen them to carry the ark of

14:2 Any exaltation we may receive in life is ultimately for the benefit of God's people, and not to be selfishly enjoyed just by ourselves.

14:14 God varied the pattern here as a test to David's obedience, rather like He did to Moses in asking Him to speak to the rock rather than striking it. And He does the same in our lives too. Often God's battle plans involved an initial turning away from the face of enemies, and then giving victory. To turn away from enemies was an indication of unworthiness and suffering for sin (Dt. 28:25). God wished to teach that victory can only come if we accept our unworthiness of that victory, and how as sinners we deserve only defeat.

14:15 The "sound of marching" was of the Angel cherubim. David was being taught that victory only comes through walking in step with the armies of Heaven which are above; see on 12:22.

15:2 It took some time for David to repent over his failure in transporting the ark of God in disobedience to God's commands (see on 13:10). The lag time between sin

God, and to minister to Him forever. ³ David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of Yahweh to its place, which he had prepared for it. ⁴ David gathered together the sons of Aaron and the Levites: ⁵ of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, and his brothers one hundred and twenty; ⁶ of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, and his brothers two hundred and twenty; ⁷ of the sons of Gershon, Joel the chief, and his brothers one hundred and thirty; ⁸ of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, and his brothers two hundred; ⁹ of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, and his brothers eighty; ¹⁰ of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, and his brothers one hundred and twelve. ¹¹ David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel and Amminadab, ¹² and said to them, You are the heads of the fathers' households of the Levites. Sanctify yourselves,

both you and your brothers, that you may bring up the ark of Yahweh, the God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it. ¹³ For because you didn't carry it at first, Yahweh our God broke out against us, because we didn't seek Him according to the ordinance. ¹⁴ So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of Yahweh, the God of Israel. ¹⁵ The children of the Levites bore the ark of God with its poles on their shoulders, as Moses commanded according to the word of Yahweh. ¹⁶ David spoke to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brothers the singers, with instruments of music, stringed instruments and harps and cymbals, sounding aloud and lifting up the voice with joy. ¹⁷ So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brothers, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari their brothers, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; ¹⁸ and with them their brothers of the sec-

and repentance ought to be as short as possible; we see a similar lag time in the gap between David's sin with Bathsheba and his repentance for it. God will work in our lives to bring us to repentance, but this often involves much suffering to ourselves and others; that can all be avoided if we have a sensitive conscience to God's word and the humility to repent immediately. Yet even here, David appears to shift the blame from himself onto others (:13). Repentance has various shades and degrees, and God seeks totality of repentance and acceptance of the fact we personally have sinned.

15:12 *The place that I have prepared for it* – David's bringing the ark to the place which he had prepared is the basis of Christ's words in Jn. 14:1-3. Clearly Christ saw David as Himself, and us as the ark. The 'bringing up' or 'lifting up' of the ark (Heb.) to a permanent dwelling place has reference to the resurrection. And when the ark was finally brought or lifted up to Zion, David / Jesus dealt bread and wine to the people (16:3). One practical encouragement from this typology is that the memorial feast is a celebration that in fact we, the ark, have in prospect already been brought or lifted up into the eternal place prepared for us in the Kingdom.

15:13 David's commission of good didn't outweigh his omission; we must take sins of omission seriously.

ond degree, Zechariah, Ben, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel, the doorkeepers. ¹⁹ So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were given cymbals of brass to sound aloud; ²⁰ and Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah and Benaiah, with stringed instruments set to Alamoth; ²¹ and Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, Jeiel and Azaziah, with harps tuned to the eight-stringed lyre, to lead. ²² Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was over the song: he instructed about the song, because he was skilful. ²³ Berechiah and Elkanah were doorkeepers for the ark. ²⁴ Shebaniah, and Joshaphat, and Nethanel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, blew the trumpets before the ark of God. Obed-Edom and Jehiah were doorkeepers for the ark. ²⁵ So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of Yahweh out of the house of Obed-Edom with joy. ²⁶ It happened, when God helped the Levites who bore

the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, that they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams. ²⁷ David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites who bore the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers; and David wore an ephod of linen. ²⁸ Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of Yahweh with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, sounding aloud with stringed instruments and harps. ²⁹ As the ark of the covenant of Yahweh came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out at the window, and saw king David dancing and playing; and she despised him in her heart.

CHAPTER 16 Oct. 2

David's Song of Praise

They brought in the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it. They offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. ² When David had made an end of offering the burnt offering and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of Yahweh. ³ He dealt to each

15:21 *Obed-Edom* – He was the one who had faithfully looked after the ark when others feared to have anything to do with it (13:14). He may have expected some great recognition for that, but he is listed along with many others as simply having a relatively small role in looking after it. If we are genuinely motivated by wishing to simply serve God's people and maintain His presence amongst His people, we will not seek for recognition or status for it.

15:29 *Despised him in her heart* – The feelings we have about our brethren and their service of God are recorded indelibly by God.

16:2, 3 Here and in 15:27 David acts as a priest, even though he was from the tribe of Judah and not Levi. On one hand, our understanding of the spirit and essence of God frees us from the need for literalistic obedience; but as David experienced at the

one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, a portion of meat and a cake of raisins. ⁴ He appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of Yahweh, and to celebrate and to thank and praise Yahweh, the God of Israel: ⁵ Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel, with stringed instruments and with harps; and Asaph with cymbals, sounding aloud; ⁶ and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually, before the ark of the covenant of God. ⁷ Then on that day David led the giving of thanks to Yahweh, by the hand of Asaph and his brothers: ⁸ Oh give thanks to Yahweh! Call on His name. Make His deeds known among the peoples. ⁹ Sing to Him, sing praises to Him. Tell of all His marvellous works. ¹⁰ Glory in His holy name. Let the heart of those who seek Yahweh rejoice. ¹¹ Seek Yahweh and His strength. Seek His face for evermore. ¹² Remember His marvellous works that He has done, His wonders, and

the judgments of His mouth, ¹³ you seed of Israel His servant, you children of Jacob, His chosen ones. ¹⁴ He is Yahweh our God. His judgments are in all the earth. ¹⁵ Remember His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, ¹⁶ the covenant which He made with Abraham, His oath to Isaac. ¹⁷ He confirmed the same to Jacob for a statute, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant ¹⁸ saying, 'I will give you the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance;' ¹⁹ when you were but a few men in number, yes, very few, and foreigners were in it. ²⁰ They went about from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people. ²¹ He allowed no man to do them wrong. Yes, He reprov'd kings for their sakes, ²² Don't touch My anointed ones! Do My prophets no harm! ²³ Sing to Yahweh, all the earth! Display His salvation from day to day. ²⁴ Declare His glory among the nations, and His marvellous works among all the peoples. ²⁵ For great is Yahweh, and greatly to be praised. He also is to be feared

time of the breach upon Uzza (13:10) and his sin with Bathsheba, this can lead us to disregard His principles to a point where it is counted as sin. On the other hand, when Uzziah acted as a priest he was condemned for it (2 Chron. 26:19-21). The same actions can be righteousness for one person and sin for another. In this lies the impossibility of our ultimately judging the outward actions of others; we simply must leave it to God.

16:3 Raisins were made from grapes, so we have here a prefigurement of the bread and wine of the communion service. It is a celebration of the blessing we have received from our high priest, the Lord Jesus.

16:21 *He reprov'd kings for their sakes* – This is a reference to the rebuking of Abimelech in Gen. 20; yet in this case Abimelech was in the right and is portrayed as the honourable one, and Abraham and Sarah as less than honourable and in need of reproof (Gen. 20:16). David is therefore asking Israel to glory in God's undeserved kindness, His grace, towards them (:34,41).

above all gods. ²⁶ For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but Yahweh made the heavens. ²⁷ Honor and majesty are before Him. Strength and gladness are in His place. ²⁸ Ascribe to Yahweh, you relatives of the peoples, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength! ²⁹ Ascribe to Yahweh the glory due to His name. Bring an offering, and come before Him. Worship Yahweh in holy array. ³⁰ Tremble before Him, all the land. The world also is established that it can't be moved. ³¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice! Let them say among the nations, Yahweh reigns! ³² Let the sea roar, and its fullness! Let the field exult, and all that is therein! ³³ Then the trees of the forest will sing for joy before Yahweh, for He comes to judge the earth. ³⁴ Oh give thanks to Yahweh, for He is good, for His grace endures forever. ³⁵ Say, 'Save us, God of our salvation! Gather us together and deliver us from the nations, to give thanks to Your holy name, to triumph in Your praise'. ³⁶ Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting. All the people said, 'Amen', and praised Yahweh. ³⁷ So he left there, before the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, Asaph and his brothers, to minister

before the ark continually, as every day's work required; ³⁸ and Obed-Edom with their brothers, sixty-eight; Obed-Edom also the son of Jeduthun and Hosah to be doorkeepers; ³⁹ and Zadok the priest, and his brothers the priests, before the tabernacle of Yahweh in the high place that was at Gibeon, ⁴⁰ to offer burnt offerings to Yahweh on the altar of burnt offering continually morning and evening, even according to all that is written in the law of Yahweh, which He commanded to Israel. ⁴¹ With them were Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest who were chosen, who were mentioned by name, to give thanks to Yahweh, because His grace endures forever; ⁴² and with them Heman and Jeduthun with trumpets and cymbals for those that should sound aloud, and with instruments for the songs of God; and the sons of Jeduthun to be at the gate. ⁴³ All the people departed each man to his family; and David returned to bless his family.

CHAPTER 17 Oct. 3

The Covenant with David

It happened that as David lived in this house, David said to Nathan the prophet, Behold, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of Yahweh is under cur-

16:26 The Truth of the Gospel is the only way to come to salvation. All other religions apart from true Christianity will not give salvation nor a relationship with God. Realising this, David pleads with his people to be a missionary nation (:8,25,26). The more we realise the pathetic fallacy of human religion, indeed the whole and utter vanity of life under this sun, the more we will preach Yahweh's Truth to a tragically wandering, aimless world.

16:33 The prospect of God 'coming' to judge the earth should be a source of joy to us rather than of endless fear.

tains. ² Nathan said to David, Do all that is in your heart; for God is with you. ³ It happened the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan saying, ⁴ Go and tell David My servant, ‘Thus says Yahweh, You shall not build Me a house to dwell in; ⁵ for I have not lived in a house since the day that I brought up Israel to this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tent to another. ⁶ In all places in which I have walked with all Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to be shepherd of My people saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’ ⁷ Now therefore, you shall tell My servant David, ‘Thus says Yahweh of Armies, I took you from the sheep pen, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over My people Israel. ⁸ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all

your enemies from before you. I will make you a name, like the name of the great ones who are in the earth. ⁹ I will appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be moved no more. Neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the first, ¹⁰ and from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will subdue all your enemies. Moreover I tell you that Yahweh will build you a house. ¹¹ It shall happen, when your days are fulfilled that you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who shall be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. ¹² He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. ¹³ I will be his father, and he shall be My son. I will not take My sure mercies away from him, as I took it from him that was before you;

17:2 Nathan replied too quickly, assuming that he knew God’s will and what God’s word ought to say in response to such a desire. But he was wrong. We see here a lesson in our need to base our response to situations strictly upon God’s revealed word rather than our assumption of what He probably meant.

17:10 *I tell you that Yahweh will build you a house* – God’s grace is reflected in all this; David wanted to build God a physical house, and God responds by saying He doesn’t need that but rather He will build David an eternal house in the sense of a family, based around David’s descendant who would be Yahweh’s own Son (Lk. 1:31-35). God loves to do for us above all we can ask or imagine of asking (Eph. 3:20); He delights to lavish grace upon us and we should delight to do the same to others, thinking what we could do for them that would make them say “Wow!” to God’s grace.

17:11 *Set up your seed* – The Greek LXX version of the Old Testament uses the word elsewhere translated ‘resurrect’ for “set up”.

17:13 *I will be his father, and he shall be My son* – The only way for this to be fully fulfilled would be that a woman who was a direct descendant of David would have a child whose father was God. The account of the virgin birth shows how it all came to pass. It’s impossible therefore that Christ physically pre-existed before His birth. Notice the future tenses here. We note too that Jesus was therefore the direct descendant of David and the rightful king of Israel. Yet He lived as a poor, despised working man

14 but I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever. His throne shall be established forever'.
 15 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

David's Response to the Covenant

16 Then David the king went in and sat before Yahweh; and he said, Who am I, Yahweh God, and what is my house, that You have brought me thus far? 17 This was a small thing in Your eyes, O God; but You have spoken of your servant's house for a great while to come, and have respected me according to the estate of a man of high degree, Yahweh God. 18 What can David say yet more to You concerning the honour which is done to Your servant? For You know Your servant. 19 Yahweh, for Your servant's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have worked all this greatness, to make known all these great things. 20 Yahweh, there is none like You, neither is there any God besides You,

according to all that we have heard with our ears. 21 What single nation in the earth is like Your people Israel, whom God went to redeem to Himself for a people, to make You a name by great and awesome things, in driving out nations from before Your people, whom You redeemed out of Egypt? 22 For Your people Israel You made Your very own people forever; and You, Yahweh, became their God. 23 Now, Yahweh, let the word that You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house be established forever, and do as You have spoken. 24 Let Your name be established and magnified forever, saying, 'Yahweh of Armies is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel. The house of David Your servant is established before You'. 25 For You, my God, have revealed to Your servant that You will build him a house. Therefore Your servant has found courage to pray before You. 26 Now, Yahweh, You are God, and have promised this good thing to

and died the death of a rejected criminal. We who are in Him by baptism into Him will likewise not be discerned for who we really are by the unbelieving society in which we live.

Sure mercies – “The sure mercies of David” result in the wicked man forsaking his way (Is. 55:3); they therefore inspire us in forsaking sinful thoughts and wicked ways (Is. 55:7).

17:16 *Who am I* – This should be our response also, for the covenants of promise have been made with us too in that we are in Christ and they therefore concern us (Gal. 3:27-29). It was because David was truly humble that he could immediately respond in genuine humility to God's promises to him; whereas Solomon became proud because of them. Note how “David the king... sat before Yahweh, and said, Who am I...?”. Grace produces quite different responses in different people; some it humbles, others misinterpret it to justify continuing in sin.

17:17 *Respected me according to the estate of a man of high degree* – This could be rendered: “You have seen me as a type of the man on high”. David understood himself as a type of Christ.

Your servant. ²⁷ Now it has pleased You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue forever before You; for You, Yahweh, have blessed, and it is blessed forever.

CHAPTER 18 Oct. 4

David's Prosperity

After this, it happened that David struck the Philistines and subdued them, and took Gath and its towns out of the hand of the Philistines. ² He struck Moab; and the Moabites became servants to David, and brought tribute. ³ David struck Hadadezer king of Zobah to Hamath, as he went to establish his dominion by the river Euphrates. ⁴ David took from him one thousand chariots, seven thousand horsemen and twenty thousand footmen; and David hamstrung all the chariot horses, but reserved of them enough for one hundred chariots. ⁵ When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck of the Syrians twenty-two thousand men. ⁶ Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought tribute. Yahweh gave victory

to David wherever he went. ⁷ David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. ⁸ From Tibhath and from Cun, cities of Hadadezer, David took very much brass, with which Solomon made the bronze laver, the pillars and the vessels of brass. ⁹ When Tou king of Hamath heard that David had struck all the army of Hadadezer king of Zobah, ¹⁰ he sent Hadoram his son to king David to greet him and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and struck him (for Hadadezer had wars with Tou); and he had with him all kinds of vessels of gold and silver and brass. ¹¹ King David also dedicated these to Yahweh, with the silver and the gold that he carried away from all the nations; from Edom, Moab, the children of Ammon, the Philistines and from Amalek. ¹² Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah struck of the Edomites in the Valley of Salt eighteen thousand. ¹³ He put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became servants to David. Yahweh gave victory to David wherever he went. ¹⁴ David reigned over all Israel; and he ex-

18:1-3 After David received the promises about the future Messianic Kingdom, he went out and established his Kingdom, attacking Israel's enemies and driving them out of the land. Our response to the future Hope of the Kingdom, which we too have through the very same promises, should also be to try to live the Kingdom life now, as far as we can.

18:4 *But reserved of them for one hundred chariots* – The king of Israel was not supposed to multiply horses and chariots but rather trust in God (Dt. 17:16). David allowed himself a little weakness in this matter; and his son Solomon used it as an excuse to multiply so many horses and chariots that he had to build cities to store them in. The problem with allowing ourselves a 'little' sin is that sin by its nature spreads and multiplies, and is repeated in others for whom we are an example (like our children) to a far greater extent.

ecuted justice and righteousness to all his people. ¹⁵ Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder; ¹⁶ Zadok son of Ahitub and Abimelech son of Abiathar were priests; Shavsha was scribe; ¹⁷ Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of David were chief around the king.

CHAPTER 19 Oct. 4

David's Conflict with Ammon

It happened after this, that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his place. ² David said, I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me. So David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon to Hanun, to comfort him. ³ But the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanun, Do you think that David honours your father, in that he has sent comforters to you? Haven't his servants come to you to search, to overthrow, and to spy out the land? ⁴ So Hanun took David's servants, shaved them, cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks,

and sent them away. ⁵ Then there went certain persons and told David how the men were served. He sent to meet them; for the men were greatly ashamed. The king said, Stay at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return. ⁶ When the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the children of Ammon sent one thousand talents of silver to hire them chariots and horsemen out of Mesopotamia, and out of Arammaacah, and out of Zobah. ⁷ So they hired for themselves thirty-two thousand chariots, and the king of Maacah and his people, who came and encamped before Medeba. The children of Ammon gathered themselves together from their cities, and came to battle. ⁸ When David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the army of the mighty men. ⁹ The children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the gate of the city. The kings who had come were by themselves in the field. ¹⁰ Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians. ¹¹ The rest of the people he committed into the hand of Abishai his brother; and

19:2 *I will show kindness to Hanun... because his father showed kindness to me* – Jesus in Lk. 6:32-34 may have this incident in mind when He taught that kindness to those who love us isn't at all the radical love and grace which He taught. Loving those who love us doesn't always work out well, as David's experience here shows.

19:4 Earlier in his life, David had had a similar experience with Nabal; he sent messengers to him, who were abused. But David at that time over-reacted, and was only saved from destruction by the wisdom of Nabal's wife Abigail (1 Sam. 25). There are times when God arranges for circumstances to repeat in our lives to test whether we have learnt a lesson, or to reinforce the lesson we learnt.

they put themselves in array against the children of Ammon. ¹² He said, If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you are to help me; but if the children of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will help you. ¹³ Be courageous, and let us be strong for our people, and for the cities of our God. May Yahweh do that which seems good to Him. ¹⁴ So Joab and the people who were with him drew near before the Syrians to the battle; and they fled before him. ¹⁵ When the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians had fled, they likewise fled before Abishai his brother, and entered into the city. Then Joab came to Jerusalem. ¹⁶ When the Syrians saw that they were defeated by Israel, they sent messengers, and drew forth the Syrians who were beyond the River, with Shophach the captain of the army of Hadadezer at their head. ¹⁷ It was told David; and he gathered all Israel together, passed over the Jordan and came on them, and set the battle in array against them. So when David had put the battle in array against the Syrians, they fought with him. ¹⁸ The Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed of the Syr-

ians seven thousand charioteers, and forty thousand footmen, and killed Shophach the captain of the army. ¹⁹ When the servants of Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with David, and served him. From then on, the Syrians would not help the children of Ammon.

CHAPTER 20 Oct. 5

At the time of the return of the year, at the time when kings go out, Joab led forth the army, and wasted the country of the children of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. Joab struck Rabbah and overthrew it. ² David took the crown of their king from off his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there were precious stones in it; and it was set on David's head; and he brought forth the spoil of the city, a great amount. ³ He brought forth the people who were therein, and cut them with saws, and with iron picks, and with axes. David did so to all the cities of the children of Ammon. David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

19:13 *May Yahweh do that which seems good to Him* – There is an element of predestination in our lives; but the fact that God will do His will shouldn't lead us to complacency nor resignation to fatalism, but rather to zeal to do His will as far as we can perceive it, knowing that He will bless the doing of His will. In Joab's case, understanding this led him to a zealous attempt to fight for the Lord, which God blessed with victory.

20:1 *But David stayed at Jerusalem* – 2 Sam. 11 fills in the significant detail that during this period, David had an affair with Bathsheba and arranged for her husband Uriah to be killed. Simple lesson: to properly understand the Bible we must read it all and compare it against itself in order to get the full picture.

20:3 This seems an unnecessarily cruel way of punishing enemies. This is the period in between David's sin with Bathsheba and his repentance. His own bad conscience

The Sons of the Giant Are Killed

⁴ After this, there arose war at Gezer with the Philistines. Then Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Sippai, of the sons of the giant; and they were subdued. ⁵ There was again war with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. ⁶ There was again war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, whose fingers and toes were twenty-four, six on each hand, and six on each foot; and he also was born to the giant. ⁷ When he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea David's brother killed him. ⁸ These were born to the giant in Gath; and

they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

CHAPTER 21 Oct. 5***David Numbers Israel***

Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. ² David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring me word, so that I may know the sum of them. ³ Joab said, May Yahweh make His people a hundred times as many as they are; but, my lord the king, aren't they all my lord's servants? Why does my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of guilt for Israel? ⁴ Nevertheless the king's word prevailed

with God led him to such excessive punishment of God's enemies. Psychologically, it's understandable; he realized he had sinned and deserved to be punished. But instead of confessing his sin and accepting the consequences as rightful and just, he psychologically transferred the sin onto others, and punished them instead of seeing himself punished. Judgmentalism and aggressive attitudes toward others often arise from a bad conscience within a person; the answer is to confess our sins to God, repent before Him and accept any consequences. We are thereby made free from the need to transfer sin and guilt onto others and judge them for our own sin.

20:5-8 These battles with giant Philistines have many similarities with David's victory over Goliath in 1 Sam. 17. His victory there inspired his men, just as Christ's victory on the cross ['Golgotha' = 'skull of Goliath'] should inspire us and be replicated by us in our spiritual struggles.

21:1 'Satan' is a Hebrew word meaning 'adversary'. It has no evil connotation of itself. The parallel 2 Sam. 24:1 says that God provoked David to number Israel. God therefore worked as a satan, an adversary, to David. Good people like Peter can be termed 'satan' (Mt. 16:21-23); the greatest adversary to us is our own internal tendency to sin. There's no sinful cosmic being called 'Satan'.

21:3 It wasn't a sin to take a census of the people, but each time they were numbered, they had to pay a tax to the tabernacle; if they refused, they would be plagued (Ex. 30:12-15). David's desire to know how many soldiers he had was a trusting in human strength. But it was also wrong in that Joab knew that the people likely wouldn't pay the tax, and therefore they would be plagued. David could've argued that this would be Israel's problem, not his, if they chose to be disobedient. But we ought to be sensitive to the likely spiritual failures of others and not lead them into sin by forcing them into positions where they have to take choices which they will probably fail in. God

against Joab. Therefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem. ⁵ Joab gave up the sum of the numbering of the people to David. All those of Israel were one million one hundred thousand men who drew sword; and in Judah were four hundred and seventy thousand men who drew sword. ⁶ But he didn't count Levi and Benjamin among them; for the king's word was abominable to Joab. ⁷ God was displeased with this thing; therefore He struck Israel. ⁸ David said to God, I have sinned greatly, in that I have done this thing. But now, put away, I beg You, the iniquity of Your servant; for I have done very foolishly. ⁹ Yahweh spoke to Gad, David's prophet, saying, ¹⁰ Go and speak to David saying, 'Thus says Yahweh, I offer you three things. Choose one of them, that I may do it to you'. ¹¹ So Gad came to David and said to him, Thus says Yahweh, 'Take your choice: ¹² either three years of famine; or three months to be consumed before your foes, while the sword of your enemies overtakes you; or else three days' suffering the sword

of Yahweh, even plague in the land, and the angel of Yahweh destroying throughout all the borders of Israel'. Now therefore consider what answer I shall return to Him who sent me. ¹³ David said to Gad, I am in distress. Let me fall, I pray, into the hand of Yahweh; for His mercies are very great. Let me not fall into the hand of man. ¹⁴ So Yahweh sent a plague on Israel; and seventy thousand men of Israel fell. ¹⁵ God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As he was about to destroy, Yahweh saw, and He relented of the disaster, and said to the destroying angel, It is enough; now stay your hand. The angel of Yahweh was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

David's Intercession for Israel

¹⁶ David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of Yahweh standing between earth and sky, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces. ¹⁷ David said to God, Isn't it I who commanded the people to be numbered? It is even

was angry with Israel and therefore He punished them (:7) – because they failed to pay the temple tax.

21:13 God is more merciful than people. This thought is a great encouragement when we at times worry as to whether God will be merciful to us at the last day. One factor in such fears is that we have only visibly known human mercy, but this is far inferior in quality and extent to God's grace.

21:15 *He relented* – God can change His planned judgments upon His people for the sake of the intercession of one faithful person who is willing to take their sin upon him; which is what David did in :16–:27. David pointed forward to Christ at this time.

21:17 David sinned only in the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba (1 Kings 15:5); the people were punished by plague because they hadn't paid the tax required of them whenever a census was taken (Ex. 30:12-15). There are times when our conscience can smite us for things of which we are not fully guilty; but see on :3.

I who have sinned and done very wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand, O Yahweh my God, be against me, and against my father's house; but not against Your people, that they should be plagued. ¹⁸ Then the angel of Yahweh commanded Gad to tell David that David should go up, and make an altar to Yahweh in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. ¹⁹ David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spoke in the name of Yahweh. ²⁰ Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons who were with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat. ²¹ As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshing floor, and bowed himself to David with his face to the ground. ²² Then David said to Ornan, Give me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build thereon an altar to Yahweh. You shall sell it to me for the full price, that the plague may be stopped from afflicting the people. ²³ Ornan said to David, Take it for yourself, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes. Behold, I give the oxen for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meal offering. I give it all. ²⁴ King David said to Ornan, No; but I will most certainly buy it for the full price. For I will not take that which is yours for

Yahweh, nor offer a burnt offering without cost. ²⁵ So David gave to Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the place. ²⁶ David built an altar to Yahweh there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on Yahweh; and He answered him from the sky by fire on the altar of burnt offering. ²⁷ Yahweh commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into its sheath. ²⁸ At that time, when David saw that Yahweh had answered him in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. ²⁹ For the tabernacle of Yahweh, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering, were at that time in the high place at Gibeon. ³⁰ But David couldn't go before it to inquire of God; for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of Yahweh.

CHAPTER 22 Oct. 6

David Prepares for the Temple

Then David said, This is the house of Yahweh God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel. ² David gave orders to gather together the foreigners who were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to cut worked stones to build God's house. ³ David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the couplings; and brass in abundance without weight; ⁴ and cedar trees without number; for

21:24 We shouldn't appear to make a sacrifice when actually it costs us nothing; e.g. to serve God in a way which naturally reinforces our natural interests and personality type. Sacrifice is to be after the pattern of Christ on the cross, and therefore has to involve real cost and pain for us; otherwise the concept of sacrifice loses any real meaning.

the Sidonians and Tyrians brought cedar trees in abundance to David. ⁵ David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be built for Yahweh must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all nations. I will therefore make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death. ⁶ Then he called for Solomon his son, and commanded him to build a house for Yahweh, the God of Israel. ⁷ David said to Solomon his son, As for me, it was in my heart to build a house to the name of Yahweh my God. ⁸ But the word of Yahweh came to me saying, ‘You have shed blood abundantly, and have made great wars. You shall not build a house to My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight. ⁹ Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of peace. I will give him peace from all his enemies all around; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. ¹⁰ He shall build a house for

My name; and he shall be My son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever’. ¹¹ Now, my son, may Yahweh be with you and prosper you, and build the house of Yahweh your God, as He has spoken concerning you. ¹² May Yahweh give you discretion and understanding, and put you in charge of Israel; that so you may keep the law of Yahweh your God. ¹³ Then you will prosper, if you observe to do the statutes and the ordinances which Yahweh gave Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and courageous. Don’t be afraid, neither be dismayed. ¹⁴ Now, behold, I have made a great effort in preparing for the house of Yahweh one hundred thousand talents of gold, one million talents of silver, and brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance. I have also prepared timber and stone; and you may add to them. ¹⁵ There are also workmen with you in abundance, cutters and workers of stone and timber, and all kinds of men who are skilful in every kind of

22:8 Solomon slightly spins this when he tells Hiram that his father David hadn’t himself had the time to get around to the job of building the temple because of being busy fighting wars (1 Kings 5:3). He says nothing about David shedding blood; the moral aspect of it all is nicely ignored by Solomon. But David in his turn appears to be twisting the promises to him given in 1 Chron. 17 and 2 Sam. 7. The house referred to was God’s Kingdom, God’s family of people; and the great son referred to was prophetic of Christ (Lk. 1:31-35). Indeed, God clarified that He didn’t want man to build *Him* a temple, instead He wanted to build us up to be His house in Christ. One wonders therefore if God really did tell David that he couldn’t build the temple because he had killed many people; and whether the building plans David claimed to have received from God were really from Him. All we have here is the record of David claiming God had told him that He did want a house built, but not by David because of his bloodshed. There are other Biblical examples of men assuming they know what God wants to the point of claiming that their hunch is in fact God’s word (2 Sam. 7:3,4; 1 Kings 22:15-17).

work: ¹⁶ of the gold, silver, brass and iron, there is no number. Arise and be doing, and may Yahweh be with you. ¹⁷ David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, saying, ¹⁸ Isn't Yahweh your God with you? Hasn't He given you rest on every side? For He has delivered the inhabitants of the land into my hand; and the land is subdued before Yahweh and before His people. ¹⁹ Now set your heart and your soul to seek after Yahweh your God. Arise therefore, and build the sanctuary of Yahweh God, to bring the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of Yahweh.

CHAPTER 23 Oct. 7

The Number and Genealogy of the Levites

Now David was old and full of days; and he made Solomon his son king over Israel. ² He gathered together all the princes of Is-

rael, with the priests and the Levites. ³ The Levites were numbered from thirty years old and over: and their number by their polls, man by man, was thirty-eight thousand. ⁴ David said, Of these, twenty-four thousand are to oversee the work of the house of Yahweh; six thousand are to be officers and judges; ⁵ four thousand are to be doorkeepers; and four thousand are to praise Yahweh with the instruments which I made for giving praise. ⁶ David divided them into divisions according to the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ⁷ Of the Gershonites: Ladan and Shimei. ⁸ The sons of Ladan: Jehiel the chief, Zetham and Joel, three. ⁹ The sons of Shimei: Shelomoth, Haziël and Haran, three. These were the heads of the fathers' households of Ladan. ¹⁰ The sons of Shimei: Jahath, Zina, Jeush and Beriah. These four were the sons of Shimei. ¹¹ Jahath was the chief, and Zizah the second: but Jeush and Beriah didn't have many

23:4 *To oversee the work of the house of Yahweh* – This system of arrangements in God's house would've been practically experienced by Solomon. He twice uses the Hebrew word translated "oversee" in Proverbs. He says that ants are self-motivated; they need no "guide, overseer or ruler" (Prov. 6:6,7). This seems a critique of the complex system of overseers which Solomon had to place over Israel in order to build the temple and build up the Kingdom. Ideally, he seems to be saying, every Israelite ought to be a zealous worker. Prov. 12:24 says the same: "The hand of the diligent [*whoever* he / she is] shall bear rule [in practice]" [s.w. Prov. 6:7 "ruler"]. And we must ask ourselves, whether for whatever reason the new Israel hasn't slumped into the same problem, of lack of self-motivation, waiting to be asked to do something before we do it, over-relying upon our "overseers". The ants aren't like this. They see the job to be done, and naturally get on with it.

Sanctified, that he should sanctify – This is alluded to in Jn. 17:17-19 where Jesus says that He sanctified Himself on the cross in order to sanctify us. Our sanctification is ultimately in order to do the same for others; because we are a Kingdom of priests (1 Pet. 2:5,6), the Levites are our pattern. Salvation and acceptance by God aren't given to us simply to personally enjoy, but so that we may serve others with them.

sons; therefore they combined to become a father's house. ¹² The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four. ¹³ The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses; and Aaron was sanctified, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons, forever, to burn incense before Yahweh, to minister to Him, and to bless in His name, forever. ¹⁴ But as for Moses the man of God, his sons were named among the tribe of Levi. ¹⁵ The sons of Moses: Gershom and Eliezer. ¹⁶ The sons of Gershom: Shebuel the chief. ¹⁷ The sons of Eliezer were: Rehabiah the chief. Eliezer had no other sons; but the sons of Rehabiah were very many. ¹⁸ The sons of Izhar: Shelomith the chief. ¹⁹ The sons of Hebron: Jeriah the chief, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth. ²⁰ The sons of Uzziel: Micah the chief, and Isshiah the second. ²¹ The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli: Eleazar and Kish. ²² Eleazar died, and had no sons, but daughters only; and their brothers the sons of Kish took them as wives. ²³ The sons of Mushi: Mahli, and Eder, and Jeremoth, three. ²⁴ These were the sons of Levi after their fathers' houses, even the heads of the fathers' houses of those who were counted individually, in the number of names by their polls, who did the work for the service of the house of Yahweh, from twenty years old and over. ²⁵ For David said, Yahweh, the God of Israel, has given rest to His people; and He dwells in Jerusalem forever. ²⁶ Also the Lev-

ites will no longer need to carry the tabernacle and all its vessels for its service. ²⁷ For by the last words of David the sons of Levi were numbered, from twenty years old and over. ²⁸ Their ministry was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of Yahweh, in the courts, and in the rooms, and in the purifying of all holy things, even the work of the service of God's house; ²⁹ for the showbread also, and for the fine flour for a meal offering, whether of unleavened wafers, or of that which is baked in the pan, or of that which is soaked, and for all kinds of measure and size. ³⁰ And to stand every morning to thank and praise Yahweh, and likewise in the evening; ³¹ and to offer all burnt offerings to Yahweh, on the Sabbaths, on the new moons, and on the set feasts, in number according to the ordinance concerning them, continually before Yahweh; ³² and that they should keep the duty of the Tent of Meeting, and the duty of the holy place, and the duty of the sons of Aaron their brothers, for the service of the house of Yahweh.

CHAPTER 24 Oct. 8

The Divisions of the Descendants of Aaron

These were the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ² But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children; therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. ³ David with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons

of Ithamar, divided them according to their ordering in their service. ⁴ There were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar. They were divided like this: of the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen, heads of fathers' houses; and of the sons of Ithamar, according to their fathers' houses, eight. ⁵ Thus were they divided impartially by drawing lots; for there were princes of the sanctuary, and princes of God, both of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar. ⁶ Shemaiah the son of Nethanel the scribe, who was of the Levites, wrote them in the presence of the king, and the princes, and Zadok the priest, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the fathers' households of the priests and of the Levites; one father's house being taken for Eleazar, and one taken for Ithamar. ⁷ Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, ⁸ the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, ⁹ the fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin, ¹⁰ the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, ¹¹ the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah, ¹² the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, ¹³ the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, ¹⁴ the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer, ¹⁵ the seventeenth to Hezir,

the eighteenth to Happizzes, ¹⁶ the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezkel, ¹⁷ the twenty-first to Jachin, the twenty-second to Gamul, ¹⁸ the twenty-third to Delaiah, the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. ¹⁹ This was their ordering in their service, to come into the house of Yahweh according to the ordinance given to them by Aaron their father, as Yahweh, the God of Israel, had commanded him. ²⁰ Of the rest of the sons of Levi: of the sons of Amram, Shubael; of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. ²¹ Of Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, Isshiah the chief. ²² Of the Izharites, Shelomoth; of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath. ²³ The sons of Hebron: Jeriah, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth. ²⁴ The sons of Uzziel, Micah; of the sons of Micah, Shamir. ²⁵ The brother of Micah, Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. ²⁶ The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Jaaziah: Beno. ²⁷ The sons of Merari: of Jaaziah, Beno, and Shoham, and Zaccur, and Ibri. ²⁸ Of Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons. ²⁹ Of Kish; the sons of Kish: Jerahmeel. ³⁰ The sons of Mushi: Mahli, and Eder, and Jerimoth. These were the sons of the Levites after their fathers' houses. ³¹ These likewise cast lots even as their brothers the sons of

24:19 The 24 orders of priests are alluded to in the vision of the Heavenly court in Rev. 4:4; 5:8; 11:16; 19:4, where again there are 24 elders. God's people on earth are to reflect the system of their representative Angels in Heaven. But Israel tragically perverted this; in Ez. 8:16-18 we read of how the High Priest and the 24 elders worshipped idols within the temple. We on earth are not alone as we do God's work; we are part of a reflection on earth of the situation which is now in Heaven.

24:31 *These likewise* – Notice the stress on the equality of the priests and the irrel-

Aaron in the presence of David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the heads of the fathers' households of the priests and of the Levites; the fathers' households of the chief even as those of his younger brother.

CHAPTER 25 Oct. 8

The Sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun

Moreover, David and the captains of the army set apart for the service certain of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, stringed instruments and cymbals. The number of those who did the work according to their service was: ² Of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah and Asharelah, the sons of Asaph, under the hand of Asaph, who prophesied after the order of the king. ³ Of Jeduthun; the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Hashabiah and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun with the harp, who prophesied in giving thanks and praising Yahweh. ⁴ Of Heman; the

sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti-Ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir and Mahazioth. ⁵ All these were the sons of Heman the king's prophet of the words of God, to lift up the horn. God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. ⁶ All these were under the hands of their father for the singing ministry in the house of Yahweh, with cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, for the service of God's house: Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman being under the order of the king. ⁷ The number of them, with their brothers who were instructed in singing to Yahweh, even all who were skilful, was two hundred and eighty-eight. ⁸ They cast lots for their offices, all alike, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar. ⁹ Now the first lot of Asaph came forth to Joseph: the second to Gedaliah, he and his brothers and sons were twelve: ¹⁰ the third to Zaccur, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ¹¹ the fourth to Izri, his sons and

evance of their personal status (25:8; 26:12). We are the new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5,6). The greatness, urgency and very nature of the work before us as a community of believers ought to make worldly differences of status and age irrelevant.

25:2 The "sons" mentioned in these lists could include those who were taught by, e.g., Asaph; the students were understood as "sons" of the teacher (:8).

25:6 *The service of God's house* – The temple project became an obsession with Solomon; after his death, his people complained at the "grievous servitude" which Solomon had subjected them to (2 Chron. 10:4). But the Hebrew word "servitude" is that repeatedly used to describe the "service" of the temple by the people (here and 26:8,30; 27:26; 28:13-15,20,21; 29:7; 2 Chron. 8:14). Solomon became obsessed with making others 'serve God' when it was effectively serving him; he came to be abusive to God's people, when the initial idea of the temple was that it was to be built in order to help God's people serve Him. And such obsession, turning well motivated projects into means of personal ego tripping, with all the resultant abuse, has sadly not been unknown amongst the believers of our generation.

his brothers, twelve; ¹² the fifth to Nethaniah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ¹³ the sixth to Bukkiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ¹⁴ the seventh to Jesharelah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ¹⁵ the eighth to Jeshaiiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ¹⁶ the ninth to Mattaniah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ¹⁷ the tenth to Shimei, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ¹⁸ the eleventh to Azarel, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ¹⁹ the twelfth to Hashabiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ²⁰ the thirteenth to Shubael, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ²¹ the fourteenth, to Mattithiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ²² the fifteenth to Jeremoth, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ²³ the sixteenth to Hananiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ²⁴ the seventeenth to Joshbekashah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ²⁵ the eighteenth to Hanani, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ²⁶ the nineteenth to Mallothi, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ²⁷ the twentieth to Eliathah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ²⁸ the twenty-first to Hothir, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ²⁹ the twenty-second to Giddalti, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ³⁰ the

twenty-third to Mahazioth, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ³¹ the twenty-fourth to Romamti-Ezer, his sons and his brothers, twelve.

CHAPTER 26 Oct. 9

The Doorkeepers

FOR the divisions of the doorkeepers: of the Korahites, Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph. ² Meshelemiah had sons: Zechariah the firstborn, Jediel the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathiel the fourth, ³ Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh. ⁴ Obed-Edom had sons: Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, Sacar the fourth, Nethanel the fifth, ⁵ Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peullethai the eighth; for God blessed him. ⁶ Also to Shemaiah his son were sons born, who ruled over the house of their father; for they were mighty men of valour. ⁷ The sons of Shemaiah: Othni, Rephael, Obed and Elzabad, whose brothers were capable men, Elihu and Semachiah. ⁸ All these were of the sons of Obed-Edom: they and their sons and their brothers, able men in strength for the service; sixty-two of Obed-Edom.

26:4 *Obed-Edom... God blessed him* – Obed-Edom bravely had the ark stay in his home, when at the time all others thought that it would lead to the death of his family (2 Sam. 6:11,12). God blessed him for this – by giving him many children and grandchildren, 62 in all (:8). And yet Obed-Edom wasn't highly rewarded for this in human terms; his many children were doorkeepers in the temple, which Ps. 84:10 implies was seen as the lowest and least honourable work. There are times when we have to do what is right and disregard the fears of others in the ecclesia, even those of the leaders [cp. David]. Reward and honour for such faithfulness will not necessarily come in this life, nor should we expect it now, if our focus is upon the future Kingdom of God on earth as the time and arena for our reward.

⁹ Meshelemiah had sons and brothers, valiant men, eighteen. ¹⁰ Also Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons: Shimri the chief, (for though he was not the firstborn, yet his father made him chief), ¹¹ Hilkiyah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth. All the sons and brothers of Hosah were thirteen. ¹² Of these were the divisions of the doorkeepers, even of the chief men, having offices like their brothers, to minister in the house of Yahweh. ¹³ They cast lots, the small as well as the great, according to their fathers' houses, for each gate. ¹⁴ The lot eastward fell to Shelemiah. Then for Zechariah his son, a wise counsellor, they cast lots; and his lot came out northward. ¹⁵ To Obed-Edom southward; and to his sons, the storehouse. ¹⁶ To Shuppim and Hosah, westward, by the gate of Shallecheth, at the causeway that goes up, watch against watch. ¹⁷ Eastward were six Levites, northward four a day, southward four a day, and for the storehouse two and two. ¹⁸ For the colonnade on the west, four at the causeway, and two at the colonnade. ¹⁹ These were the

divisions of the doorkeepers; of the sons of the Korahites, and of the sons of Merari.

The Keepers of the Treasury

²⁰ Of the Levites, Ahijah was over the treasures of God's house, and over the treasures of the dedicated things.

²¹ The sons of Ladan, the sons of the Gershonites belonging to Ladan, the heads of the fathers' households belonging to Ladan the Gershonite: Jehieli. ²² The sons of Jehieli: Zetham and Joel his brother were over the treasures of the house of Yahweh.

²³ Of the Amramites, of the Izharites, of the Hebronites, of the Uzzielites:

²⁴ and Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was ruler over the treasures. ²⁵ His brothers: of Eliezer, Rehabiah his son, Jeshaiyah his son, Joram his son, Zichri his son and Shelomoth his son. ²⁶ This Shelomoth and his brothers were over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the heads of the fathers' households, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the army, had dedicated. ²⁷ They dedicated some of

26:26 *David... had dedicated* – God swore to David “by My holiness” (Ps. 89:35). The Hebrew for “holiness” is the same word translated “dedication”. David’s response to God’s dedication to him was to dedicate [s.w.] all the silver and gold which he had won from this world, to the service of God’s house (see too 1 Kings 7:51; 2 Chron. 5:1). Our response to God’s dedication to us should be a like dedication of what we have to Him. Covenant relationship with God requires much of both Him and us. The case of David is a nice illustration of the meaning of grace. David wanted to *do* something for God – build Him a house, spending his wealth to do so. God replied that no, He wanted to build *David* a house. And He started to, in the promises He gave David. And David’s response to that grace is to still *do* something – to dedicate his wealth to God’s house, as God had dedicated Himself to David’s house. This is just how grace and works should be related in our experience.

the spoil won in battles to repair the house of Yahweh. ²⁸ All that Samuel the seer, Saul the son of Kish, Abner the son of Ner and Joab the son of Zeruiah had dedicated, whoever had dedicated anything, it was under the hand of Shelomoth, and of his brothers.

Other Officials

²⁹ Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons were for the outward business over Israel, for officers and judges. ³⁰ Of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brothers, men of valour, one thousand seven hundred, had the oversight of Israel beyond the Jordan westward, for all the business of Yahweh, and for the service of the king. ³¹ Of the Hebronites was Jerijah the chief, even of the Hebronites, according to their generations by fathers' households. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valour at Jazer of Gilead. ³² His brothers, men of valour, were two thousand seven hundred, heads of fathers' households, whom king David made overseers over the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of the Manassites, for every matter pertaining to God, and for the affairs of the king.

CHAPTER 27 Oct. 10

The Monthly Battalions

Now the children of Israel after their number, the heads of fathers' households and the captains of thousands and of hundreds,

and their officers who served the king, in any matter of the divisions which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year — of every division were twenty-four thousand. ² Over the first division for the first month was Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel; and in his division were twenty-four thousand. ³ He was of the children of Perez, the chief of all the captains of the army for the first month. ⁴ Over the division of the second month was Dodai the Ahohite, and his division; and Mikloth the ruler; and in his division were twenty-four thousand. ⁵ The third captain of the army for the third month was Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, chief; and in his division were twenty-four thousand. ⁶ This is that Benaiah, who was the mighty man of the thirty, and over the thirty; and of his division was Ammizabad his son. ⁷ The fourth captain for the fourth month was Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him; and in his division were twenty-four thousand. ⁸ The fifth captain for this fifth month was Shamhuth the Izrahite; and in his division were twenty-four thousand. ⁹ The sixth captain for the sixth month was Ira the son of Ikkesheh the Tekoite; and in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹⁰ The seventh captain for the seventh month was Helez the Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim; and in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹¹ The eighth captain for the eighth month was Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zerahites; and in his division

were twenty-four thousand. ¹² The ninth captain for the ninth month was Abiezer the Anathothite, of the Benjamites: and in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹³ The tenth captain for the tenth month was Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zerahites; and in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹⁴ The eleventh captain for the eleventh month was Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim; and in his division were twenty-four thousand. ¹⁵ The twelfth captain for the twelfth month was Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel; and in his division were twenty-four thousand.

The Rulers of the Tribes

¹⁶ Furthermore over the tribes of Israel: of the Reubenites was Eliezer the son of Zichri the ruler: of the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maacah: ¹⁷ of Levi, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel: of Aaron, Zadok: ¹⁸ of Judah, Elihu, one of the brothers of David: of Issachar, Omri the son of Michael: ¹⁹ of Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah: of Naphtali, Jeremoth the son of Azriel: ²⁰ of the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah: of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiiah: ²¹ of the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah: of Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner: ²² of Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham.

These were the captains of the tribes of Israel. ²³ But David didn't take the number of them from twenty years old and under, because Yahweh had said He would increase Israel like the stars of the sky. ²⁴ Joab the son of Zeruiah began to number, but didn't finish; and there came wrath for this upon Israel; neither was the number put into the account in the chronicles of king David. ²⁵ Over the king's treasures was Azmaveth the son of Adiel. Over the treasures in the fields, in the cities, and in the villages, and in the towers, was Jonathan the son of Uziah. ²⁶ Over those who did the work of the field for tillage of the ground was Ezri the son of Chelub. ²⁷ And over the vineyards was Shimei the Ramathite. And over the increase of the vineyards for the winecellars was Zabdi the Shiphmite. ²⁸ And over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that were in the lowland was Baal Hanan the Gederite. And over the cellars of oil was Joash. ²⁹ And over the herds that fed in Sharon was Shitrai the Sharonite. and over the herds that were in the valleys was Shaphat the son of Adlai. ³⁰ And over the camels was Obil the Ishmaelite. And over the donkeys was Jehdeiah the Meronothite. And over the flocks was Jaziz the Hagrite. ³¹ All these were the rulers of the substance which was king David's. ³² Also Jonathan, David's

27:23 There would've been nothing morally wrong with taking a census of Israel's young people, the next generation; but David believed in the promise that Abraham's seed would be many, and so he didn't. We can count every penny of our resources if we wish, but the higher level is to live in faith that God will fulfil His promise to provide for His people on their journey towards His Kingdom.

uncle, was a counsellor, a man of understanding, and a scribe. Jehiel the son of Hachmoni was with the king's sons. ³³ Ahithophel was the king's counsellor. Hushai the Archite was the king's advisor; ³⁴ and after Ahithophel was Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar. The captain of the king's army was Joab.

CHAPTER 28 Oct. 11

David Charges Solomon about the Temple

David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, the captains of the companies who served the king by division, the captains of thousands and hundreds, and the rulers over all the substance and possessions of the king and of his sons, with the officers and the mighty men, even all the mighty men of valour, to Jerusalem. ² Then David the king stood up on his feet and said, Hear me, my brothers and my people! As for me, it was in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, and for the footstool of our God; and I had

prepared for the building. ³ But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you are a man of war, and have shed blood'. ⁴ However Yahweh, the God of Israel, chose me out of all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever. For He has chosen Judah to be prince; and in the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father He took pleasure in me to make me king over all Israel. ⁵ Of all my sons (for Yahweh has given me many sons), He has chosen Solomon my son to sit on the throne of Yahweh's kingdom over Israel. ⁶ He said to me, 'Solomon, your son, shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his father. ⁷ I will establish his kingdom forever, if he continues to do My commandments and My ordinances as he does at this time'. ⁸ Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of Yahweh, and in the audience of our God, observe and seek out all the commandments of Yahweh your God; that you may possess this good

28:3-6 These words of David appear to be his claims as to what God had told him; but what he says here appears to be a mixture of God's actual words with some wishful thinking on his own part. The reasons God gave for not wanting David to build a temple are different to what David here claims God said, and clearly David was obsessed with justifying Solomon as his heir, even claiming that God had commanded Solomon to be king and to build the temple. David had lost his Christ-centeredness in his zeal to see his son become the major fulfilment of the promises to him in 2 Sam. 7. This desire to declare Solomon right and as God's man at all costs was very damaging for Solomon, for it led him to a loss of conscience, chronic selfishness and loss of faith in the end. See on :19.

28:8 *Seek out all the commandments of Yahweh* – If we love God, we will not have a minimalistic attitude to serving Him, doing as little as we can get away with. We will eagerly seek out how to please Him, what principles we should live by, what we should and should not do or be in order to please Him.

land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever. ⁹ You, Solomon my son, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for Yahweh searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. ¹⁰ Take heed now; for Yahweh has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong, and do it.

David's Preparation for the Temple

¹¹ Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch of the temple, and of its houses, and of its treasuries, and of the upper rooms of it, and of the inner rooms of it, and of the place of the mercy seat; ¹² and the pattern of all that he had in mind for the courts of the house of Yahweh, and for all the surrounding rooms, for the treasuries of God's house, and for the treasuries of the dedicated things; ¹³ also for the divisions of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of Yahweh, and for all the vessels of service in the house of Yahweh; ¹⁴ of gold by weight for the gold, for all vessels of every kind of service; for all the vessels of silver by weight, for all vessels of every kind of service; ¹⁵ by weight also for the lampstands

of gold, and for its lamps, of gold, by weight for every lampstand and for its lamps; and for the lampstands of silver, by weight for every lampstand and for its lamps, according to the use of every lampstand; ¹⁶ and the gold by weight for the tables of show bread, for every table; and silver for the tables of silver; ¹⁷ and the forks, and the basins, and the cups, of pure gold; and for the golden bowls by weight for every bowl; and for the silver bowls by weight for every bowl; ¹⁸ and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of the chariot, the cherubim, that spread out, and covered the ark of the covenant of Yahweh. ¹⁹ All this, said David, I have been made to understand in writing from the hand of Yahweh, even all the works of this pattern. ²⁰ David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and courageous, and do it. Don't be afraid, nor be dismayed; for Yahweh God, even my God, is with you. He will not fail you, nor forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of Yahweh is finished. ²¹ Behold, there are the divisions of the priests and the Levites, for all the service of God's house. There shall be with you in all kinds of work every willing man who has skill, for any kind of service. Also the captains and all the people will be entirely at your command.

28:19 *This, said David, I have been made to understand in writing from the hand of Yahweh* – The implication could be that David was only claiming to have been given the temple plans from Yahweh (see on 28:3-6). David like many today mixed God's word with his own wishes and speculations, and ended up assuming that what he wished to be true was in fact God's word.

CHAPTER 29 Oct. 12***David Addresses Israel and They Respond Generously***

David the king said to all the assembly, Solomon my son, whom alone God has chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great; for the palace is not for man, but for Yahweh God. ² Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for the things of gold, the silver for the things of silver, the brass for the things of brass, the iron for the things of iron and wood for the things of wood; onyx stones and stones to be set, stones for inlaid work and of various colours, all kinds of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. ³ In addition, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, since I have a treasure of my own of gold and silver, I give it to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, ⁴ even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, with which to overlay the walls of the house; ⁵ of gold for the things of

gold, and of silver for the things of silver, and for all kinds of work to be made by the hands of artisans. Who then offers willingly to consecrate himself this day to Yahweh? ⁶ Then the princes of the fathers' households, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers over the king's work, offered willingly; ⁷ and they gave for the service of God's house five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, and of silver ten thousand talents, of brass eighteen thousand talents and of iron a hundred thousand talents. ⁸ They with whom precious stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of Yahweh, under the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. ⁹ Then the people rejoiced, because they offered willingly, because with a complete heart they offered willingly to Yahweh: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy. ¹⁰ Therefore David blessed Yahweh before all the assembly; and David said, You are blessed, Yahweh, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. ¹¹ Yours, Yahweh, is the great-

29:1 *Whom alone God has chosen* – God hadn't said this, but David made his personal wishes and preferences to sound as if they were God's word; see on 28:3-6,19.

29:5 *To be made by the hands of artisans* – Solomon's temple is described as being made with hands. The word "made" is stressed in the record of Solomon's building the temple (2 Chron. 3:8,10,14-16; 4:1,2,6-9,14,18,19,21). The work of the temple was very much produced by men's *hands* (2 Chron. 2:7,8). 'Things made with hands' is a phrase referring to idols in several passages (e.g. Is. 2:8; 17:8; 31:7). And it may be significant that the words of Is. 66:1,2 concerning God not living in temples are quoted by Paul with reference to pagan temples in Acts 17:24, and concerning the temple in Jerusalem by Stephen. The building of the temple became an idol to Solomon, just as the service of God can be twisted by us into a form of self-worship.

29:6 David's generosity inspired his brethren to do the same; generosity to God's work is contagious.

ness, the power, the glory, the victory and the majesty! For all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Yours. Yours is the kingdom, Yahweh, and You are exalted as head above all. ¹² Both riches and honour come from You, and You rule over all; in Your hand is power and might; it is in Your hand to make great, and to give strength to all. ¹³ Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name. ¹⁴ But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of Your own have we given You. ¹⁵ For we are strangers before You, and foreigners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no remaining. ¹⁶ Yahweh our God, all this store that we have prepared to build You

a house for Your holy name comes from Your hand, and is all Your own. ¹⁷ I know also, my God, that You try the heart, and have pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things. Now have I seen with joy Your people, that are present here, offer willingly to You. ¹⁸ Yahweh, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Israel our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and prepare their heart for You. ¹⁹ Give to Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep Your commandments, Your testimonies and Your statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for which I have made provision. ²⁰ David said to all the assembly, Now bless Yahweh your God!

29:14 *Of Your own have we given You* – We are not our own: how much less is ‘our’ money or time our own! Like David, we need to realize that all our giving is only a giving back to God of what we have been given by Him. The myth of materialism is the assumption that we are ultimate owners of what we ‘have’. Connected to this is David’s argument that we ought to be generous to God’s work because of our mortality (:15) – seeing we can take nothing with us, we should give it all to God. This is one outcome of believing that man is mortal and that we have no immortal soul which consciously survives death.

29:19 David earnestly prayed in Psalm 72 for Solomon to be the Messianic King, and therefore David asked for Solomon to be given a truly wise heart. These prayers were answered in a very limited sense – in that Solomon was given great wisdom, and his Kingdom was one of the greatest types of Christ’s future Kingdom. Thus our prayers for others really can have an effect upon them, otherwise there would be no point in the concept of praying for others. But each individual has an element of spiritual freewill; we can’t force others to be spiritual by our prayers; yet on the other hand, our prayers can influence their spirituality. David’s prayers for Solomon is an example of this. Those prayers were heard, in that God helped Solomon marvellously, giving him every opportunity to develop a superb spirituality; but he failed to have the genuine personal desire to be like this in his heart, in his heart he was back in Egypt, and therefore ultimately David’s desire for Solomon to be the wondrous Messianic King of his dreams had to go unfulfilled.

The Death of David

All the assembly blessed Yahweh, the God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads and prostrated themselves before Yahweh and the king. ²¹ They sacrificed sacrifices to Yahweh, and offered burnt offerings to Yahweh, on the next day after that day, even one thousand bulls, one thousand rams and one thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel, ²² and ate and drink before Yahweh on that day with great gladness. They made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him to Yahweh to be prince, and Zadok to be priest. ²³ Then Solomon sat on the throne of Yahweh as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. ²⁴ All the princes, the mighty men, and also all the sons of king David submitted themselves to

Solomon the king. ²⁵ Yahweh magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed on him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel. ²⁶ Now David the son of Jesse had reigned over all Israel. ²⁷ The time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and he reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem. ²⁸ He died in a good old age, full of days, riches and honour; and Solomon his son reigned in his place. ²⁹ Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the history of Samuel the seer, in the history of Nathan the prophet and in the history of Gad the seer, ³⁰ with accounts of all his reign and his might, and the circumstances which he and all Israel experienced, and those of all the kingdoms of the surrounding countries.

29:23 *Solomon sat on the throne of Yahweh as king* – Note that the Kingdom of Israel was in fact God’s Kingdom; the re-establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth (Ez. 21:27; Acts 1:6) therefore requires that the arena of that Kingdom will likewise be here on earth – not in Heaven.