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Daily Manna devotions: Editor's Choice
Current archive for January to December 2024

Old and New Testament Bible teachings
as requested by the late Fred Morris, author and founder of Manna Publications
(USA), before he died in 2018

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

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1st January 2024

Genesis 1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth... God said, "Let there be light." He separated the light from the darkness. Then God separated the water below from the waters above. Then God said, "Let the waters below be gathered in one place and let dry land appear. Let the land produce plants. Let them bear their own seeds. And let there be trees on the land that bear fruit with seeds in it. Let each kind of plant or tree have its own kind of seeds." God said, "Let there be lights in the huge space of the sky. Let them separate the day from the night." He also made the stars. God said, "Let the waters be filled with living things. Let birds fly above the Earth across the huge space of the sky." Then God said, "Let the land produce all kinds of living creatures. Let there be livestock, and creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals." Then God said, "Let Us make mankind in our likeness. Let them rule over the fish in the waters and the birds of the air. Let them rule over the livestock and over the whole Earth." So God created man in his own likeness. He created them as male and female. He said to them, "Have children and increase your numbers. Fill the Earth and bring it under your control. Rule over every living creature. I am giving you every plant on the face of the whole Earth that bears its own seeds. All of them will be given to you for food."

Matthew 1 begins with the ancestors of Joseph, the husband of Mary, from whom was born Jesus who is called the Christ. Before they were married, Mary was pregnant with a child through the Holy Spirit. An angel of the Lord God Almighty visited them to explain this.

*Father God, thank You for reminding us of these 'beginnings' at the start of the new year.
Amen.*

2nd January 2024.

Genesis 2. Moses confirms the beginnings of the Universe and our planet Earth were in six days (v.1). "So on the seventh day God rested and blessed the seventh day and made it holy." Moses also confirmed that at first there was no rain on Earth but the ground was watered by springs (v.6). "The LORD God Almighty planted a garden in Eden. There He put the man He had formed. The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground. Their fruit was pleasing to look at and good to eat. The tree that gives life forever was in the middle of the garden. The tree that had the ability to tell the difference between good and evil was also there." (v.8-9). "The LORD God commanded 'You can eat the fruit of any tree that is in the garden. But you must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you do, you can be sure that you will die.' The LORD God also said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.' " (v.16-18) Then God created Eve out Adam's rib while he slept (v.22).

Matthew 2 describes the worship of the baby Jesus by wise men from the east. (v.1-2). But when they had gone, King Herod tried to kill Jesus by ordering all the baby boys in the area around Bethlehem to be destroyed (v.16). But an angel of the Lord God Almighty had already warned Joseph and Mary to escape to Egypt with the baby Jesus. (v.13-15). After the death of Herod, Joseph took Mary and Jesus back to his home in Nazareth (v.19-23).

Thank you again heavenly Father for confirming these things that happened at the beginning of the world You created and at the beginning of Your visit to Earth in the form of the baby Jesus who is our Saviour. Amen.

3rd January 2024.

Genesis 3 describes how Adam and Eve were tempted to disobey God by Satan through eating from 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. Satan told his serpent to deceive them by telling them they would become like God Himself, knowing good from evil. Adam and Eve confessed to God what they had done (v.12-13). Then the Lord God Almighty said, "The man has become like one of Us [the Trinity]. He can now tell the difference between good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and pick fruit from the tree of life and eat it. If he does, he will live forever." So the LORD drove the man out of the Garden of Eden to work the soil he had been made out of (v.22-23).

Matthew 3. While Jesus lived in Nazareth, 'John the Baptist came and preached in the desert saying, "Turn away from your sins! The kingdom of Heaven is near." John is the one the prophet Isaiah had spoken about. "A messenger is calling out in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord.' " (Isaiah 40:3) ...People went out to him from Jerusalem and all of Judea... When they admitted they had sinned, John baptized them in the River Jordan (v:1-6). He warned the religious people to "produce fruit that shows you have turned away from your sins... I baptize you with water, calling you to turn away from your sins. But after me, One will come who is more powerful than I am... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (v.8,11) Then Jesus came to the Jordan River to be baptized by John... God announced, "This is My Son" ' (v.13,17)

Thank You heavenly Father for Your provision for mankind through hard work and the need to turn from the "knowledge or evil" in life to "produce good fruit that shows you have turned away from your sins". In Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

4th January 2024.

Jeremiah Chapter 36 describes the time when 'a message came to Jeremiah from the LORD God Almighty in the fourth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah. He was the son of the godly King Josiah. "Get a scroll. Write on it all of the words I have spoken to you about Israel, Judah and all of the other nations since the time of King Josiah until now. The people of Judah will hear about all of the trouble I plan to bring on them. Maybe then all of them will turn from their evil ways. If they do, I will forgive their sins and the evil things they have done." ' (v.1-3) But King Jehoiakim refused to change his ways and ordered the scroll to be burned. 'So Jeremiah got another scroll... He wrote down all of the words that were burned up and added many more words the LORD had given.' (v.32)

Titus Chapter 1. Paul left Titus in charge of the churches in Crete "to appoint elders in every town... An elder must be without blame. He must be faithful to his wife. His children must be believers. They must not give anyone a reason to say that they are wild and do not obey." (v.5-6) Paul knew that 'people from Crete are always liars and evil beasts. They do not want to work. They live only to eat... "So give [the elders] a strong warning. Then they will understand the faith correctly. They will pay no attention to Jewish stories that are not completely true nor listen to the commands of those who turn away from the truth." ' (v.12-14)

Father God, raise up people like Jeremiah and Titus in these wicked days who will persevere so that "all will turn from their evil ways". Forgive us for failing to remember the times you have saved us from disasters and instead joined revellers who "do not want to work but live only to eat". Help us to faithfully establish Your truth. Amen.

5th January 2024.

Genesis 5:28 to 6:8. This record by Moses begins at the time of Noah. (In those days before 'Noah's Flood', the climate was different and people lived a long time.) 'When Lamech was 182 years he had a son. He named him Noah. Lamech said, "He will comfort us when we are working... We have to work hard because the LORD has put a curse on the ground." Lamech lived until he was 777 years old. After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth. (5:28-32) Men began to increase their numbers on Earth and daughters were born to them. The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful. So they married any of them they chose. Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not struggle with man forever. He will die. He will have only 120 years." (6:1-4) The LORD saw how bad the sins of man had become on Earth. All of the thoughts in his heart

were always directed toward what was evil... The LORD was very sad that He had made mankind on Earth... So the LORD said, "I created man on the Earth. But I will wipe them out... I am very sad that I have made man." But the LORD was pleased with Noah.' (6:5-8)

Hebrews 1:10-12. God said, "O Lord [that is Jesus, His Messiah or Christ], in the beginning You made Earth secure. You placed it on its foundations. The heavens are the work of Your hands. They will pass away. But You remain. They will all wear out like a piece of clothing... They will be changed as a person changes clothes. But You remain the same. Your years will never end."

Father God, grant us more understanding about what happened at the time of Adam, Noah and Jesus here on Earth. Also more perseverance to always "work hard". Also more faith regarding eternal salvation through Jesus our Creator and Saviour. Amen.

8th January 2024.

Psalms 128. The psalmist expresses the purpose of God for Israel. "Blessed are all those who have respect for the LORD God Almighty and live as He wants them to live. Your work will then supply what you need. Blessings and good things will come to you. As a vine bears a lot of fruit, so your wife will have many children by you. They will sit around your table like young olive trees. Only a man who has respect for the LORD will be blessed like that... May you enjoy the good things that come to Jerusalem all the days of your life. May you live to see your grandchildren. May Israel enjoy peace."

1 Corinthians 2:9-16. "It is written, 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has known what God has prepared for those who love Him.' (Isaiah 64:4) But God has shown it to us through His Spirit... Only the Spirit of God knows God's thoughts. We have not received the spirit of the world. We have received the Spirit of God. The Spirit helps us understand what God has freely given us. That is what we speak about. We do not use words taught to us by people. We use words taught to us by the Holy Spirit. We use the words of the Spirit to teach the truths of the Spirit. Some people do not have the Holy Spirit. They do not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God... Everyone who has the Spirit can judge all things. But no-one can judge those who have the Spirit... For we have the mind of Christ."

Father God, thank You for the assurance we have in understanding Your purposes for today if we seek "the mind of Christ" through His indwelling Spirit. Help us then to pray in line with Your will, including "May Israel enjoy peace". Open our eyes to "know what God has prepared for those who love Him." To Your glory. Amen.

9th January 2024.

Numbers 33. Moses lists the final stages of the 40-year journey to God's Promised Land of Canaan (v.1-49). The LORD spoke to Moses by the Jordan River across from Jericho. "Speak to the people of Israel. 'Go across the Jordan River into Canaan. Drive out all those who are living in the land. Destroy all of their statues made out of stone and metal. And destroy all of the high places where they are worshiped. Take the land as your own. Settle down in it. I have given it to you... But if you do not drive out the people who are living in the land, then those you allow to remain will become like thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. Then I will do to you what I plan to do to them.' " (v.50-56)

Revelation 2:2-5 gives the words of Jesus to the church in Ephesus. "I know what you are doing. You work long and hard. I know you cannot put up with those who are evil. You have tested some who claim to be apostles but are liars. You have been faithful and have put up with a lot of trouble because of Me. You have not given up. But here is something I hold against you. You do not have as much love as you had at first. Remember how far you have fallen! Turn away from your sins... If you don't, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place." The city of Ephesus does not exist today!

Heavenly Father, thank You again for clarifying Your purpose and provision for Israel. We pray Your people will put their trust in You alone. We also pray for the Church of Jesus Christ worldwide that nothing will hinder Your love for us and our love for You in these difficult times caused by our disobedience and failure to persevere. Strengthen the love of Christ in us! Amen.

10th January 2024.

1 Kings 13:1-6. 'A man of God went from Judah with a message from the LORD God Almighty. He arrived in Bethel just as King Jeroboam was standing by the altar to offer a sacrifice. The man

shouted a message from the LORD against the altar. "A son named Josiah will be born into the royal family of David. Altar, listen to me! Josiah will sacrifice the priests of the high places on you... So human bones will be burned on you." ...When King Jeroboam heard it, he reached out his hand and said, "Seize him!" But as he reached out his hand toward the man, it dried up. Also, the altar broke into pieces. Its ashes spilled out. That happened in keeping with the miraculous sign the man of God had announced from the LORD. King Jeroboam spoke to the man of God. "Pray to the LORD your God for me. Pray that my hand will be as good as new again." So the man of God prayed to the LORD for the king. And the king's hand became as good as new.'

Hebrews 10:14-18. "By that one sacrifice He (Jesus) has made perfect forever those who are being made holy... 'This is the covenant I will make with them', says the LORD. 'I will put My laws in their hearts and minds. I will not remember their sins anymore. I will not remember the evil things they have done.' (Jeremiah 31:33-34) Where those have been forgiven, there is no longer any offering for sin."

Thank You Father God for Your ancient message for today to trust only true believers, not false priests. Forgive us for any wrong acts of worship and misguided sacrifices. Instead, we pray that You will continue Your work of making us holy through the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. May our actions and prayers of faith have great impact on society today, including kings and priests, with signs and wonders of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

11th January 2024.

Psalms 126 expresses Israel's desire for God's blessing after their return from exile. "Our enemies took us away from Zion. But when the LORD brought us home, it seemed like a dream to us. Our mouths were filled with laughter and joy. Then the people of other nations said, 'The LORD God Almighty has done great things for them.' LORD, bless us with great success... Those who cry as they plant their crops will sing with joy when they gather them in."

Romans 2:7-13. Paul says, "God will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good. They desire glory, honour, and life that never ends. But there are others who only think about themselves. They do not accept the truth but go down an evil path. God will pour out ... trouble and suffering for everyone who does evil. That is meant first for the Jews but also for the non-Jews. There will be glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good. That is meant first for the Jews and also for the non-Jews. God treats everyone the same. Those who do not know God's Law when they sin will perish by the Law when they die. But those who do know God's Law when they sin will be judged by the Law." But remember that "hearing the Law does not make a person right with God. People are considered to be right [justified, KJV] with God only when they obey the Law." Paul adds, "On that day God will appoint Jesus Christ to judge their secret thoughts. That is part of my Good News." (v.16) This is the Gospel of salvation through Christ alone.

Heavenly Father, may Your people Israel continue to rejoice that "the LORD God Almighty has done great things for them". May both Jews and Gentiles remember that "God will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good" in love. May we all obey the Law with faith in Christ's salvation and righteous judgement. Amen.

12th January 2024.

Haggai Chapter 1 is the time in Judea after the exile in Babylon. A message came to the prophet Haggai from the LORD God Almighty. "The people of Judah are saying, 'The time has not yet come for the LORD's Temple to be rebuilt.' My Temple is still destroyed but you are living in your houses that have beautiful wooden walls. Think carefully about how you are living. You have planted many seeds but the crops you have gathered are small. You eat but never have enough. You drink but are never full. You put your clothes on but you are not warm... Go up into the mountains. Bring logs down. Use them to rebuild My house. Then I will enjoy it and you will honour Me. You expected a lot but you can see what a small amount it turned out to be. Why? Because my Temple is still destroyed. In spite of that, each one of you is busy with your own house." Haggai gave God's message to the people. Then everyone began to work on rebuilding the Temple of the LORD.

Galatians 1:6-9. Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia (Turkey). "I am amazed you are so quickly deserting the One who chose you through the grace of Christ. You are turning to a different 'Good News'. What you are accepting is really not good news at all. It seems that some people are trying to twist the 'Good News of salvation through Christ'... Anyone who preaches a 'Good News' that is different from the one you accepted should be judged by God forever."

Forgive us heavenly Father for quickly turning away from Your salvation and calling in life. Help us to build or rebuild Your Church instead of meeting our own needs in these difficult days. Help us to "think carefully about how we are living" then trust You for our needs as we preach and live Your "Good News of salvation through Christ alone". For His sake. Amen.

15th January 2024.

1 Kings chapters 12 to 16. After the death of King Solomon, most of the kings in Israel and Judah "did evil in the sight of the LORD their God" ...This period in the ninth century BC was before God raised up His prophet Elijah. However, during these 65 years, 'Asa became king of Judah and ruled in Jerusalem for 41 years... Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD God Almighty as King David had done. Asa threw out of the land the male prostitutes who were at the shrines. He got rid of all of the statues of gods his people before him had made. He even removed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother. She had made a pole that was used to worship the goddess Asherah. The LORD hated it so Asa cut it down and burned it in the Kidron Valley. Asa didn't remove the high places from Israel, but he committed his whole life completely to the LORD. He and his father had set apart silver, gold and other articles to the LORD and brought them into the LORD's Temple.' (15:9-15)

John 8:12, 31-32. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Those who follow Me will never walk in darkness. They will have the light that leads to life... If you obey My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

Father God in Heaven, we thank You again for Your written words which testify of good and evil, especially the truth of the Good News of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Make us bold to support leaders like Asa but above all to speak and live the truth of Jesus Christ. Free us from slavery to sin. Make us bold to speak against unholy ways of living today and the things that You hate. Raise up modern-day Elijahs to prepare the way for the return of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.

16th January 2024.

Lamentations 3:55-59 says, "LORD God Almighty, I called out to You. I called out from the bottom of the pit. I prayed, 'Please do not close Your ears to my cry for help.' And You heard my appeal. You came near when I called out to You. You said, 'Do not be afraid.' LORD, you stood up for me. You saved my life and set me free. LORD, You have seen the wrong things people have done to me. Stand up for me again!"

Hebrews 10:5-10. "When Jesus Christ came into the world, He said [to Almighty God, His Father], 'You did not want sacrifices and offerings. Instead, You prepared a body for Me. You were not pleased with burnt offerings and sin offerings. Then I said, here I am. It is written about Me in the scrolls. Father, I have come to do what You want.' (Psalm 40:6-8) First Christ said, 'You did not want sacrifices and offerings. You did not want burnt offerings and sin offerings. You were not pleased with them.' He said that even though the Law required people to bring them. Then He said, 'Here I am. I have come to do what You want.' He did away with the first [covenant]. He did it to put the second in place. We have been made holy by what God wanted. We have been made holy because Jesus Christ offered His body [as a sin offering] once and for all time."

Thank You God our Father for standing up for us again and again! Thank You for rescuing us from those times when we feel we are at the "bottom of the pit". Thank You for sending Your Son as a human being to suffer on our behalf that we might be saved for ever! May it always be that "You come near when I call out to You". Teach us more about what is written of Jesus and our salvation "in the scrolls". For His sake and Your glory. Amen.

17th January 2024.

Psalms 37:38-40. "The future of the upright person is peace... But transgressors shall be destroyed and the future of the wicked shall be cut off. The salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: He is their strength in times of trouble. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him."

Revelation 22:16-21. Jesus said to John, "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches... Let anyone who is thirsty come; and let anyone who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: if anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share

in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen." John adds, "Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen."

Thank You Father God for recording this Psalm of Your servant David which proclaims that "the salvation of the righteous" is secure and they will know Your peace. Praise You for the faith You have given us to put our trust in You. Thank You Lord Jesus for the evidence that You are coming soon. As we wait in faith, we repent on behalf of those who are guilty of watering down Your truth. Forgive us and revive Your Church to prepare to meet and greet You. In the meantime, we intercede for the 365 million Christians who are persecuted or insecure in the world today for Father God's mercy upon them. In Your name we pray. Come soon Lord Jesus! May Your grace be with us. Amen.

18th January 2024.

Amos 7:14-16. Amos sent a message to the king of Israel in the year 787 BC. "I was not a prophet... I was a shepherd... But the LORD took me away from taking care of the flock. He said to me, 'Go. Prophesy to my people Israel.' Now then, listen to the LORD's message." The message was the prophesy about the king's death and Israel's exile in Babylon (v.11) which the king rejected. This prepared the way for the exile to happen 10 years later. The book of Amos ends with a prophesy about Israel's restoration which happened several decades later (9:11-12). "I will rebuild David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places... Then My people will take control of those who are left alive. They will also possess all of the nations that bears God's name." We take this to refer to the time of Israel's Messiah in fulfilment of God's promise to King David to bless Israel and all nations who worship Jesus their Messiah.

Titus 2:1-8. Titus had warned the church in Crete to reject any Jewish traditions which deny the truth of the Good News of Jesus Christ (1:14). "What you teach must agree with true teaching... Then no-one will be able to speak evil things against God's word. In the same way, help the young men to control themselves. Do what is good. Set an example for them in everything. When you teach, be honest and serious so that no-one can question the truth."

Father God, in Your mercy, send teachers and preachers who uphold Your truth even at risk of rejection. Fulfil Your purpose in sending Your Son our Saviour "to bless Israel and all nations who worship their Messiah". Encourage Your people Israel today to uphold Your truth and prepare the way for the return of Jesus Christ to establish His Kingdom on Earth. Amen.

19th January 2024.

Exodus 34:28-35. After God punished Israel for worshipping the golden calf, He told Moses to return to Mount Sinai to record again the Ten Commandments which Moses had destroyed in anger. 'The LORD God Almighty wrote on the tablets the words of the Ten Commandments... The face of Moses was shining because he had spoken with the LORD. Aaron and all of the people of Israel saw Moses. So they were afraid to come near him... Moses gave them all of the commands the LORD had given him. Then he put a veil over his face... He would keep it on until he went again to speak with the LORD.'

Mark 1:9-12. At the time John the Baptist came 'preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins', Jesus arrived from His home town of Nazareth. 'John baptized Him in the Jordan River. As Jesus was coming up out of the water He saw Heaven torn open. He saw the Holy Spirit coming down on Him like a dove. A voice spoke to Him from Heaven. "You are my Son, and I love You." At once the Holy Spirit sent Jesus out into the desert. He was there 40 days where Satan tempted Him. Angels took care of Him.' Mark then records the beginning of the call of His disciples and the miraculous deliverance ministry of Jesus.

Father God, thank You for doing everything possible to establish Your truth for Your people down the ages despite their disobedience. Thank You for revealing to us Your anger and punishment as well as Your mercy. Thank You for Your commandments and the testimonies of signs and wonders at the time of Moses and John the Baptist. We note the records of the temptation of Jesus, His ministering angels, His calling of His followers and His miraculous ministry. Help us to understand and apply these things while growing in faith and respect for Your times of testing, Your words of truth and Your calling in ministry. Amen.

22nd January 2024.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 9 is where the writer despairs of the evidence of good and bad people sharing the same fate. "I realized that those who are wise and do what is right are under God's control. But a man doesn't know whether God will show favour to him. Death comes to godly and sinful people alike." (9:1-2) However, the writer's thoughts are beginning to show the wisdom of the LORD God Almighty. He advises, "No matter what you do, work at it with all your might." (9:10) Also, "It is better to be wise than to be powerful... Wisdom is better than weapons of war." (9:16-18) Finally, he concludes, "Fear God and obey His commandments. That is what everyone should do." (12:13)

Acts 2:29-39. Peter said, "Brothers... King David knew that God had made a promise to him that someone in David's family line would be king after him. David saw what was ahead. So he spoke about the Christ rising from the dead... God has raised this same Jesus back to life. We are all witnesses of this. Jesus has been given a place of honour at the right hand of God. This is what God had promised... So be sure of this, all you people of Israel. You nailed Jesus to the cross. But God has made him both Lord and Christ." When the people heard this, their hearts were filled with shame. They said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" Peter replied, "All of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children. It is also for all who are far away. It is for all whom the Lord our God will choose."

Father God, open the minds of the people You are calling not to despair but to receive eternal salvation through Christ our Saviour. Amen.

23rd January 2024.

Judges 11:21-24. These writings from 1160 BC look back to events on the way to the Promised Land of Canaan. "Then the Lord, the God of Israel, handed King Sihon and all of his men over to Israel. Israel won the battle over them. The Amorites were living in the country at that time. And Israel took over all of their land. They captured all the land that was between the Arnon River and the Jabbok River. It reached from the desert all the way to the Jordan River. The Lord, the God of Israel, has driven the Amorites out. But what right do you have to take it over? ...We will take over [only] what the LORD our God has given us."

2 Peter 3:11-15. "What kind of people should you be? You should lead holy and godly lives. Live like that as you look forward to the day of God. It will make that day come more quickly. On that day fire will destroy the heavens. Its heat will melt everything in them. But we are looking forward to a new Heaven and a new Earth. Godliness will make its home there. All of this is in keeping with God's promise. Dear friends, I know you are looking forward to that. So try your best to be found pure and without blame. Be at peace with God. Remember that while our Lord is waiting patiently to return, people are being saved. Our dear brother Paul also wrote to you about that. God made him wise to write as he did."

Father in Heaven, thank you that more people than ever are being saved as we await our Saviour's return. Help us "to be found pure and without blame". Meanwhile, encourage Your people Israel to expect their Messiah soon and be wise in understanding the instruction to "take over [only] what the LORD our God has given us." Prepare us all for the "day of God" with its new Heaven and Earth. Amen.

24th January 2024.

Judges 11:29-40 records the events of Jephthah, the commander of Israel's army. After winning the battle against the Amorites (see yesterday's reading) God encouraged him to fight against the Ammonites. But Jephthah made a promise to the LORD God Almighty. "If You hand the Ammonites over to me, then here is what I will do when I return from winning the battle. Anything that comes out of my house to greet me will belong to You and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering." (v.31) When he returned from winning the battle it was his only child who greeted him. He cried out, "My daughter, I have made a promise to the LORD and I cannot break it!" She told him he must do what he had promised to do. From then on, the young daughters of Israel met each year to remember and celebrate the daughter of Jephthah.

1 Timothy 5:21-25. Paul says, "I command you to follow these directions in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the chosen angels. Treat everyone the same without favouring one person over another. Do not be too quick to lay hands on others to set them apart to serve God. Do not take part in the sins of others... The sins of some people are easy to see. They are already being judged... In

the same way, good works are easy to see. But even good works that are hard to see cannot stay hidden."

Father God, spare us from making solemn promises which are against Your divine will. Also, spare Your people from appointing leaders "to set them apart to serve God" without Your approval. Open our eyes as we read the Scriptures to understand and apply Your truth "in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the chosen angels". So prepare us for the difficult times ahead with faith in the mighty works of Your Holy Spirit promised to all believers, showing favour to all. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

25th January 2024.

Jeremiah 2:29-31; 3:11-13. The LORD God Almighty spoke through His servant Jeremiah. "All of you have refused to obey Me. I punished your people. But it did not do them any good. They did not pay attention when they were corrected. You have killed your prophets with swords... You who are now living, consider My message!" Some years later, God spoke again. "Israel, you have not been faithful. Return to Me. Then I will look on you with favour again. My love is faithful. I will not be angry with you forever. Admit that you are guilty of doing what is wrong. You have refused to obey Me. I am the LORD your God."

Romans 12:1-6. "Brothers and sisters, God has shown you His mercy. So I am asking you to offer up your bodies to Him while you are still alive. Your bodies are a holy sacrifice that is pleasing to God. When you offer your bodies to God, you are worshiping Him. Do not live any longer the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed. Then you will be able to test what God wants for you. And you will agree that what He wants is right... So here is what I say to every of you. Do not think of yourself more highly than you should... Keep in mind the amount of faith God has given you. Each of us has one body with many parts. And the parts do not all have the same purpose... We all have gifts. They differ in keeping with the grace that God has given each of us."

Thank you Father God for the way that Your servant Paul was able to build on the truth You revealed to Jeremiah centuries before. Help us to not to "live any longer the way this world lives so that our way of thinking will be completely changed" and know "what God wants". Help us to use wisely the gifts You have given. Amen.

26th January 2024.

1 Chronicles 29:1-20. 'David praised the LORD God Almighty in front of the whole community. "LORD, we give You praise for ever and ever... Everything in Heaven and on Earth belongs to You... Without Your help we would not be able to give this much [for the Temple]. We have given back to You only what comes from You... to build You a Temple where You will put Your holy Name... Keep this longing in the hearts of Your people forever to be true to You." ...The whole community bowed low in front of the LORD and the king.'

2 Corinthians 1:3-13. "May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace... We have received comfort from God as we share the sufferings of Christ and His comfort... If we are comforted, it is so that you will be comforted. Then you will be able to put up with the same suffering we have gone through... That happened so that we would not depend on ourselves but on God... God has saved us from deadly dangers. And He will continue to do it. We have put our hope in Him... You must help us by praying for us. Then many people will thank God for His kindness to us in answer to the prayers of many... Our way of living is not wise in the eyes of the world. But it is in keeping with God's grace. We are writing only what you can read and understand."

Thank You God for these words of Paul which confirms the objective of Fred Morris, author of Manna Publications, to write to the overseas churches "only what you can read and understand." Grant that we will know Your Spirit's guidance in comforting one another with Your Bible truth and the Good News of Jesus Christ. May we "give back to You what comes from You". "Keep the longing in the hearts of Your people to be true to You." Amen.

29th January 2024.

Habakkuk 2:1-4,12-14; 3:17-18. The writer stood complaining to the LORD God Almighty. He replied: "Write down the message I am showing you on the tablets you use... It speaks about what is going to happen. And all of it will come true... It will happen when I want it to. The Babylonians are very proud. And what they want is not good. But the one who is right with God will live by faith... How terrible it will be for the Babylonians! ...I am the LORD who rules over all. Human effort is no better than wood that feeds a fire. So the nations wear themselves out for nothing... The Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." The writer then stood rejoicing, "The fig trees might not bud. The vines might not produce any grapes. The olive crop might fail. The fields might not produce any food. There might not be any sheep in the pens. There might not be any cattle in the barns. But I will still rejoice because of what the LORD has done. God my Saviour fills me with joy."

Colossians 1:15-20. Paul says. "Christ is the exact likeness of God. All things were created by Him. He created everything in Heaven and on Earth... Before anything was created, He was already there. He holds everything together. And He is the head of the body, which is the Church... God made peace through Christ's blood, through His death on the cross."

Heavenly Father, when we stand moaning and groaning, encourage us to remember these famous words by Habakkuk and Paul and rejoice. Grant us the faith to believe You will make things happen "when You want it to". Even in the midst of poverty and desolation help us to say, "God my Saviour fills me with joy." Thank You that You have "made peace through Christ's blood through His death on the cross". Amen.

30th January 2024.

Psalm 67. "May God, show us His favour and bless us. May His face shine upon us!

Then His ways will be known on Earth. All nations will see that God has the power to save. May the nations praise You... Then the land will produce its crops. God Himself will bless us and all the people on Earth will have respect for Him."

Acts 6:1-7. 'In those days the number of believers was growing. The Jews who followed Greek practices complained against the Jews who followed only Jewish practices. They also said that the widows were not being taken care of nor getting their fair share of food each day. So all the believers met together. The leaders said, "It would not be right for us to give up teaching God's word in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men who are wise and full of the Holy Spirit. We will turn this important work over to them to give our attention to prayer and to teaching the word." This plan pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and also Nicolas from Antioch who had accepted the Jewish faith. Then the apostles prayed for them and placed their hands on them [in faith for Holy Spirit guidance]. So God's word spread. The number of believers in Jerusalem grew quickly. Also, a large number of priests began to obey the teachings of Jesus.'

We praise You heavenly Father and thank You for showing how the problems in the growing Jerusalem church were quickly resolved through a meeting of believers. Thank you that Luke records the wisdom given to choosing administrators to avoid neglecting the ministry of prayer and teaching Your truth and preaching the Good News of salvation in Christ. Thank you that through this action, the church grew with signs and wonders, but also opposition. "May all the people on Earth have respect for our God" and "show us His favour and bless us." Amen.

31st January 2024.

Ezekiel 18:5-9. God said to Ezekiel, "Suppose a godly man does what is fair and right. And he does not eat at the mountain temples nor worship the statues. He does not have sex with another man's wife. He does not make love to his own wife during her monthly period. He does not treat anyone badly... He does not steal. Instead, he gives his food to hungry people. He provides clothes for those who are naked. He does not lend money and charge too much interest. He keeps himself from doing what is wrong. He judges cases fairly. He follows My rules. He is faithful in keeping My laws. He always does what is right. You can be sure he will live."

Galatians 3:14-19. Paul writes, "Christ Jesus set us free so that the blessing given to Abraham would come to non-Jews through Christ. He did it so that we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit by believing in Christ... The promises were given to Abraham. They were also given to his seed. Scripture does not say, 'seeds' which means many people. It says, 'and to your seed'. (Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 24:7) That means one person. And that one person is Christ... The Law came 430 years after

this promise. But the Law does not get rid of God's covenant and promise. The covenant had already been made by God. So the Law does not do away with the promise. The great gift that God has for us does not depend on the Law... So what was the purpose of the Law? It was added because of human sin. And it was supposed to control us until the promised Seed [Jesus the Christ or Messiah] had come."

Heavenly Father, thank you for Your righteous Law given to Your special people. Thank You also for Your profound promise to Abraham of salvation for all nations through Israel's Messiah, Jesus the Christ, Your Son and Saviour of Jews and Gentiles alike. Amen.

1st February 2024.

Daniel 2:47-49. Daniel interpreted a dream of King Nebuchadnezzar which had prophetic meaning then and still has for certain nations today (2:43). 'King Nebuchadnezzar bowed low in front of Daniel to honour him and said "I am sure your God is the greatest God of all. He is the Lord of kings. He explains mysteries. That is why you were able to explain the mystery of my dream." Then the king put Daniel in a position of authority and gave him many gifts.' In the very next chapter the king ordered the building of a golden shrine for the people to worship.

Hebrews 9:7-14. "The high priest went into the inner room once a year taking [sacrificed] blood with him. He offered the blood for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. Here the Holy Spirit was showing us ... that the gifts and sacrifices they offered were not enough to remove the worshiper's feelings of guilt... These were rules that deal with things outside our bodies to obey until the new covenant came. Christ came to be our High Priest of the good things that are already here... He did not enter by spilling the blood of goats and calves. He entered the Most Holy Room by spilling His own blood. He did it once and for all time. He paid the price to set us free from sin forever... He did this through the power of the eternal Holy Spirit."

Dear God, thank You for the records from 2600 years ago which are still relevant for today. We note the destructive prophecies yet to be fulfilled for certain nations. We also note the need to be wary of praise from our leaders who at the same time encourage the worship of alien gods. Thank You that in Jesus Christ the sins of the nation can be exposed by the declaration of Your truth and forgiven by the sacrifice of His blood. Accept our praise and worship! Amen.

2nd February 2024.

1 Samuel 10 describes the way God chose Saul to be the first king of Israel. The prophet Samuel anointed Saul in secret (10:1). Then Samuel said to the people, "The LORD God says, 'Israel, I brought you up out of Egypt... I also saved you from the powerful hand of all of the kingdoms that attacked you.' But now you have turned your backs on your God. He saves you out of all your trouble and suffering. But you say, 'We refuse to listen. Place a king over us.' " Then Samuel told each tribe of Israel to come forward to choose their king by lots. Finally Saul, the son of Kish, was chosen. Later, God chose David to be the true king of Israel until the time of Christ (1 Samuel 16).

John 19:1-6 describes the way God chose Jesus, the true king of Israel, to sacrifice His life for the salvation of all who believe He is the Son of God. 'Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him whipped. The soldiers twisted thorns together to make a crown and put it on the head of Jesus. Then they put a purple robe on Him. They went up to Him again and again, mocking Him by saying, "We honour You, king of the Jews!" Once more Pilate said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing Jesus out to you. I want to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against Him." ...As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw Him, they shouted, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" But Pilate answered, "You take Him and crucify Him. I myself find no basis for a charge against Him." The Jews replied, "The law says He must die. He claimed to be the Son of God." '

Father God, grant wisdom to know Your chosen people to lead the nations today. May they stand firm against unrighteous persecution and uphold Bible truth and salvation through Christ alone. For His sake, Amen.

5th February 2024.

Proverbs 31:30-31. Solomon observed, "Charm can fool you. Beauty fades. But a woman who has respect for the LORD God Almighty should be praised. Give her the reward she has earned. Let everything she has done bring her praise."

Hebrews 10:14-24. "By that one sacrifice, Jesus Christ has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also gave witness to us about this [over 600 years before]. First He said, 'This is the covenant I will make with them after that time,' says the LORD. 'I will put My laws in their hearts. I will write My laws on their minds.' (Jeremiah 31:33) 'I will not remember their sins anymore nor remember the evil things they have done.' (Jeremiah 31:34) For those who are forgiven, there is no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not afraid to enter the Most Holy Room. We enter boldly because of the blood of Jesus... It has been opened for us through the curtain... We have a great High Priest over the house of God. So let us come near to God with an honest and true heart. Let us come near with a faith that is sure and strong. Our hearts have been sprinkled [by the blood of Jesus]. Our minds have been cleansed from guilt. Our bodies have been washed with pure water. Let us hold firmly to the hope we have. The One who promised is faithful. Let us consider how we can encourage each other in love. Let us help each other to do good works."

Thank You heavenly Father for these words of an unknown writer to the Jewish believers in the first century AD. Also for the words of Your prophet Jeremiah centuries before. Thank You that Your Spirit establishes Your truth in our hearts and minds but removes from Your mind the sins of our past. Thank You also for Solomon's prayer for female believers who show respect for You. Amen.

6th February 2024.

Ruth Chapter 3 describes the famous story of how Naomi advised Ruth to seek the favour of their nearest unmarried family member, Boaz. Ruth was obedient and the outcome was her marriage to Boaz, whose son became an ancestor of God's chosen King David. David's royal family line continued as prophesied to the time of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Acts 22:16-21 is where Paul testified in Jerusalem of his conversion as a devout Jew to faith in Jesus Christ. "Ananias said [in Damascus], 'The God of our people has chosen you. He wanted me to tell you His plans for you. You have seen the Blameless One... Now you will give witness to all people about what you have seen and heard. So get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away.' I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the Temple. Then I saw the Lord speaking to me. 'Quick!' He said. 'Leave Jerusalem at once. These people will not accept your witness about Me.' 'But Lord,' I replied, 'these people know what I used to do. I went from one synagogue to another and put believers in prison. I also beat them. Stephen was a man who gave witness to others about You. I stood there when he was killed. I had agreed that he should die. I even guarded the coats of those who were killing him.' Then the Lord said to me, 'Go. I will send you far away to people who are not Jews.' "

Dear God, grant further understanding of how You chose Ruth, who was not a Jew, to become the wife of Boaz and ancestor to Joseph and Mary. Also, to understand how You chose Paul, a devout Jew, to stop persecuting the followers of Jesus and preach the Good News to those who were not Jews. Lord Jesus, help us to know You more as we prepare for Your return to Jerusalem, that we will help many to believe and be saved. Amen.

7th February 2024.

Deuteronomy 16:1-8 records one of the 613 laws God gave to Moses 3500 years ago. (These are not part of the 1500 laws added by the Pharisees later on which Jesus and Paul criticised.) "Celebrate the Passover Feast of the LORD your God in the month when He brought you out of Egypt. Sacrifice an animal from your flock in honour of the LORD your God at the special place the LORD will choose. Do not eat the animal with bread that is made with yeast. For seven days eat bread that is made without yeast to remind you of how much you suffered... Remember it all the days of your life... Sacrifice it when the sun goes down. Do it on the same day every year on the day you left Egypt. Cook it and eat it at the place the LORD your God will choose... For six days eat bread that is made without yeast. On the seventh day, come together for a service in honour of the LORD your God. Do not do any work."

Jude 17-22. "Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said was going to happen. 'In the last days, some people will make fun of the truth. They will follow their own ungodly longings.' They are the people who separate you from one another. They do only what comes naturally. They are not led by the Holy Spirit. Build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let

the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ will bring you eternal life. As you wait for His mercy, remain in God's love and show mercy to those who doubt."

Heavenly Father, we are sad when the enemies of Israel attack Your people on holy days. We pray for the Jews to show mercy and also all who follow their Messiah as Saviour even when they begin to doubt in these terrible days. In Your mercy. Amen.

8th February 2024.

Job 32:1-13. After three of Job's friends spoke to him about his complaints to God, the youngest of his friends, Elihu, spoke to him. "I am young, and you are old. So I was afraid to tell you what I know. I thought, 'Those who are older should speak first.' The Spirit in people gives them understanding... But older people are not the only ones who are wise... So I am saying you should now listen to me... Not one of you has proved that Job is wrong nor answered his arguments. Do not claim, 'We have enough wisdom to answer Job.' Let God, not a mere man, prove that he is wrong." The next five chapters record Elihu's divine wisdom before God spoke directly to Job as recorded in the following four chapters. Finally, in Chapter 42, Job confessed and was much blessed by God Almighty.

Luke 22:20-27. At the Last Supper, Jesus said to His twelve disciples, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. It is poured out for you. But someone here is going to hand Me over to My enemies... The Son of Man will go to His death, just as God has already decided. But how terrible it will be for the one who hands Him over! ...The kings of the nations hold power over their people. And those who order them around call themselves Protectors. But you must not be like that. Instead, the most important among you should be like the youngest. The one who rules should be like the one who serves. Who is considered more important? Is it the one at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am here among you as one who serves."

Thank You heavenly Father for reminding us to value Your wisdom in all people both young and old. Above all, may we see the importance of serving other believers and not ruling or overruling them. Amen.

9th February 2024.

Psalms 145:17-21. "The LORD is right in everything He does. He is loving toward everything He has made. The LORD is ready to help all those who call out to Him who really mean it. He satisfies the needs of those who have respect for Him. He hears their cry and saves them. The LORD watches over all those who love Him... I will praise the LORD with my mouth. Let every creature praise His holy name for ever." #

Matthew 3:1-12. 'In those days John the Baptist came and preached in the desert. He said, "Turn away from your sins! The kingdom of Heaven is near." John is the one the prophet Isaiah had spoken about. "A messenger is calling out in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord.' " (Isaiah 40:3) ...People went out to him from Jerusalem and all of Judea... When they admitted they had sinned, John baptized them in the River Jordan. John saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming. He said to them, "You are like a nest of poisonous snakes! Who warned you to escape the coming of God's anger? Produce fruit that shows you have turned away from your sins. Do not think you can say to yourselves, 'Abraham is our father.' I tell you, God can raise up children for Abraham even from these stones... All the trees that do not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water, calling you to turn away from your sins. But after me, One will come who is more powerful than I am. And I am not fit to carry His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." '

Father God, we thank You for the example of faith and vision of King David to praise You in all circumstances. We remember that we are privileged to be Abraham's children of promise through salvation in Christ. Help us to "prepare the way" for His return. Amen.

12th February 2024.

Deuteronomy 32:1-5 is the beginning of 'the Song of Moses' which he recited to the Children of Israel on the way to the Promised Land. "Listen, O Heaven and Earth! Let my teaching fall like rain. Let my words come down like dew... Let them be like rain on tender plants. I will make known the name of the LORD. Praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock. His works are perfect. All of His ways are right. He is faithful. He does no wrong. He is honest and fair. Israel, you have sinned

against Him very much." The song goes on to tell how God will deal with His disobedient people and also with their enemies. It also reveals how God loves Israel and how He will restore them.

Philemon verses 8-12. While in house prison in Rome, Paul spoke to a runaway slave called Onesimus who became a believer and a close friend. Paul decided to send him back to his owner, Philemon, whom Paul knew well. He sent a letter requesting him to forgive Onesimus. "Because of the authority Christ has given me, I could be bold and order you to do what you should do anyway. But I make my appeal to you on the basis of our love for each other... I make an appeal to you for Onesimus. He became a son to me while I was being held in chains. Before that, he was useless to you. But now he has become useful to you... I am sending Onesimus back to you. My very heart goes with him."

Father God, thank You for reminding us how we fail You and do wrong and deserve Your punishment. Thank You that You long to forgive us and show us Your mercy. Thank you for the example of Paul who pleaded for Philemon to show mercy to Onesimus. Help us to live Christ-like lives showing mercy to Your people and the needy "like rain on tender plants". Amen.

13th February 2024.

Joel 2:12-14. The "word of the LORD God Almighty" was given to His prophet Joel, 800 years before Christ, for the nation to repent (1:13-20). Then came a warning that time was running out before God's "day of darkness and gloom" (2:1-2). Then the LORD declared, "Return to Me with all your heart. There is still time. Do not eat food but weep and mourn. Do not tear your clothes just to show how sad you are. Let your hearts also be broken. Return to the LORD your God. He is gracious. He is tender and kind. He is slow to get angry. He is full of love. He holds back from destroying you. Who knows? He might turn toward you and have pity on you. He might even give you His blessing. Then you can bring your offerings to the LORD your God."

John 14:12-16. Jesus said, "What I am about to tell you is true. Anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. In fact, he will do even greater things. That is because I am going to the Father and I will do anything you ask in My name. Then the Son will bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in My name. I will do it. If you love Me, you will obey what I command. I will ask the Father. And He will give you another Friend to help you and to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth." Jesus invites us to love Him three more times in the same chapter (v.21,23,28).

Dear God, thank You for encouraging us to take notice of the warnings you gave Your people 2800 years ago to repent, fast and pray in mourning for the sins of their nation. May we seek to love our Saviour more for the sacrifice He made so that the Holy Spirit will be at work in our nation and the church with power and compassion. Amen.

14th February 2024.

Ecclesiastes (NIV). "People should listen to the quiet words of those who are wise. That is better than paying attention to the shouts of a ruler of foolish people. Wisdom is better than weapons of war. But one sinner destroys a lot of good." (9:17-19.) "As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little foolishness overrides wisdom and honour." (10:1.) "Here is the conclusion of the matter. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." (12:13-14.)

1 Timothy 3:1-5 (NIRV). "If anyone desires to be a leader in the church, his desire must be to do a good work for God and people. A leader must be free from blame. He must be faithful to his wife. In anything he does, he must not go too far. He must control himself. He must be worthy of respect. He must welcome people into his home. He must be able to teach. He must not get drunk. He must not push people around. He must be gentle. He must not be a person who likes to argue. He must not love money. He must manage his own family well. He must make sure that his children obey him and show him proper respect. If someone does not know how to manage his own family, then how can he take care of God's church?"

Father God, help us to understand the wisdom of these teachings so that we know how to pray in Your will for our leaders of church and state. May we all walk under the anointing of your Holy Spirit promised to those who put their trust in Your Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Help us to care for each family member at home and for each member of the church family. Keep reminding us that Jesus is by Your side helping us to fulfil Your calling in life. Amen.

15th February 2024.

Joel 2:17-18. "Let the priests who serve the LORD weep. Let them cry between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, 'LORD, spare Your people. Do not let others make fun of them. Do not let the nations laugh at them. Do not let them tease your people and say, "Where is their God?"'

Then the LORD will show concern for His land. He will take pity on His people." Joel then hints of times ahead when Israel's Messiah will appear and an even more distant day when He will come again. These things had not been fully revealed at the time of Joel (800 BC).

Mark 13:32-37. Jesus said, "No one knows about that day or hour. Not even the angels in Heaven know. The Son does not know. Only the Father knows. Keep watch! Stay awake! [Some manuscripts say, "Stay alert and pray".] You do not know when that time will come. It will be like a man going away and leaves his house with his servants in charge. Each one is given a task to do. He tells the one at the door to keep watch. So keep watch! You do not know when the owner of the house will come back. It may be in the evening or at midnight. It may be when the rooster crows or at dawn. He may come suddenly. So do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone. 'Watch!' "

*Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for the times that our Father in Heaven hinted of Your coming in the Old Testament. As we now await Your second coming, help us to "keep watch" and "stay alert and pray". In the meantime may we study and **teach** Bible truth, **preach** the Gospel and **reach** the needy. Also those who make fun of believers in their ignorance and say, "Where is their God?" For Your sake who suffered so much for our eternal salvation. Amen.*

16th February 2024.

Joshua Chapters 7 & 8 give the story of the destruction of Ai, a small city chosen by Joshua after the amazing victory over Jericho, a much larger city. The first attempt failed because one of his men, Achan, had been disobedient towards God (7:1). Also, Joshua himself did not prepare properly to go into battle by failing to seek God's guidance (7:2-5). However, after the repentance and punishment of Achan, God told Joshua exactly what to do to successfully destroy Ai (8:1-2). Afterwards, 'Joshua built an altar to honour the LORD, the God of Israel... Then the people offered on the altar burnt offerings to the LORD... Joshua copied the written Law of Moses on stones then read all of the words of the Law out aloud. He read the blessings and the curses. He read them in keeping with what is written in the Scroll of the Law. Joshua read every word Moses had commanded to the whole community of Israel. That included the women and children and also the non-Jews who were living among them.' (8:30-35)

Romans 15:14-16. "My brothers and sisters, I am sure that you are full of goodness. What you know is complete. You are able to teach one another. I have written to you very boldly about certain things I want you to think about and remember. The grace of God has allowed me to serve Christ Jesus among those who are not Jews. My duty as a priest is to preach God's Good News. Then the non-Jews will become an offering that pleases God."

Father God, help us to avoid the sins that hinder Your provision for ourselves and that of others including non-believers. Keep reminding us of Your teachings through Your servants like Moses and Paul. Enable us to live without regrets over our past sins and our failure to seek Your guidance, as with Achan and Joshua. Help us in our "duty as a priest to preach Your Good News". For Christ's sake. Amen.

19th February 2024.

Proverbs 31:10-31 describes some of the qualities of a godly wife. "She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband can trust her completely. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. She loves to work with her hands. She gets up while it is still dark and provides food for her family. She uses some of the money she earns to plant a vineyard. She knows that her trading earns a lot of money. Her lamp does not go out at night. She opens her arms to those who are poor and needy. All of her family are dressed in the finest clothes. Her husband is respected at the city gate. She speaks wisely. She teaches faithfully. She watches over family needs. She is busy all the time. Her children stand up and call her blessed. Her husband also praises her. A woman who has respect for the LORD should be praised. Let everything she has done bring praise to her at the city gate."

2 John verses 5-10. This is the only book in the New Testament addressed to a woman. "Dear lady, I am writing a command we have had from the beginning. I am asking that we love one another. The way we show our love is to obey God's commands. He commands you to lead a life of love... Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for. Make sure that you get your

complete reward. Some people do not follow the teaching of Christ. Do not take them into your house. But those who follow the teaching of Christ belong to the Father and to the Son."

Thank You Father God for Your love for women from the time of Your creation of the human race. May Your godly provision for women throughout life be fulfilled in marriage commitments to bless their husbands and children and also help to meet the needs of their neighbours whose trust is in You. Amen.

20th February 2024.

Deuteronomy 31:14-21. God spoke to Moses before entering the Promised Land. "The people will not be faithful to me. They will soon join themselves to the gods that are worshiped in the land they are entering. The people will desert Me and break the covenant I made with them. On that day I will become angry with them and desert them... Horrible troubles and hard times will come on them. They will say 'Our God isn't with us!' I will certainly turn away from them on that day because they did a very evil thing when they turned to other gods. I want you to write down a song and teach it to the people of Israel to sing... Then the song I am giving you will be a witness against them. It will not be forgotten by their children and their children's children. I know what they are likely to do. I know it even before I bring them into the land I promised them with an oath."

Acts 7 records Stephen's account of what happened in the early days of Israel under Moses, Joshua and David. "You are stubborn! You will not listen! You are just like your people of long ago! You always oppose the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your people didn't try to hurt? They even killed those who told about the coming of the Blameless One. And now you have handed Him over to His enemies. You have murdered Him. The law you received was brought by angels. But you have not obeyed it." (7:31-53)

*Heavenly Father, we have sinned and failed to uphold Your Bible truth. Forgive us when we "oppose the Holy Spirit". Make us strong in **teaching** Your truth and **preaching** salvation in Jesus Christ whilst **reaching** out to the needy. Especially the believers who are persecuted by followers of other faiths in Africa and Asia or ancient forms of witchcraft as in Gabon, Burundi and Malawi today. Amen.*

21st February 2024.

Deuteronomy 8:1-6. After the teaching of the Ten Commandments, Moses warned the children of Israel. "Make sure you follow every command I am giving you today. Then you will increase your numbers. You will enter the land the LORD promised with an oath to your people long ago. Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way. He guided you in the desert for these 40 years. He wanted to take your pride away. He wanted to put you to the test and know what was in your hearts. He wanted to see whether you would obey His commands... He let you go hungry then gave you manna to eat... He tested you to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD... The LORD your God trains you, just as parents train their children. Obey the commands of the LORD your God. Live as He wants you to live. Have respect for Him."

3 John verses 4 to 12. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are living by the truth [of God]. Dear friends, you are faithful in what you are doing for [visiting] believers. You are faithful even though they are strangers to you. They have told us about your love. Please help them by sending them on their way in a manner that honours God... They did not receive any help from those who are not believers. We should welcome people like them. We should work together with them for the truth." John then warns them to reject the teaching of Diotrephes. "Do not be like those who do evil."

Thank you Father for Your teachings through Moses and John. Help us to live "on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD". May we be seen as "children who are living by the truth of God". May we welcome and encourage other true believers in our midst. Amen.

22nd February 2024.

Psalms 133 is a psalm of King David for those who travelled to Jerusalem to worship the LORD God Almighty. "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in peace! It is like the special olive oil that was poured on the head of Aaron the priest... The LORD gives His blessing and gives life that never ends." It is followed by another psalm for visitors to sing. "All of you who serve

the LORD, praise the LORD... Lift up your hands in the Temple and praise the LORD. May the LORD bless you from Zion (Jerusalem). He is the Maker of Heaven and Earth."

1 Corinthians 3:10-17. Paul says, "God has given me the grace to lay a foundation as a master builder. Now someone else is building on it. But each one should build carefully. No-one can lay any other foundation than the one that has already been laid. That foundation is Jesus Christ. A person may build using gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay or straw. But each person's work will be shown for what it is. On judgment day it will be brought to light... God will give the builder a reward for his work. If the building burns up, the builder will lose everything! ...Do you not know that you yourselves are God's Temple? God's Spirit lives in you. If anyone destroys God's Temple, God will destroy them. God's Temple is holy. And you are that Temple." Paul then goes on to warn about the importance of church unity and expelling sinful members.

Thank you Father God for Paul's reminder that we are Your Temple on Earth. Do not let us ignore the risks of destroying the unity in the worldwide church of Jesus Christ, but take Spirit-led action to maintain peace and holiness. May we value the words of King David, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in peace!" May this also remain true in Jerusalem today and in the future. Amen.

23rd February 2024.

Judges 11 is the story of Jephthah who was the son of a prostitute. When he grew up, his step-brothers drove him away from his home and said, "You will not receive any of the family's inheritance." However, he became a mighty warrior for Israel and helped to defeat the Ammonites. The Spirit of the LORD God Almighty came upon him as he advanced toward the Ammonites. Foolishly, he made a promise to God. "If You give the Ammonites into my hands, when I come back from winning the battle, anything that comes out the door of my house to meet me will belong to You. I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering." (v.31) Sadly, he did not repent whilst he had the time. When God gave him the victory over the enemies of Israel, it was his daughter who came out to greet him. He blamed her and said, "My daughter! You have filled me with trouble and sorrow!" (v.35)

Galatians 5:1-6. Paul's life was changed when he repented to God for persecuting Jesus the Christ, Israel's Messiah. He wrote to the Galatian believers, "Christ has set us free... So stand firm. Do not let the chains of slavery hold you again... Do not let yourselves be circumcised. If you do, Christ will not be of any value to you... Some of you are trying to be made right with God by trusting in the Law of Moses. You have become separated from Christ. You have fallen away from God's grace. But we can expect to be made completely holy because of our faith in Christ. Through the Holy Spirit we wait in hope. Circumcision or uncircumcision are no longer important to those who believe in Christ Jesus. The only thing that is really important is faith that shows itself through love."

Heavenly Father, forgive our foolish ways, now and in the past. Grant us the total freedom promised in Christ our Saviour as we repent of everything that still enslaves us. Amen.

26th February 2024.

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 reveals the despair of the writer who finds little purpose in life! He experienced many pleasures but they became meaningless (v.1). Laughter became meaningless like the pleasures (v.2). Also wine and other activities he explored using his human wisdom (v.3). Also engaging in great building projects and planting fields and parks and establishing flocks of cattle and sheep and employing slave labour (v.4-7). Using his own wisdom, he became rich and employed singers and women to "serve the delights of the heart of mankind" (v.8-9). He had everything his eyes wanted (v.10). "But then I looked over everything my hands had done. I saw what I had worked so hard to get and nothing had any meaning. It was like chasing the wind. Nothing was gained here on this Earth."

Romans 8:12-17. "Brothers and sisters, our duty is not to live under the control of our sinful nature... But by the power of the Holy Spirit you can put to death the sins your body commits [in your old life]. Then you will live [the new life in Christ]. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God... By the Spirit's power we call God 'Abba, Father'. The Spirit Himself joins with our spirits... As His children, we will receive all that He has planned for us that Christ has already received. But we must share in His sufferings if we want to share in His glory."

Dear Lord God, the writer of Ecclesiastes says it all! The freedoms we have to "serve the delights of the heart" lead us and others nowhere. Forgive us for seeking the selfish and sinful things

in life instead of the new life You give in Christ our Saviour. Grant us to understand the full meaning of Paul's words, "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God". Prepare us to share in some of the sufferings Christ Himself experienced before we join Him "in His glory". Amen.

27th February 2024.

Micah 4:3-7. God's prophet said (700 BC) that in the last days, "He will judge between people from many nations. He will settle problems among mighty nations everywhere. They will hammer their swords into ploughs and their spears into pruning tools. Nations will not go to war against each another. They will not even train to fight anymore... Other nations worship and trust in their gods. But we will worship and obey the LORD. He will be our God for ever and ever. 'The time is coming when I will gather those who are disabled,' announces the LORD God Almighty. 'I will bring together those who were taken away as prisoners. I will gather those I have allowed to suffer. I will make the disabled my faithful people. I will make those who were driven away from their homes a strong nation. I will rule over them in Mount Zion (Jerusalem) and be their King forever.' "

John 5:36-47. Jesus warned, "I am doing the work the Father gave Me to finish. It gives witness that the Father has sent Me... His word does not live in you. This is because you do not believe the One He sent. You study the Scriptures carefully because you think they will give you eternal life. The Scriptures you study give witness about Me. But you refuse to come to Me and receive life... I have come in My Father's name, and you do not accept Me... Do not think I will bring charges against you in front of the Father. Moses is the one who will do that. And he is the one you build your hopes on! He wrote about Me. But you do not believe what he wrote. So how are you going to believe what I say?"

Father God, we thank You for Your promised provision in the last days when Jesus our Saviour returns. Have mercy on those who currently refuse to believe. For His sake, who died to save us all. Amen.

28th February 2024.

Exodus 34:29-35. Moses prepared the second set of Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai in the presence of the LORD God Almighty. 'Then Moses came down from Mount Sinai. He had the two tablets of the covenant in his hands. His face was shining because he had spoken with the LORD. But he did not realize it. Aaron and all of the people of Israel saw Moses. So they were afraid to come near him... He gave them all of the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai. When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face... He would keep it on until he went in [to the Tent of Meeting] to speak with the LORD.'

John 6:25-35. After the feeding of the 5000, the crowds found Jesus on the other side of Lake Galilee. He told them, "You are not looking for Me because you saw miraculous signs. You are looking for Me because you ate the loaves until you were full. Do not work for food that spoils. Work for food that lasts forever. That is the food the Son of Man [Jesus the Messiah] will give you. God the Father has put His seal of approval on Him... God's work is to believe in the One He has sent." So they said to Him, "Long ago our people ate the manna in the desert. The Lord gave them bread from Heaven to eat." Jesus said to them, "It is not Moses who has given you the bread from Heaven. It is My Father who gives you the true bread from Heaven. The bread of God is the One who comes down from Heaven. He gives life to the world... I am the bread of life. No-one who comes to Me will ever go hungry. And no-one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty."

Father God, we seek to obey Your Ten Commandments and eat Your "true bread from Heaven" in following Jesus our Saviour. Amen.

29th February 2024.

Ecclesiastes 11:7-10 goes beyond worldly wisdom by warning us of the dark days to come, including sickness and old age. Whilst we are young enough to live life to the full, remember that God will judge us with punishment or reward for what we have done on this planet Earth. This gives understanding and purpose to the many things in life that the writer thinks can be so meaningless. Therefore, we must stop worrying, put behind us our troubles and sins, then live to please God. If we seek God and obey His commands, we can place our future in His hands. Our youthful days and ways will soon pass but our life with God will go on for ever, for those who know His forgiveness and salvation.

Mark 6:1-12. Jesus and His disciples went to visit his home town of Nazareth but many were not pleased with him. Jesus said, "A prophet is not honoured in his home town among his relatives." (6:3-4) So Jesus went around teaching from village to village. He sent the disciples out two by two. He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits (6:6-7). He said, "Some places may not welcome you or listen to you." (6:11) However, 'they went out. And they preached that people should turn away from their sins. They drove out many demons. They poured oil on many sick people and healed them.' (6:12-13)

Dear Lord God, please forgive the worldly decisions we have made in the past. In "the dark days to come, including sickness and old age", help us to stop worrying and live to please You and rejoice in the promise of eternal life with You. Do not let us be discouraged by those who know us but are not pleased with us, as happened to Jesus in His home town. Send us out in the power of Your Holy Spirit to preach the Good News of salvation in Christ alone and perform many signs and wonders. Amen.

1st March 2024.

Daniel 11:2-35 records the prophecy of "the kings of the north and the south". Daniel was exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon in 605 BC. He became a major official in the king's government and became famous for interpreting dreams and pronouncing prophecies from the LORD God Almighty. In the third year of King Cyrus (10:1) Daniel was given a prophecy through an angel of God of what would happen in the Middle East in the coming centuries. This included Alexander the Great whose kingdom became divided between Egypt to the south and Syria to the north. The remnant of the Jews was often in the middle of the conflict. This resulted in Antiochus, the king of the north, bringing the "abomination that causes desolation" to Jerusalem (11:31). He stopped the daily sacrifices and established the worship of the Greek god Zeus in the Temple. He led many Jews to do evil, "but the people who know their God will firmly oppose him" (11:32). These faithful Jews preserved the Jewish nation which still existed at the time of Christ, unlike the kingdom of Antiochus which did not last.

Revelation 1:1-3. The Apostle John was given amazing prophecies and revelations through an angel of God. "This is the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave Him to show those who serve God what will happen soon. God made it known by sending his angel to his servant John... The things he gives witness to are God's word and what Jesus Christ has said. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy. Blessed are those who hear it and believe everything it says is important. The time when these things will come true is near."

Father God, thank You for sending an angel to Daniel and John to bring true predictions of what will happen in the future. Thank you for the faithful few in Jerusalem then and now and for today's "children of God" with faith in Jesus Christ Your Messiah and our Saviour. Amen.

4th March 2024.

2 Chronicles 13. Abijah became king in Jerusalem and established a battle line with his 400,000 troops against Jereboam, the king of the northern tribes who had 800,000 troops (13:1-3). Abijah stood on a hilltop and shouted to Jereboam, "Don't you know that the LORD God Almighty has placed David and his sons after him on Israel's throne forever? ...His kingdom is in the hands of men in David's family line. It's true that you have a huge army... But you drove out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron. You also drove out the Levites. You appointed your own priests. That is the way the people of other nations do... Then they become priests of gods that are not really gods at all! But the LORD is our God. We have not deserted Him." (13:8-10) Jereboam and his troops surrounded the troops of Abijah but God delivered them. 'Abijah and his men wounded and killed large numbers of them... The men of Judah won the battle over them. That's because they trusted in the LORD.' (13:17-18)

Galatians 2:20-12. Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ. I no longer live but Christ lives in me. My faith in the Son of God helps me to live my life in my body. He loved me. He gave Himself for me. Therefore, I do not lose the grace of God."

Dear heavenly Father, thank you for the many examples in Scripture that testify of Your faithfulness for those who put their trust in You and in Your Son our Saviour. Thank you that for those who do this, we "do not lose the grace of God". Forgive us and our nation when we appoint priests and leaders "in the way the people of other nations do". Thank you that You "placed David and his sons after him on Israel's throne forever" to provide our new life in Christ our Saviour, Israel's Messiah, who was born through the family line of David. Amen.

5th March 2024.

Genesis 26 records the last years of Isaac, before his twin son Jacob married Abraham's relatives. There was a famine in the land of Canaan but God warned Isaac not to move down to Egypt. "Live in the land where I tell you to live... I will give all of these lands to you and your children after you. I will keep the promise I made to your father Abraham." (26:2-5) Canaan became known as God's Promised Land of Israel. The Philistines who lived nearby blocked up the wells dug by Isaac (26:15). So Isaac moved away from them. The LORD God Almighty spoke to him. "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid. I am with you. I will bless you. I will increase the number of your children because of My servant Abraham." (26:24) Then Abimelech, king of the Philistines, came to Isaac and made a peace treaty with Isaac and his family (26:26-31). Later, Isaac's other twin son Esau 'got married to Judith, a Hittite. He also married Basemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite. Isaac and Rebekah became very upset because Esau had married Hittite women.' (26:34-35)

Mark 7:24-30 records the visit of Jesus to Tyre, north of Galilee. A foreign woman came to Him drive out a demon in her daughter. He tried to ignore her by saying "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). However, because of her faith, Jesus healed her daughter. 'She went home and found her child lying on the bed. And the demon was gone.' (Mark 7:30)

We note how foreigners offered peace to Abraham's family but Esau disobeyed his father Isaac and married two foreigners. Unlike Jacob, who became God's chosen father of the twelve tribes of Israel. We note how Jesus, despite His calling to minister to Israel, healed a foreigner. We thank you Father God for our calling to minister to all who will receive Jesus as Saviour today. Amen.

6th March 2024.

Habakkuk 3. After the LORD God Almighty answered Habakkuk's complaints, Habakkuk begins to see the world around him from God's view point. He offers a prayer of praise and petition. "LORD, I have great respect for You because of Your mighty acts. Do them again for us! Make them known in our time. When you are angry, please show us your tender love... You sent plagues ahead of You. Sickness followed behind You. When You stood up, the earth shook. When You looked at the nations, they trembled with fear... Floods of water swept by. The sea roared and lifted its waves high... You came out to set Your people free and saved Your chosen ones. You crushed Pharaoh... But I will be patient. I will wait for the day of trouble to come on the nation that is attacking us. The fig trees might not bud. The vines might not produce grapes. The olive crop might fail. The fields might not produce food. There might not be any sheep in the pens. There might not be any cattle in the barns. But I will still be glad because of what the LORD has done. God my Saviour fills me with joy."

Titus 2:11-14. "God's saving grace has appeared to all people. It teaches us to say no to godless ways and sinful longings... We must do what is right. We must live godly lives in today's world as we wait for the blessed hope God has given us when Jesus Christ appears in all His glory. He is our great God and Saviour. He gave Himself for us and set us free from all evil. He wanted to make us pure. He wanted us to be His very own people and do what is good."

Father God, forgive us when we complain! Help us to see ourselves and the world around us from Your point of view. Help us to rejoice and live godly lives as we await our Saviour's return. Amen.

7th March 2024.

Deuteronomy 32:9-12. This is part of the Song of Moses after he received the Ten Commandments from Almighty God. "The LORD's people are his portion. Jacob [Israel] is the nation He has inherited. The LORD found Israel in a desert land... He took care of them and kept them safe... The LORD was the only one who led Israel. No other god was with them." The song concludes in faith and vision: "You nations, be full of joy together with God's people. The LORD will get even with His enemies. He will pay them back for killing those who serve Him. He will wipe away the sin of his land and people." (v.33)

Hebrews 8:6-12 explains, "Jesus has been given a greater work to do for God. He is the go-between for the new covenant... It is based on better promises. Suppose nothing had been wrong with that first covenant. Then no one would have looked for another covenant. But God found fault with His people. He said, 'A new day is coming. I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their people long ago. That was when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. My new covenant will be different because they didn't

remain faithful to My old covenant. So I turned away from them. But this is the covenant I will make with Israel after that time, says the LORD. I will put my laws in their minds. I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God. And they will be My people. I will forgive their evil ways. I will not remember their sins anymore.' " (See Jeremiah 31:31-34.)

Thank You Father God for Your commitment to your people Israel. Open our minds and hearts, for them and for us all, to the full meaning of Your new covenant established through Jesus Christ our Messiah and Saviour. Amen.

8th March 2024.

Ecclesiastes 7:25,29. "I tried to understand wisdom more completely... I tried to find out everything I could about it. I tried to understand why it is foolish to be evil... Here is the only other thing I found. God made men honest. But they have made [sought after, KJV] many evil plans."

2 Timothy 3:1-10,14-15. Paul wrote to Timothy, "There will be terrible times in the last days. People will love themselves. They will love money. They will boast and be proud. They will tear others down. They will not obey their parents. They will not be thankful or holy. They will not love others. They will not forgive others. They will tell lies about people. They will be out of control. They will be wild. They will hate what is good. They will turn against their friends. They will act without thinking. They will think they are better than others. They will love what pleases them instead of loving God. They will act as if they were serving God. But what they do will show that they have turned their backs on God's power. Have nothing to do with those people. They are the kind who get into the homes of weak-willed women to have control over them. They give in to all kinds of evil longings. They are always learning but never come to know the truth... They oppose the truth. Their minds are twisted. As far as the faith is concerned, God doesn't accept them... Their foolish ways will be clear to everyone... But I want you to continue to follow what you have learned. Do not give up what you are sure of... You have known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a child. They are able to teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus."

Thank You Father God for these wise words for the "terrible times in the last days". Help us to remain confident in what we have learned from the Bible. Amen.

11th March 2024.

2 Kings 11:17-21. After the deaths of Ahab and Jezebel, most of their family members were killed. But their daughter Athaliah rose up to destroy the royal family members in Judah. However, the young boy Joash was hidden. When he was seven years old the Temple priest in Jerusalem, Jehoiada, 'made a covenant between the LORD God Almighty and the boy king and the people. They promised they would be the LORD's people. All of the people of the land then went to Baal's temple and tore it down with the altars and the statues of gods. Then Jehoiada stationed guards at the Temple of the Lord... and brought the new king into the palace and the king sat down on the royal throne. All of the people of the land were filled with joy. And the city was quiet because Athaliah had been killed with a sword at the palace.' Joash reigned for 40 years in Jerusalem and gave instructions for the repair of God's Temple which had been neglected.

Hebrews 2:11-18. "The One who makes people holy and the people He makes holy belong to the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them His brothers and sisters... Jesus became human like them in order to die for them. By doing that, he could destroy the one who rules over the kingdom of death, the devil... Jesus set people free who were afraid of death and held as slaves by that fear... So He had to be made like His brothers in every way to serve God as a kind and faithful high priest. And then He could pay for the sins of the people by dying for them."

Thank You again heavenly Father for the records that show how You used humble servants like Joash and Jehoiada to defeat the work of the devil. Thank You that You sent Jesus as a humble human being to die for us to set us free from evil and fear. Amen.

12th March 2024.

Deuteronomy 12:1-4,10. Moses said, "Here are the rules and laws you must obey. Be careful to follow them in the land the LORD God Almighty has given you to take as your own... Obey these rules and laws as long as you live in the land. You will soon drive the nations out of it. Completely destroy all of the places where they worship their gods... But first you will go across the Jordan River. You will settle in the land He is giving you. It will belong to you as your share. He will give you peace and rest from all of your enemies around you. You will live in safety."

2 Timothy 3:15 to 4:4. Paul wrote, "You have known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a little child. They teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus. God has breathed life into all of Scripture for teaching us what is true... By using Scripture, people of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing. I give you a command in the sight of God and Christ Jesus. Christ will judge the living and the dead. Because He and His kingdom are coming, here is the command I give you. Preach the word. Be ready to serve God in good times and bad. Correct people's mistakes. Warn them. Cheer them up with words of hope... The time will come when people will not put up with true teaching. Instead, they will try to satisfy their own longings. They will gather a large number of teachers around them who will say what the people want to hear. The people will turn their ears away from the truth."

Thank You Father God for reminding us of Your instructions and promises given nearly 3500 years ago to Moses and the Children of Israel. Thank you that this was in preparation for receiving Jesus Christ as Saviour. May Your people everywhere uphold Your truth and prepare for Christ's return. Amen.

13th March 2024.

Jeremiah 36. A message came to Jeremiah from the LORD God almighty in the fourth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah. "Get a scroll. Write on it all of the words I have spoken to you about Israel, Judah and all of the other nations... They will hear about all of the trouble I plan to bring on them. Maybe then all of them will turn from their evil ways. Then I will forgive their sins and the evil things they have done." Baruch wrote down all of the words the LORD had spoken and read them out in LORD's Temple. Later, when the words from God were read out to the king he had the scroll burned. 'So I got another scroll and told Baruch what to write on it.' Jeremiah ended up in prison.

Acts 10. 'A man named Cornelius lived in Caesarea. He was a Roman commander. Cornelius and all his family were faithful and worshiped the one true God Almighty. One day he had a vision. An angel came to him and said, "Cornelius! Your prayers and gifts to poor people have come up like an offering to God. So He has remembered you. Now send men to Joppa and bring back a man named Simon Peter.'" Then Cornelius called two of his servants and sent them to Joppa.' In this way, the apostle Peter went to visit Cornelius. He preached the Good News of salvation in Christ and Cornelius and his family repented and were saved along with other Gentiles who believed.

Thank You Father God for again reminding us, through Jeremiah, of Your instructions, warnings and promises. Thank you for the impact of Your ministry through Cornelius and Peter in the early Roman Empire. We ask for Your Bible truth to be revealed today to people of power including kings and leaders of state, businesses and churches, despite the risk of persecution, even imprisonment. In the name of Jesus and for His sake. Amen.

22nd March 2024.

Isaiah 65:1-2; 13-17 give the words of the LORD God Almighty regarding His judgement and salvation. "I made Myself known to those who were not asking for Me. I was found by those who were not trying to find Me. I spoke to a nation that did not pray to Me. 'Here I am,' I said. All day long I have held out My hands to welcome a stubborn nation. They lead sinful lives. They go where their evil thoughts take them. They are always making Me very angry. They do it right in front of Me..." So the LORD and King says, "My true servants will have food to eat. But you will be hungry. My true servants will have plenty to drink. But you will be thirsty. My true servants will be full of joy. But you will be put to shame. My true servants will sing with joy in their hearts. But you will cry out because of the great pain in your hearts... I will give new names to those who serve Me. They will ask Me to bless their land in My name. I am the God of truth. They will take oaths and make promises in their land... The troubles of the past will be forgotten and hidden from My eyes. I will create new heavens and a new earth. The things that have happened before will not be remembered. They will not even enter your minds."

Romans 11:11-18 provide Paul's teaching on the Gentiles who are grafted into the root of God's people Israel. He warns, "Do not boast: you do not support the root but the root supports you."

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your warning to the stubborn nations and Your readiness to bless all "who serve Me" including those "who were not trying to find You". Lord God, raise up more true servants who put their trust in Israel's Messiah in whom all true believers are rooted. For His sake. Amen.

25th March 2024.

Genesis 13. Abraham and his nephew Lot settled in the Negev which became part of the Promised Land of Israel nearly 600 years later. 'Abram said to Lot, "The people who take care of your herds and those who take care of mine should not argue with each another... Is not the whole land in front of you? Let us separate. If you go to the left, I will go to the right." (13:8-9) Lot chose the best pasture land near Sodom and Abraham trusted God to meet his own needs. After Lot departed, the LORD God Almighty spoke to Abraham. "Look north, south, east and west. I will give you all of the land that you see to you and your children after you forever... Go, walk through the land I am giving to you." '

Revelation 22:7-17. Nearly 4000 years after Abraham, Jesus spoke to His servant John in a vision. "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy in this book... Let those who do wrong keep on doing wrong... Let those who do what is right keep on doing what is right... Look! I am coming soon! I will reward each person for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will have the right to come to the Tree of Life. They will be allowed to go through the gates into the city. Outside the city are the dogs and those who practice witchcraft. Also those who commit sexual sins and murder, who worship statues of gods and do what is false. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this witness for the churches."

Thank You Father God for your Bible truth from Genesis to Revelation. Open our eyes to see "north, south, east and west" what You have provided for Your Kingdom on Earth, past, present and future. Help us to believe and "witness for the churches". Amen.

26th March 2024.

Ecclesiastes 11 to 12 give words of wisdom back in 1000BC. "Anyone who keeps on watching the wind won't plant seeds. Anyone who keeps looking at the clouds won't gather crops... You do not know how a baby is made inside its mother. So you cannot understand how God works either... In the morning, plant your seeds. In the evening, keep your hands busy. You do not know what will succeed. It may be one or the other or both might do equally well... Do what your heart tells you to do... But know that God will judge you for everything... And here is the final thing I want to say. Have respect for God and obey His commandments. That is what everyone should do. God will judge us including everything we try to hide... whether it is good or evil."

2 Timothy 3:12-17. Paul tells Timothy, "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Evil people and pretenders will go from bad to worse. They will fool others, and others will fool them. But I want you to continue to follow what you have learned. Do not give up what you are sure of. You know the people you learned it from. You have known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a child. They are able to teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus. God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It teaches us what is true and corrects our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again and for training us to do what is right. By using Scripture, a man of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing."

Father God, grant us the faith to "in the morning, plant seeds" and above all to "obey Your commandments". Thank You for the scriptures old and new we have learnt from childhood, which prepare us "to do every good thing". Thank You for Jesus. Amen.

27th March 2024.

Deuteronomy 1:1-8. 'These are the words Moses spoke to the people of Israel in the desert east of the Jordan River... "The LORD our God spoke to us at Mount Horeb. 'Take your tents down. Go into the hill country of the Amorites. Go to all of the people who are their neighbours... in the Negev Desert and along the [Mediterranean] coast. Travel to the land of Canaan and through Lebanon as far as the great Euphrates River. I have given you all of the land I promised I would give to your fathers. I promised it to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to their children after them.' "

Acts 7:30-53 is when the apostle Stephen was arrested for preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah and our Saviour. He said to the Jewish leaders at that time, "An angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. He heard the voice of the LORD God Almighty. 'I have seen My people beaten down in Egypt. I have heard their groans. I have come down to set them free.' So Moses led them out of Egypt... This is the same Moses who spoke to the people of Israel. 'God will send you a Prophet who will be like me.' Moses received living words to pass on to us. But our people refused to obey Moses. In their hearts, they wished they were back in Egypt... You people! You won't obey! You are stubborn! You won't listen! You are just like

your people of long ago! You always oppose the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your people didn't try to hurt? They even killed those who told about the coming of the Blameless One. And now you have handed Him over to His enemies. You have murdered Him. The Law you received was brought by angels. But you haven't obeyed it."

Lord Jesus, help us to fulfil Father God's salvation plan! Amen.

28th March 2024.

Psalm 38. A petition to God Almighty from King David. "Oh LORD, my guilt has become too much for me. It is a load too heavy to carry." (38:4) "My heart pounds. My strength is gone. My eyes can hardly see." (38:10) "I am like a deaf person. I cannot hear. I am like someone who cannot speak, who cannot say a word." (38:13) "I confess I have done wrong. I am troubled by my sin." (38:18) "O LORD, do not desert me. My God, do not be far away from me. LORD my Saviour, come quickly to help me." (38:21-22)

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17. Paul says, "The Lord loves you. God chose you from the beginning. He wanted you to be saved. Salvation comes through the Holy Spirit's work. He makes people holy. It also comes through believing the [Bible] truth. He chose you to be saved by accepting the Good News that we preach. And you will share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, stand firm. Hold on to what we taught you. We passed our teachings on to you by what we preached and wrote. Our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father loved us [from the beginning]. By His grace God gave us comfort that will last forever. The hope He gave us is good. May our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father comfort your hearts. May They make you strong in every good thing you do and say."

Father God, we note the confessions of King David and bow our heads in shame because of our own past sins. Thank You that we have been taught through the faithful preaching from the Bible to believe in Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ, as our Lord and Saviour, who took our sins on the cross in our place. "Make us strong in every good thing we do and say." Thank You that "from the beginning" You have "chosen us to be saved" like David and Paul. Amen.

29th March 2024.

Leviticus 25:8-55 describes the Year of Jubilee. The LORD God Almighty said to Moses, "Count off seven times seven years to a total of 49 years... On that day blow the trumpet all through your land. Set the 50th year apart. Announce freedom all over the land to everyone who lives there. The 50th year will be a Year of Jubilee for you... Do not plant anything... It is a Year of Jubilee and will be holy for you. Eat only what the fields produce... Follow My rules. Be careful to obey My laws. Then you will live safely in the land. The land will produce its fruit. You will eat as much as you want. And you will live there in safety."

Hebrews 3:1-7. "Holy brothers and sisters, God chose you to be His people. So keep thinking about Jesus. He is our Apostle. He is our High Priest. We believe in Him. Moses was faithful in everything he did in the house of God. In the same way, Jesus was faithful to the One who appointed Him. The person who builds a house has greater honour than the house itself. In the same way, Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses. God is the builder. Moses was faithful as one who serves in the house of God. He gave witness to what God would say in days to come. But Christ is faithful as a Son over God's house. We are His house if we continue to come boldly to God. We must also hold on to the hope we have. The Holy Spirit says, 'Listen to His voice today. If you hear it, do not be stubborn [harden your hearts].' "

Forgive us heavenly Father for failing to gather together to celebrate in 1995, 50 years after You delivered us all from the second world war. Forgive us for hardening our hearts and failing to listen to the voice of Jesus our Saviour today. For His sake, Amen.

1st April 2024.

Genesis Chapter 49. In the year 1689 BC, Jacob and his family were still living in Egypt. He knew he was about to die so he blessed each of his 12 sons one by one, despite their many faults. (It was over 200 years later that Moses led their families out of Egypt into the Promised Land of Canaan, now called Israel.) In the previous chapter, Jacob had blessed the two sons of Joseph who had been born to his alien Egyptian wife, that they should be fully recognised by the rest of the family as part of the tribe of Israel (48:20). Before he died, Jacob gave instructions that his body should be buried in Canaan "in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite near Mamre in Canaan. Abraham had bought it as a place where he could bury his wife's body. The bodies of Abraham and his wife Sarah were

buried there. So were the bodies of Isaac and his wife Rebekah. I also buried Leah's body there." (49:30-32)

Matthew 19:13-30. Jesus blessed the little children that people brought to Him. He told His followers, "Let the little children come to Me. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to people like them." Then a rich young man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to receive eternal life?" He was faithful in keeping all the Ten Commandments but Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell everything you have. Give the money to those who are poor. You will have treasure in Heaven. Then come and follow Me."

Thank You Father God, for recording the blessings You planned for Abraham's family "despite their many faults". This included sons born to aliens living in their midst. Thank You that Jesus confirmed His blessing for people with a child-like faith and for those who are ready to help the poor. Show us how to store up "treasure in Heaven" as we follow Jesus. Amen.

2nd April 2024.

Joshua 10:1-14. The people of Israel defeated Jericho and Ai in the year 1451 BC, 'The king of Jerusalem, heard that Joshua had taken Ai and that the city had been set apart to the LORD God Almighty in a special way to be destroyed. He also heard that the people of Gibeon had made a peace treaty with Israel... So he made an appeal to five local kings. "Come up and help me attack Gibeon." The five Amorite kings moved all of their troops into position to fight against Gibeon... Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his whole army. The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them. I have handed them over to you." Joshua marched all night and took the Amorite armies by surprise. The LORD threw them into a panic and they ran away as Israel marched toward them. As they ran, the LORD threw large hailstones down on them from the sky which killed more of them than the swords of the men of Israel... Joshua spoke to the LORD, "Sun, stand still over Gibeon!" So the sun stood still and the moon stopped until the nation won the battle over its enemies. You can read about it in the Book of Jashar... It was a day when the LORD listened to a mere man. You can be sure that the LORD was fighting for Israel!'

Acts 7:44-53. Stephen said to the leaders of Israel, "Long ago our people had with them in the desert the holy tent where the tablets of the covenant were kept... Our people brought it with them when they took the land of Canaan. God drove out the nations that were in their way." But Stephen went on to accuse the Jewish leaders of killing Israel's Messiah. "The Law you received was brought by angels. But you haven't obeyed it."

Father God, forgive us for judging Your people Israel whom You blessed through Jesus Christ our Messiah. Help them and us to prepare for His return! Amen.

3rd April 2024.

Zephaniah 2:1-7. The prophet Zephaniah spoke to the unfaithful believers before "the day of his anger comes upon you". (2:2) Then he spoke to the faithful believers. "So look to Him, all of you people in the land who worship Him faithfully who always do what He commands you to do. Continue to do what is right. Do not be proud. Then perhaps the LORD God Almighty will keep you safe on the day He pours out his anger" (2:3). Zephaniah then pronounces what the LORD will do to Israel's evil neighbours, beginning with Gaza. "Gaza will be deserted... How terrible it will be for the people who live by the Mediterranean Sea!" This region was occupied by Israel after they returned from exile. "But the full occupation of this land will only take place when their Messiah returns again to reign." (Quoted from *The Applied Old Testament Commentary* by Thomas Hale, friend and colleague of Manna Publications author, Fred Morris.)

Galatians Chapter 3. Paul asks, "Why does God give you His Spirit? Why does He work miracles among you? Is it because you do what the Law says? Or is it because you believe what you have heard?" (v.5) "We know that no-one is made right with God by keeping the Law. Scripture says (Habakkuk 2:4), 'Those who are right with God will live by faith.' " (v.11) "Christ Jesus set us free so that the blessing given to Abraham would come to non-Jews through Christ. He did it so that we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit by believing in Christ." (v.14)

Heavenly Father, thank you that we have the writings from Zephaniah to warn us about Your anger when believers are unfaithful. Thank you also for the writings which confirm Your love for those who "do what He commands you to do". Help us to understand fully today the writings about the past, present and future as we faithfully continue to believe and trust in Christ our Saviour. Amen.

4th April 2024.

Joshua 6:1-5 gives God's instructions in 1451 BC to destroy the city of Jericho after the crossing of the River Jordan. 'The gates of Jericho were shut tight and guarded closely because of the people of Israel... Then the LORD God Almighty spoke to Joshua. "I have handed Jericho over to you and its king and its fighting men. March round the city once with all of your fighting men. Do this for six days. Tell seven priests to take trumpets and carry them in front of the Ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times... When you hear the priests blow a long blast on their trumpets, tell all of the men to give a loud shout. The walls of the city will fall down. Then the whole army will go straight in." Jericho was never rebuilt and remains a barren site to this day.

1 Corinthians 2:3-8. Paul writes, "When I came to you, I was weak and afraid and trembling all over. I didn't preach my message with clever and compelling words. As I preached, the Holy Spirit showed His power. That was so you would believe, not because of human wisdom but because of God's power. The words we speak to those who have grown in the faith are wise. Our words are different from the words of the rulers of this world. People like that are not going anywhere! No, we speak about God's secret wisdom which has been hidden. Before time began, God planned that His wisdom would bring us heavenly glory. None of the rulers of this world understood God's wisdom. If they had, they would not have nailed the Lord of Glory to the cross."

Thank You Father God that Paul understood Your plan was to "bring us heavenly glory" through Your wisdom, not through "the words of the rulers of this world". Like Joshua and Paul, in our weakness, may we obey You and see Your plans fulfilled in power! Amen.

5th April 2024.

Ecclesiastes 1:12-18. Solomon said, "I spent all of my time studying everything that is done on Earth... I said to myself, 'Look, my wisdom has really been growing.' Then I used my mind to understand what it really means to be wise. And I wanted to know what foolish pleasure is all about. But I found out that that ... a lot of human wisdom leads to a lot of sorrow. More knowledge only brings more sadness." At the end of his writings, he says, "Have respect for God and obey His commandments... God will judge everything people do, whether it is good or evil."

1 Corinthians 12:1-11. Paul said, "I want you to know about the gifts of the Holy Spirit... There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given by the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord Jesus. There are different ways to work. But the same God makes it possible for all of us to have those different things... To some people the Spirit gives the message of wisdom. To others, He gives knowledge. To others He gives faith. To others He gives gifts of healing. To others He gives the power to do miracles. To others He gives the ability to prophesy. To others He gives the ability to understand the spirits. To others He gives the ability to speak in different kinds of languages. And to still others He gives the ability to interpret."

Father God, we thank you for the invitation from the beginning to obey You. Above all, we thank you that because of our sinful nature to choose "foolish pleasures", You sent Jesus to sacrifice His life to pay for our sins and receive a new Spirit-filled life. Thank You for the gifts of the Spirit You share among true believers today including true wisdom and knowledge. Thank you that Solomon knew that without obedience we could not use the gifts of the Spirit for good.

8th April 2024.

Leviticus 5:14-19 describes the guilt offering law. The LORD God Almighty spoke to Moses. "When a person sins by breaking the law without meaning to, he sins against Me or My priests... He must bring Me a ram from the flock without flaws... It is a guilt offering to pay for his sin... The priest will pay for the person's sin with the ram and he will be forgiven. Suppose a person sins by doing something I command him not to do. Even though he does not know it, he is guilty and will be held accountable for it. He too must bring to the priest a ram from the flock as a guilt offering without flaws... The priest will sacrifice the animal. That will pay for what the person has done wrong without meaning to and he will be forgiven. It is a guilt offering because he has been guilty of doing wrong against Me."

Luke 4:1-13. After the baptism of Jesus He was tempted three times in the desert by the devil. The devil said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." (4:3) Next the devil said, "I will give you all the authority and glory that is given to me... So if you worship me, it will all be yours." (4:6-7) Next, the devil led Jesus to Jerusalem and told Him stand on the highest point

of the Temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here." Each time Jesus answered from Scripture. (Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:13; Psalm 91:11,12)

Thank You Father God for Your Old Testament teachings through Moses, many of which were repeated by Jesus our Saviour. Help us to understand the need to always repent of sin, even when we do it without meaning to, because we are "guilty of doing wrong against You". Help us, as Jesus did, to trust You and worship You and not put You to the test. Amen.

9th April 2024.

Jeremiah 42. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 590 BC by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, some of the people of Israel planned to escape to Egypt. They came to Jeremiah. "Please listen to our appeal. Pray to the LORD your God for all of us who are left here.... Pray that He will tell us where to go and what to do." (42:2) "We will do everything the LORD your God tells us to do." (42:5) After ten days, Jeremiah said, "The LORD God of Israel told me, 'Stay in this land and I will build you up.... Do not be afraid of the king of Babylonia... But if you have already made up your minds to go to Egypt... you will die there.' " (42:10-16) The people of Israel became angry with Jeremiah and ignored his warnings and carried on travelling to Egypt. They never returned to Jerusalem but died with the Egyptians when Nebuchadnezzar attacked Egypt.

Romans 3:1-6. "Is there any advantage in being a Jew? There is great value in every way! First of all, the Jews have been given the very words of God. What if some Jews did not believe? Will the fact that they do not have faith keep God from being faithful? Not at all! God is true, even though every human being is a liar. It is written, 'You are right when You sentence me. You are fair when You judge me.' (Psalm 51:4) Does not the fact that we are wrong prove more clearly that God is right? Then what can we say? Can we say that God is not fair when he brings his anger down on us? God is certainly fair! If He were not fair, how could He judge the world?"

Forgive us heavenly Father for the times we make up our minds to do things without Your blessing. Forgive us for seeking Your guidance and blessing even when our minds are already made up! Keep us ever open to Your truth! Amen.

10th April 2024.

Psalms 46 celebrates The LORD God Almighty and His "holy place" in Jerusalem. It looks forward to the time when the events in Jerusalem will have an impact on the whole world. "God is our place [refuge] of safety. He gives us strength. He is always there to help us in times of trouble. The Earth may fall apart. The mountains may fall into the sea. The waters of the sea may roar and foam. The mountains may shake and the waters rise. But we will not be afraid. God's blessings fill the City of God with joy... See what the LORD has done! The places He has destroyed and wars stopped from one end of the Earth to the other. He breaks every bow and spear... and says, 'Be still, and know that I am God. I will be honoured among the nations. I will be honoured on Earth' The LORD who rules over all is with us. He is our fortress."

1 Corinthians 6:11-20. Paul writes, "Your sins were washed away. You were made holy and right [righteous] in God's sight. All of that was done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. Some of you say, 'Everything is permitted for me.' But not everything is good... Do not be controlled by anything! ...The body is not meant for sexual sins but for the Lord... Do you not know that your bodies belong to the body of Christ? ...Keep far away from sexual sins. All the other sins a person commits are outside the body. But sexual sins are sins within and against one's own body. Your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is in you from God. You do not belong to yourselves. Christ has paid the price for you. So use your bodies in a way that honours God!"

Thank You Father God. Thank you Jesus. Thank You for events in Jerusalem past, present and future! Amen.

11th April 2024.

1 Chronicles 25. King David established the importance of singing in the daily worship of our LORD God Almighty. 'David and the commanders of the army set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun. They served the LORD by prophesying while harps, lyres and cymbals were being played.' (25:1) 'All of them were under the direction of their fathers... Young and old alike cast lots for their duties, for students as well as teachers.' (25:6-8)

Acts 4:23-31 records the time that Peter and John were released from prison and warned not to preach in the name of Jesus. 'They went back to their own people to report everything the chief

priests and the elders had said to them. When the believers heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Lord and King... Long ago you spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of our father David, 'Why are the nations angry? The kings of the Earth take their stand against the LORD. The rulers of the Earth gather together against His anointed king.' (Psalm 2:1,2) Herod and Pontius Pilate... made plans against Your holy servant Jesus whom You anointed. They did what Your power and purpose had already decided should happen. Consider now the bad things they say they are going to do. Help us to be bold when we speak Your word. Stretch out Your hand to heal and do miraculous signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And they were bold when they spoke God's word.'

Father God, continue to encourage us to use our gifts in music and prophesying to worship You. Also to be bold in witnessing and preaching the Good News of Jesus our Christ and Saviour. Also to expect and do "miraculous signs and wonders" in and through the name of "Your holy servant Jesus". Amen.

12th April 2024.

Exodus 32 to 34. Aaron, the brother of Moses, allowed the people of Israel to build a golden calf to worship. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, Aaron said, "Please do not be angry with me. You know how these people like to do what is evil. They said, 'Make us a god that will lead us. Moses brought us up out of Egypt but we do not know what has happened to him.' " (32:22-23) Moses said to the people, "You have committed a terrible sin. But now I will go up to the LORD God Almighty. Maybe if I pray to Him, He will forgive your sin." (32:30) The LORD sent a plague to kill those who had sinned. (32:33-35) 'Then the LORD spoke to Moses. "Go up to the land I promised to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob... I will send an angel ahead of you. I will drive out the Canaanites." (33:1-2) 'Then the LORD said to Moses, "Cut out two stone tablets that are just like the first ones. I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke." (34:1) Then God wrote the Ten Commandments on the stones for Moses to carry to the Promised Land.

Jude verses 3 to 23. "I want to remind you the Lord saved his people out of Egypt. But later he destroyed those who did not believe." (v.5) "The people of Sodom and Gomorrah also did evil things... They committed sins of the worst possible kind. They are an example of those who are punished with fire that never goes out." (v.7) "But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ will bring you eternal life. As you wait for His mercy, remain in God's love." (v.20-21)

Help us Lord Jesus to "carry" with us God's truth and be more like You! Amen.

15th April 2024.

Ezra Chapter 7. Ezra, an expert in God's Law given to Moses, was sent by King Artaxerxes of Persia in the year 457 BC to Jerusalem with a letter from him. "I and my seven advisers are sending you to Judah and Jerusalem. Find out whether the people there are obeying the Law of your God... I and my advisers have freely given silver and gold to the God of Israel who lives in Jerusalem... Take the offerings to give for the Temple of their God in Jerusalem." (7:14-16) "Use them for worshiping your God in His Temple. If you need to supply other things for the Temple of your God, take them from among the royal treasures." (7:19-20) "Work hard for the Temple of the God of Heaven. I do not want Him to be angry with my kingdom." (7:23) "Appoint judges and other court officials, using the wisdom your God gives you. Those you appoint should do what is right and fair when they judge people who live west of the River Euphrates. They should do it for everyone who knows the laws of your God. And I want you to teach the people who do not know those laws." (7:25)

Colossians 2:2-3. Paul writes, "I want their hearts to be made cheerful and strong. I want them to be joined together in love. Then their understanding will be rich and complete. They will know the 'mystery of God' which is in Christ. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him."

Thank You Father God that You gave Your servant Ezra the amazing authority to bless Your Temple and Your people in Jerusalem through the support given from the treasures of the king of Persia. Ezra was also ordered to teach Your laws to all the people living west of the Euphrates! Help us understand You gave Your servant Paul the authority to teach that "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ." Amen.

16th April 2024.

1 Samuel 17 describes the story of David and Goliath. The young David was told by his father to leave his sheep and take food to his older brothers who were fighting the Philistines. King Saul asked to speak to David. David explained he could slay the giant in the same way he killed the lions and bears who attacked his sheep. David refused to use Saul's armour and went towards Goliath the giant. Goliath threatened to kill him but David said "You are coming to fight against me with a sword... But I am coming against you in the name of the LORD God Almighty who rules over all. He is the God of the armies of Israel. He is the One you have dared to fight against. This very day the LORD will hand you over to me. I will strike you down. I will cut your head off. This very day I will feed the bodies of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and to the wild animals. Then the whole world will know there is a God in Israel." The successful battle against the Philistines followed and is remembered to this day, over 3000 years later.

Matthew 19:13-15. 'Some people brought little children to Jesus. They wanted Him to place His hands on the children and pray for them. But the disciples told the people to stop. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me. Do not hinder them. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to people like these." Jesus placed his hands on them and went on His way.'

Thank You Father God for revealing how even the youngest and weakest are called to serve You in defeating those who oppose "the Kingdom of Heaven". We note, too, that David was called by you to raise up a royal family that You would use to prepare for Israel's Saviour and Messiah, Jesus the Christ. Grant us child-like faith to trust You in life's battles. Amen.

17th April 2024.

Psalms 147:12-20. In this time of conflict, let us reflect on the words of the psalmist over 3000 years ago. "Jerusalem, praise the Lord. Zion, praise your God! He makes the bars of your gates stronger. He blesses the people who live inside you. He keeps your borders safe and secure. He satisfies you with the finest wheat... He has made His word known to the people of Jacob. He has made His laws and rules known to Israel. The other nations do not know His laws. Praise the Lord!"

Mark 13:1-8. Jesus gave us His teachings on the future of Jerusalem to His followers. 'Jesus was leaving the Temple. One of His disciples said to Him, "Look, Teacher! What huge stones! What wonderful buildings!" "Do you see these huge buildings?" Jesus asked. "Not one stone here will be left on top of another. Every stone will be thrown down." Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, across from the Temple. Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him a question in private. "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to come true?" Jesus said to them, "Keep watch! Be careful that no one deceives you. Many will come in My name. They will claim 'I am He'. You will hear about wars and about future wars. Do not be alarmed. Those things must happen. But the end still is not here. Nation will fight against nation. Kingdom will fight against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in many places. People will go hungry. All of those things are the beginning of birth pains."'

Lord Jesus, You know everything about God's role for Jerusalem and Israel, past, present and future. May we be given divine understanding for today and each day to come until you return to establish God's Kingdom on Earth personally. Thank you for Your warning to "Keep watch" in the meantime. We pray in Your name for peace in Jerusalem. Amen.

18th April 2024.

Micah 4:6-13. The LORD God Almighty gave a vision before His people were exiled in Babylon. "I will gather together those I have allowed to suffer. I will make those who were driven away from their homes a strong nation. I will be their King forever. Jerusalem, the glorious kingdom you had before will be given back to you. Soon you must leave your city and go to Babylonia. But that is where the LORD will save you. There He will set you free from the powerful hand of your enemies. But for now, many nations have gathered together to attack you. Those nations do not know what the LORD has in mind. The time is coming when I will gather together those who are disabled and those who were taken away as prisoners and those I have allowed to suffer."

Galatians 3:25 to 4:7. "You are all children of God by believing in Christ Jesus. There is no Jew or Greek. There is no slave or free person. There is no male or female. Because you belong to Christ Jesus, you are all one as children of Abraham and will receive what God has promised. God sent his Son. A woman gave birth to Him. God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Holy Spirit. So you are no longer slaves. You are God's children. Because you are His children, He gives you what He promised to give His people."

Thank You Father for Your everlasting love for Your people Israel and the promises You have made to "gather together those I have allowed to suffer". Grant us that same love so that we can all be adopted as "children of Abraham" with the Spirit of Jesus Your Messiah in our hearts. This day, may the nations "know what the LORD has in mind" and free all who are slaves, disabled or prisoners. Bring glory to Your name, for the sake of Jesus who died to save us all. Amen.

19th April 2024.

Esther chapters 3 to 8 describe how King Xerxes, whose kingdom stretched from India to Egypt, was persuaded to destroy all the Jews in the land. (3:12-13) However, Mordecai the Jew persuaded Queen Esther to talk to the king. (4:16). The king listened and he agreed to send an order for the whole empire to protect the Jews. (8:11-13) 'The Jews were filled with joy and happiness. They were very glad because now they were being honoured... It was true in every territory and every city. Many people from other nations announced that they had become Jews because of their fear of the Jews.' (8:16-17)

Titus 3:1-7. "Remind God's people to obey rulers and authorities. Remind them to be ready to do what is good. Tell them not to speak evil things against anyone. Remind them to live in peace. They must consider the needs of others. They must be kind and gentle toward all people. At one time we too acted like fools. We did not obey God. We were tricked. We were controlled by all kinds of longings and pleasures. We were full of evil. We wanted what belongs to others. People hated us, and we hated one another. But the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared. He saved us. It was not because of the good things we had done. It was because of His mercy. He saved us by washing away our sins. We were born again. The Holy Spirit gave us new life. God poured out the Spirit on us freely because of what Jesus Christ our Saviour has done. His grace made us right with God. So now we have received the hope of eternal life as God's children."

Heavenly Father, give us this day fear and respect for Your people Israel. Forgive the wrong we have done and give us all the desire to live in the hope and peace of Christ, Israel's Messiah and our Saviour. For His sake who died for us all. Amen.

22nd April 2024.

Proverbs 5:21-23. "The LORD God Almighty watches a man's ways. He studies all of his paths. A sinner is trapped by his own evil acts. He is held tight by the ropes of his sins. He will die because he refused to be corrected. His sins will capture him because he was very foolish."

1 Corinthians 2:14-16 to 3:1-3. "Some people do not have the Holy Spirit. They do not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. Things like that are foolish to them. They cannot understand them. In fact, such things cannot be understood without the Spirit's help. Everyone who has the Spirit can judge all things. But no-one can judge those who have the Spirit. It is written, 'Who can ever know what is in the Lord's mind? Can anyone ever teach Him?' But we have the mind of Christ! Brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as if you were guided by the Holy Spirit. I had to speak to you as if you were following the ways of the world. You are not growing as Christ wants you to. You are still like babies. The words I spoke to you were like milk, not like solid food. You were not ready for solid food yet. And you are still not ready for it. You still follow the ways of the world. Some of you are jealous. Some of you argue. So are you not following the ways of the world? Are you not acting like ordinary human beings?"

Heavenly Father, we come before You this day aware of Your truth and warnings in both Old and New Testaments. Thank you that you have chosen and called us to be Yours from the beginning. But You have left us to choose for ourselves to obey You or remain "trapped by our own evil acts". Forgive us when we "follow the ways of the world" and "do not accept the things that come from the Holy Spirit". Amen.

23rd April 2024.

Genesis 28. Isaac sent his son Jacob to Laban who was his mother's brother. He warned him not to marry a Canaanite women like his twin brother Esau did, but to marry a relative of his uncle Laban. On the way there he had a dream. 'He saw a stairway from Earth to Heaven with angels going up and coming down on it. The LORD God Almighty stood above the stairway and said, "I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your children after you the land on which you are lying... They will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south. All nations on earth will be blessed because of you and your children after

you... And I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised." "

Matthew 5:14-20. After Jesus chose some of His disciples, He taught them the Beatitudes (5:1-12). He then encouraged them by saying, "You are the light of the world... Let your light shine in front of others. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will praise your Father who is in Heaven." He then explained that He had come "not to reject what is written in the Law or in the Prophets. Instead, I have come to give full meaning to what is written... However, You must be more godly than the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law. If you are not, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." He explained later about God's plan for His crucifixion, resurrection and Holy Spirit power to enable believers to enter the Kingdom of God in this world and the next.

Thank You Father God for Your amazing promise of blessing us through Jacob's family, fulfilled through the Law of Moses and the sacrifice of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.

24th April 2024.

1 Samuel 23:1-5. Before David became king he was a successful army leader against the enemies of Israel. David was told, "The Philistines are fighting against the town of Keilah." So he asked the LORD God Almighty for advice. "Should I go and attack those Philistines?" The LORD answered, "Go and attack them. Save Keilah." But David's men said to him, "We are afraid here in Judah. If we go to Keilah and fight against the Philistine army, we will be even more afraid." Once again David asked the LORD what he should do. The LORD answered, "Go down to Keilah. I am going to hand the Philistines over to you." So David and his men went to Keilah... They wounded and killed large numbers of Philistines and he saved the people of Keilah.

Galatians 5:16-25. Paul says, "Live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your sinful nature wants you to do... The Spirit does not want what the sinful nature delights in. The two are at war with each other... But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the authority of what the sinful nature does... The fruit of the Holy Spirit produces love, joy and peace. It is enables us to be patient, kind and good... faithful and gentle with self control... Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their sinful nature to His cross. They do not want what their sinful nature longs for. Since we live by the Spirit, let us march in step with the Spirit."

Thank You heavenly Father for teaching us through Your servant David. Encourage us to seek You for the daily guidance we need and ignore our own desires. Remind us also to seek You when others discourage us from going forward. May we also take Paul's advice to "live by the Spirit's power" and "march in step with the Spirit." For the sake of Jesus who gave His life on the cross for us. Amen.

25th April 2024.

Proverbs 16:16-17,20. "It is much better to have wisdom than gold. It is much better to choose understanding than silver. The path of honest people takes them away from evil. Those who guard their ways guard their lives... Whoever pays attention to what they are taught, will succeed. Blessed is the person who puts their trust in the LORD God Almighty."

2 Timothy 2:1-10. "My son, be strong in the grace that is found in Christ Jesus. You have heard me teach in front of many witnesses. Pass on to people you can trust the things you have heard me say. Then they will be able to teach others also. Like a good soldier of Christ Jesus, share in the hard times with us. A soldier does not take part in things that do not have anything to do with the army... In the same way, anyone who takes part in a sport doesn't receive the winner's crown unless he plays by the rules. The farmer who works hard should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Think about what I am saying. The Lord will help you understand what all of it means. Remember Jesus Christ. He came from David's family line and was raised from the dead. That is my Good News. I am suffering for it and have even been put in chains like someone who has committed a crime. But God's word is not held back by chains. So I suffer everything for the good of God's chosen people. Then they also can be saved. Christ Jesus saves them. He gives them glory that will last forever."

Lord Jesus, help us reach the people God has chosen for You to save. Help us in our calling as a soldier or an athlete or a farmer. Help us to "pay attention to what is taught" and succeed in life. Help us also to seek Your wisdom and understanding for sharing Your Good News, not silver and gold! Amen.

26th April 2024.

Isaiah 4:2-4. After pronouncing judgement on Jerusalem in the previous chapter, Almighty God speaks through His servant Isaiah. "In the days of the Branch of the LORD, Israel's king will be beautiful and glorious. He will be called 'The Branch of the LORD'. The fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of those who are still left alive in Israel. Those who are left in Zion will be called holy... The LORD will wash away the sins of the women in Zion. He will clean up the blood that was spilled there. He will judge those who spilled that blood." This begins the redemption for God's righteous people through their promised Messiah, "The Branch of the LORD".

1 Timothy 2:5-10. "There is only one God. And there is only one go-between for God and human beings. He is the man Christ Jesus. He gave himself to pay for the sins of everyone. That was a witness given by God at just the right time. I was appointed to be a messenger and an apostle to preach the Good News. I am telling the truth. God appointed me to be a teacher of the true faith to [Jews and] those who are not Jews. I want men everywhere to pray. I want them to lift up holy hands. I do not want them to be angry when they pray. I do not want them to argue. I also want women to dress simply. They should wear clothes that are right and proper. They should not braid their hair with gold or pearls... Instead, they should put on good works as if they were their clothes. That is proper for women who claim to worship God."

Father God, we repent of past sins and seek the redemption for righteous people through their promised Messiah. We note Your warning through Isaiah against "the sins of the women" and through Paul regarding the clothes to wear and the hair styles. Encourage "men everywhere to pray". Amen.

29th April 2024.

1 Samuel 8:1-9. 'God's prophet Samuel grew old. He appointed his sons to serve as judges for Israel... But they were only interested in making money... They made things that were wrong appear to be right. So the elders of Israel came to Samuel and said, "You are old. Your sons do not live as you do. So appoint a king to lead us. We want a king just like the kings of the other nations." Samuel was not pleased. So he prayed to the LORD God Almighty. The LORD told him, "You are not the one they have turned their backs on. I am the one they do not want as their king! They have deserted Me and served other gods. They have done that from the time I brought them up out of Egypt. Now they are deserting you too. Let them have what they want. But give them a strong warning. Let them know what the king who rules over them will do." '

John 14:12-17. Jesus said, "Anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing and do even greater things. That is because I am going to the Father. And I will do anything you ask in My name. Then the Son will bring glory to the Father... If you love Me, you will obey what I command. I will ask the Father. And He will give you another Friend to help you and to be with you forever. The Friend is the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept Him since the world does not see Him or know Him. But you know Him. He lives with you, and within you."

Forgive us Heavenly Father for disobeying You and the Spirit of Truth. Lord Jesus, "ask the Father" to establish leaders of Your choice and "give them a strong warning" not to "make things that are wrong appear to be right". Encourage us to listen and obey and bring "glory to the Father". Amen.

30th April 2024.

Jeremiah 23:3-5. The LORD God Almighty announced: "I Myself will gather together those who are left alive in My flock. I will gather them out of all of the countries where I have driven them. And I will bring them back to their own land. There My sheep will have many lambs. Their numbers will increase. I will place shepherds over them who will take good care of them. My sheep will not be afraid or terrified anymore. And none of them will be missing. A new day is coming. At that time I will raise up from David's royal line a true and rightful Branch. He will be a King who will rule wisely. He will do what is fair and right in the land."

Matthew 13. Jesus preceded his parable of the sower with this promise: "Anyone who does what my Father in Heaven wants is my brother or sister or mother." (12:50) He followed the parable with these words: "Here is why I use parables when I speak to the people. I say, 'They look, but they do not really see. They listen, but they do not really hear or understand.' In them the words of the prophet Isaiah come true. He said, 'You will hear but never understand. You will see but never know what you are seeing. The hearts of these people have become stubborn. They can barely hear with their ears. They have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes. They might hear

with their ears. They might understand with their hearts. They might turn to the Lord, and then He would heal them.' But blessed are your eyes because they see. And blessed are your ears because they hear." (13:13-16)

Thank You Heavenly Father for your promise of blessings through Israel's Messiah – past, present and future. "Place Your shepherds over us" and reassure us we are His "brothers and sisters". Help us "not to be afraid" and grant us "understanding with our hearts". Amen.

1st May 2024.

Deuteronomy 2:17-25. 'Then the LORD spoke to Moses. "Today you must pass near the border of Moab. When you come to the Ammonites, do not attack them. If you do, they will go to war against you. I will not give you any of their land as your own. I have given it to the people in the family line of Lot." The LORD had done the same thing for the people of Esau... The people of Esau have lived in Seir to this very day... Then the LORD said, "Go across the valley of the Arnon River. I have handed Sihon, the Amorite king, over to you and his country... This very day I will bring fear and terror on all of the nations because of you. They will hear about you and tremble with fear."

John 18:36-38. Jesus told Pilate, "My kingdom is not part of this world. If it were, those who serve Me would fight... My kingdom is from another place." Pilate said, "So You are a king, then!" Jesus answered, "You are right to say I am a king. In fact, that is the reason I was born. I came into the world to give witness to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of truth listens to me." Pilate said, "What is truth?" Then Pilate went out again to the Jews. He said, "I find no basis for any charge against Him."

Father God Almighty, we are amazed how You decided which nations should be saved and which nations should be destroyed on the journey to the Promised Land for Your people Israel. You spared the descendants of Lot and Esau and the descendants of Jacob prospered in the land of Canaan. We are also amazed how You decided that Your own flesh and blood, Jesus the Christ and Israel's Messiah, should die so that others would see "what is truth" regarding Your plan of salvation for the world, despite "any charge against Him". Amen.

2nd May 2024.

2 Chronicles 24. 'King Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD God Almighty as long as the high priest Jehoiada lived.' (24:2) They instructed the people of Israel to obey the laws of Moses and make donations for the upkeep of the Temple. (24:5) 'The repairs went well and they did it in keeping with the original plans.' (24:13-14) However, when the high priest died, the king came under the control of the officials of Judah. 'They turned their backs on the Temple of the LORD. They worshiped the goddess Asherah and other gods. Because Judah and Jerusalem were guilty of sin, God became angry with them.' (24:18) 'The army of Aram marched into Jerusalem... The LORD allowed them to win the battle over a much larger army. Judah had deserted the LORD, the God of their people. That is why the LORD punished Joash.' (24:23-24)

Luke 3:1-3 'Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea. Herod was the ruler of Galilee. Caiaphas was high priest. At that time God's word came to John in the desert. He went to the Jordan River and preached that people should be baptized and turn away from their sins. Then God would forgive them.'

Father God, thank you for raising up faithful spiritual leaders like Jehoiada nearly 3000 years ago and John the Baptist 2000 years ago. Thank You that under King Joash, Your will for the people to worship You at the Temple was established. But after the death of Jehoiada, Joash was betrayed by the new leaders and the people sinned and You allowed them to be punished. We note that after the death of John the Baptist, King Jesus was betrayed and you allowed Him to be punished by Herod, Pilate and Caiaphas. But we thank You that His punishment was for the sins of all the people then and now for our eternal salvation. Jerusalem was later destroyed but the Good News of Jesus was established for ever! Praise God! Amen.

3rd May 2024.

1 Chronicles 23:1-5. In chapter 22, God had promised David a son. "He will be a man of peace. And I will give him peace and rest from all of his enemies on every side. I will give Israel peace and quiet while he is king." (22:9) 'When David became very old, he made his son Solomon king over

Israel. He gathered together all of the leaders of Israel including the priests and the Levites. The Levites who were 30 years old or more were counted. The total was 38,000. David said, "From them, 24,000 will direct the work of the LORD's Temple. 6,000 will be officials and judges. 4,000 will guard the gates. And 4,000 will praise the LORD with instruments of music" ' "

Galatians 5:13-18. Paul writes, "My brothers and sisters, you were chosen to be free. But do not use your freedom as an excuse to live in sin. Instead, serve one another in love. The whole law can be found in a single command. "Love your neighbour as you love yourself." (Leviticus 19:18) You must not keep on biting at each other nor trying to eat each other up. Watch out! You might destroy each other. So I say, live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your sinful nature wants you to do. The sinful nature does not want what the Spirit delights in. And the Spirit does not want what the sinful nature delights in. The two are at war with each other. That is what makes you do what you do not want to do."

Thank You Father God for Your Old and New Testament records of Spirit-led leadership and advice from David and Paul. This led to many blessings including "peace and quiet while Solomon was king". Grant us peaceful God-fearing leaders and rulers, who will establish examples for state and personal behaviour led by the power of Your Holy Spirit. May it be based on "serving one another in love". Amen.

6th May 2024.

Exodus 20:1-21. Almighty God gave His Ten Commandments on the mountain top to His servant Moses: "Worship God only; have no idols; respect God's name; remember God's Sabbath day; respect your parents; do not kill anyone; no sexual activities outside of marriage; do not steal; do not lie; do not envy." The people watched and listened from a distance. Moses told them, "God has come to put you to the test, so that the fear of God will be with you. He wants you to have respect for Him to keep you from sinning." Then followed may guidelines for godly living.

Matthew 25 gives the teaching of Jesus about the End Times using His parable of the Ten Virgins. Five were ready for the bride groom to arrive but the other five were not prepared and they were shut out. They had no oil left in their lamps. By this, Jesus meant they had no oil of the Holy Spirit working in their lives. They were not prepared and ready to meet Christ. Jesus told His disciples, "So keep watch. You do not know the day or the hour when the groom will come."

Thank You Father in Heaven for Your reminders in the Old and New Testaments to lead godly lives in fear of Your judgement. Thank you for our salvation in Christ. Thank you for His promised Holy Spirit given to all believers. May we continue to live in love and respect for You and for all whom we know or meet. "Keep us from sinning" and ready to greet our Saviour when He returns in glory. Open our eyes and hearts to Your "guidelines for godly living" for the society and situations we live in today, through the "oil of the Holy Spirit working in our lives". For the sake of Jesus who died for our sins to be forgiven. Amen.

7th May 2024.

1 Samuel Chapters 8 to 10. The people of Israel asked Samuel to appoint a king for them "like the other nations". This upset Samuel knowing that the LORD was their true leader (8:5-6). However, the LORD said, "Listen to them. Give them a king." Several years later, 'the LORD said to Samuel, "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him to be the leader of My people Israel. He will save them from the powerful hand of the Philistines. I have seen how much My people are suffering. Their cry for help has reached Me." When Samuel saw a man coming towards him, God said, "He is the man I told you about. His name is Saul. He will govern My people." ' (9:16-17) The next day, Samuel told Saul that he will meet a group of prophets. "The Spirit of the LORD will come on you with power. Then you will prophesy along with them. You will become a different person... For God is with you." (10:5-7) Saul again told the people how wrong they were to reject God as their leader, but He allowed Saul to be chosen as king (10:19-21).

Acts 26 tells how Paul testified to King Agrippa that he was told by God to teach not only the Jews but the Gentiles about Israel's Messiah. "I am sending you to them to open their eyes. I want you to turn them from darkness to light. I want you to turn them from Satan's power to God. I want their sins to be forgiven. They will be forgiven when they believe in Me. They will have their place among God's people." (26:17-18)

Thank You Father God how you used Samuel and Paul to trust You to fulfil Your purposes for mankind. Open our eyes to see how You plan "to turn the people from darkness to light", however wrong it seems at first and however long it takes. Amen.

8th May 2024.

1 Samuel 18:6-16. After David killed Goliath and the Philistines were defeated, 'the women came out of all of the towns of Israel... As they danced, they sang, "Saul has killed thousands of men and David has killed tens of thousands." That song made King Saul very angry... The next day an evil spirit that was sent by God came on Saul. Saul began to prophesy at the same time David began to play the harp. Saul was holding a spear. He threw it at David... But David got away from him twice. The LORD had left Saul and was with David... In everything he did, he was very successful because the LORD God Almighty was with him.'

Revelation 10:1-11. The Apostle John wrote, "Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from Heaven... He was holding a little scroll which was lying open in his hand... I was getting ready to write. But I heard a voice from Heaven say, 'Do not write it down.' Then the angel said, 'In the days when the seventh angel is ready to blow his trumpet, the last part of God's plan will be carried out. [The mystery of God, the Kingdom of Christ, will be accomplished (NIV).] God told all this to the prophets who served him long ago.' Then the voice from Heaven spoke to me again. 'Go and take the scroll from the angel... Take it and eat it... You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.' "

Dear Father God, we learn how You allow certain people to become leaders of the nations. You even give them a gift of prophecy as with King Saul. But we see also that Your plans are far mightier than men who fail to obey You. LORD God Almighty, appoint and make known Your faithful leaders in these final days, like David and John. Then all will know Your truth and be encouraged and remain faithful until Jesus Christ Your Messiah returns. Amen.

9th May 2024.

Jonah 3 Chapters 3 to 4. After Jonah ran away from God's calling to preach repentance to the city of Nineveh, he reluctantly obeyed (3:1-3). 'He announced, "In 40 days Nineveh will be destroyed." The people of Nineveh believed God's warning. They fasted and put on black clothes... The king of Nineveh also took his royal robes off and dressed himself in black clothes. Then he sent out a message to the people of Nineveh. "All of you must call out to God with all your hearts. Stop doing what is evil. Do not harm others. God might take pity on us. He might turn away from his burning anger. Then we won't die." God saw that they stopped doing what was evil. So he took pity on them. He didn't destroy them as he had said he would.' (3:4-10) Jonah became angry that God did not punish them (4:1-2). God said, "Nineveh has more than 120,000 people. They cannot tell right from wrong... So should I not show mercy for that great city?" (4:11)

2 Peter 3:8-15. "With the Lord a day is like a thousand years. And a thousand years are like a day... He is patient with you. He does not want anyone to be destroyed. Instead, he wants all people to turn away from their sins. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief... God will judge the Earth and everything in it. So what kind of people should you be? You should lead holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God. It will make the day come more quickly... We are looking forward to a new Heaven and a new Earth. Godliness will make its home there... So try your best to be found pure and without blame. Be at peace with God. Remember that while our Lord is waiting patiently to return, people are being saved."

Dear God, grant us Your pity, mercy, love and understanding for sinners! Amen.

10th May 2024.

Zephaniah 2:1-5 describes the prophecy given around 630 BC that Israel would be destroyed and its people sent to Babylon. "Gather your people together, you shameful nation of Judah! ...Soon the LORD's anger will burn against you. So look to Him, all of you people in the land who worship Him faithfully and do what he commands. Continue to do what is right. Do not be proud. Then perhaps the LORD will keep you safe on the day he pours out his anger. Gaza will be deserted. Ashkelon will be destroyed. Ashdod will be emptied out at noon... Philistia, what happened to Canaan will happen to you!" This prophecy ends with a promise from the LORD God Almighty Himself for the remnant of Judah. "I will gather those who have been scattered... I will bring you home. I will give you honour and praise among all of the nations on Earth." (3:20)

Galatians 5:1-6. "Christ has set us free. So stand firm. Do not let the chains of slavery hold you again. Do not let yourselves be circumcised. If you do, Christ will not be of any value to you. Every man who lets himself be circumcised must obey the whole Law. Some of you are trying to be made right with God by obeying the Law. You have been separated from Christ. You have fallen away from God's grace. We are made completely holy because of our faith in Christ. Through the Holy Spirit we wait in hope... The only thing that really counts is faith that shows itself through love."

Father God we note how You laid waste Your Promised Land because of Israel's sins. We also note how Your people returned in 539 BC. We also note how You established the modern state of Israel in 1948. We pray for Your people today that they may know "we are made completely holy because of our faith in Christ". Reveal this truth to Your people and to those who occupy Gaza today. Amen.

13th May 2024.

Proverbs 16. "People make plans in their hearts. But the LORD controls what they say. Everything a man does might seem right to him. But the LORD knows what that man is thinking. Commit to the LORD everything you do. Then your plans will succeed." (16:1-3) "It is much better to choose wisdom than gold. It is much better to choose understanding than silver." (16:16)

1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 18-20. "Do you not know that evil people will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be fooled. Those who commit sexual sins will not receive the Kingdom. Neither will those who worship statues of gods or commit adultery. Neither will men who are prostitutes or who commit homosexual acts. Neither will thieves or those who always want more and more. Neither will those who are often drunk or tell lies or cheat. People who live like that will not receive God's Kingdom. Some of you used to do those things. But your sins were washed away. You were made holy. You were made right with God. All of that was done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God... Keep far away from sexual sins. All the other sins a person commits are outside his body. But sexual sins are sins against one's own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? The Spirit is in you. You have received Him from God. You do not belong to yourselves. Christ has paid the price for you. So use your bodies in a way that honours God."

Father God, we thank You for this righteous advice handed down to us from centuries ago. Help us to keep our minds pure and understand that our "bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit". Save us also from the sins committed outside our bodies. Help us to know "it is much better to choose wisdom than gold" and to "inherit the Kingdom of God". Amen.

14th May 2024.

Leviticus 5:14-19. This is known as the Guilt Offering given by God to Moses in 1490 BC. "Suppose a person sins by breaking the Law without meaning to. He sins against Me or My priests. Then he must bring Me a ram from the flock without any flaws... It will pay for his sin... The priest will pay for the person's sin with the ram. It is a guilt offering and he will be forgiven. Suppose a person sins by doing something I command him not to do. Even though he does not know it, he is guilty. [In the same way] He must bring to the priest a ram from the flock as a guilt offering."

Matthew 28:11-20. After the resurrection of Jesus, 'Some of the guards reported to the chief priests all that had happened. They came up with a plan. They gave the soldiers a large amount of money. "We want you to say, 'His disciples came during the night. They stole his body while we were sleeping.' " So the soldiers took the money and did as they were told. This story has spread all around among the Jews to this very day. Then the 11 disciples went to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him. But some still had their doubts. Then Jesus came to them. He said, "All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to Me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Thank You Father for recording that we must be ready to seek forgiveness even for failing to do things we are not aware of. Forgive also our fears and doubts that hinder our worship of Jesus our Saviour and doing what He asked us to do to "make disciples of all nations". Amen.

15th May 2024.

Esther Chapters 1 to 2. This is the beginning of what happened around 520 BC in Persia after the exile of the Jews in Babylon. King Xerxes became angry with his wife who refused to escort him at a banquet in the palace grounds. He dismissed her as queen because he was embarrassed that he controlled the biggest empire in the world at that time but could not control his wife! (1:15-19) We read how God prevailed upon the choice of the new queen who was a Jewess among the many Jews who remained in the land after the exile was over. Mordecai, a descendant of the Jews from Jerusalem who had been exiled, had a cousin Esther whom he brought up as his own daughter (2:5-7). She was chosen as queen (2:17) and later became responsible for saving a planned massacre of the Jews through the order of the king.

2 Thessalonians 2:7-15. "The secret power of sin is already at work... The coming of the man of sin will be Satan's work... It will be seen in every kind of evil that fools people. They will die because they refuse to love the truth. The truth will save them... but many will not believe the truth. They will take pleasure in evil but they will be judged. Brothers and sisters, the Lord loves you. God chose you from the beginning. He wanted you to be saved. Salvation comes through the Holy Spirit's work. It comes thorough believing the truth and accepting the Good News we preach. You will share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Stand firm and hold to what we taught you."

Thank You Father in Heaven how You "chose us from the beginning and wanted us to be saved". Thank You for the records that prove your love and mercy for those who remain faithful in worshipping You and who await Your Messiah. Help us to reject Satan's work who seeks to destroy God's people. Amen.

16th May 2024.

Proverbs 14:18. "The simple-minded inherit folly but the prudent are crowned with knowledge."

Acts 9:15-23. 'But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! I have chosen this man to work for Me. He will carry My name to those who are not Jews and to their kings. He will bring My name to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for Me." Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. He placed his hands on Saul. "Brother Saul," he said, "you saw the Lord Jesus. He appeared to you on the road as you were coming here. He has sent me so that you will be able to see again. You will be filled with the Holy Spirit." Right away something like scales fell from Saul's eyes. And he could see again. He got up and was baptised. After eating some food, he got his strength back. Saul spent several days with the believers in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues. He taught that Jesus is the Son of God. All who heard him were amazed. They asked, "Isn't he the man who caused great trouble in Jerusalem for those who worship Jesus? Hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" But Saul grew more and more powerful. The Jews living in Damascus wouldn't believe what was happening. Saul proved to them that Jesus is the Christ. After many days, the Jews had a meeting. They planned to kill Saul.'

Father God, we thank you for confirming the words of Proverbs by turning Saul round from folly to divine wisdom through his personal experience of meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus. Destroy the folly of people who persecute those who proclaim Your truth today! Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus, for those who are hindered in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as you mediate for your brothers and sisters at the side of our Father in Heaven. Amen.

17th May 2024.

1 Samuel 30 records the time of God's blessing on the future King David. 'The Amalekites had attacked God's people and burned the city of Ziklag. They had captured the women and taken as prisoners young people and old people alike. But they didn't kill any of them... David and his men came to Ziklag. They saw that it had been destroyed by fire. They found out that their wives and sons and daughters had been captured. So David and his men began to weep out loud. David's two wives had also been captured... David was greatly troubled... But David was made strong by the LORD his God.' (30:1-6) 'David fought against them from sunset until the evening of the next day. None of them escaped except 400 young men... David got everything back that the Amalekites had taken including his two wives. Nothing was missing. Not one young person or old person or boy or girl was missing. None of the goods or anything else the Amalekites had taken was missing.' (30:17-19)

Mark 12:35-40 records the time when Jesus spoke about King David who lived over 1000 years earlier in Jerusalem. "Why do the teachers of the Law say that the Christ is the son of David? The

Holy Spirit spoke through David himself. 'The LORD said to my Lord (the Messiah), "Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies under Your control." ' ' ' (Psalm 110:1) The large crowd listened to Jesus with delight. But He warned them, "Watch out for the teachers of the law."

Thank You Father God that in King David, You established an earthly kingdom for Your people. You saved his earthly family and through that family you established a heavenly Kingdom for all who believe in You as Messiah, "the Christ the son of David". Thank You Jesus for confirming what is truth. Grant us understanding and faith to pray in your name for wisdom among teachers who want to mislead us. Amen.

29th May 2024.

Nehemiah 13:10-13. Nehemiah wrote, 'I learned that the shares the Levites were supposed to receive had not been given to them. So all of the Levites and singers had to leave their regular temple duties and go back to farm their fields. I gave a warning to the officials. "Why are you not taking care of God's house?" Then I brought them together ... and put them back to work. All of the people of Judah brought a tenth of their grain, olive oil and fresh wine. They took it to the Temple storerooms. I put men in charge of the storerooms... who could be trusted. They were put in charge of handing out the supplies to the servants of the LORD God Almighty.' Nehemiah prayed, "You are my God. Remember me because of what I have done. I have worked faithfully for your Temple and its services. So please do not forget the good things I have done."

2 Timothy 2:15. Paul advises, "Do your best to please God. Be a worker who does not need to be ashamed. Teach the message of truth correctly."

Heavenly Father, we come before You to seek Your recognition of what we have done for Your glory. Forgive us for what we have failed to do but inspire us and enable us to serve You in love and encourage others to do the same. Open our eyes as with Nehemiah regarding our neglect of Your truth and our failure to obey Your word. Help us also to follow the advice of Paul as we work in the Kingdom of God and teach and preach faithfully the message of truth in the Bible. For Your glory and for the sake of Jesus our Christ and Messiah, who suffered terribly as a human being for our salvation. May we therefore be a blessing to many people. At the end of each day, may we pray, "You are my God. Remember me because of what I have done." Amen.

30th May 2024.

Daniel Chapter 2 records in 603 BC how God revealed the meaning of a dream to Daniel that King Nebuchadnezzar had. During that night, God showed him what the mystery was all about. "May God be praised for ever and ever! He is wise and powerful. He changes times and seasons. He sets up kings. He removes them from power. The wisdom of those who are wise comes from Him. He gives knowledge to those who have understanding. He explains deep and hidden things... God of my people, I thank and praise You. You have given me wisdom and power... You have shown us the king's dream." (2:19-23) Daniel revealed both the dream and its meaning that no-one else could understand. "King Nebuchadnezzar, you saw a large statue standing in front of you... The head of the statue was made out of pure gold. Its chest and arms were made of silver. Its stomach and thighs were bronze. Its legs were made out of iron. And its feet were partly iron and partly baked clay. While you were watching, a Rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them." The whole statue was broken to pieces but the Rock filled the whole Earth (2:31-35). This prophecy we believe refers to the arrival of Christ our Rock in the present age we live in.

Revelation 12 gives the vision to John of the woman whose Son "would rule all the nations with an iron rod" (12:5). A loud voice in Heaven said, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God have come. The authority of his Christ has come." (12:10) Satan "was very angry with the woman. He went off to make war against the rest of her children who obey God's commands and hold firmly to what Jesus has said." (12:17)

Help us God to receive understanding and persevere to the end to do Your will. Amen.

31st May 2024.

Psalms 37:1-9. "Do not be upset because of sinful people. Do not be jealous of those who do wrong. Like grass, they will soon dry up. Like green plants, they will soon die. *Trust* in the LORD God Almighty and do good. Then you will live in the land and enjoy its food. *Delight* in the Lord. Then He will give you everything your heart really wants. *Commit* your life to the Lord... He will make your godly ways shine like the dawn. He will make your honest life shine like the sun at noon. *Be still* before the LORD. *Be patient and wait* for Him to act. Do not be upset when other people succeed. Do not be upset when they carry out their evil plans. Keep from being angry. Do not be afraid which only leads to evil. Sinful people will be cut off from the land and will be given to those who put their hope in the LORD."

Ephesians 3:14-19. Paul wrote, "I bow in prayer to the Father because of my work among you...I pray that He will use His glorious riches to make you strong. May His Holy Spirit give you His power deep down inside you. Then Christ will live in your hearts because you believe in Him. And I pray that your love will have deep roots. I pray that it will have a strong foundation. May you have power with all God's people to understand Christ's love. May you know how wide and long and high and deep it is. And may you know His love, even though it is beyond understanding. Then you will be filled with everything God has for you."

Thank You Father God. Thank You Lord Jesus, Thank You Holy Spirit. Thank You for Your love "even though it is beyond understanding". Thank You for these inspiring words from King David and Apostle Paul. Help us to trust, delight and commit. Help us to be still, be patient and wait. Amen.

3rd June 2024.

Genesis 35:1-3, 10-12 confirms God's provision for the people of Israel. 'God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there. Build an altar there to honour Me. That is where I appeared to you when you ran away from your brother Esau." So Jacob spoke to his family and to everyone who was with him. He said, "Get rid of the strange gods you have with you. Make yourselves pure, and change your clothes. Come, let us go up to Bethel. There I will build an altar to honour God. He answered me when I was in trouble. He has been with me everywhere I have gone." God also said, "Your name is Jacob. But your name will be Israel. Have children and increase your numbers. A nation and a community of nations will come from you. Kings will come from your body. I am giving you the land I gave to Abraham and Isaac. I will also give it to your children after you." '

Ephesians 5:8-14. "At one time you were in the dark. But now you are in the light because of what the Lord has done. Live like children of the light. The light produces what is completely good, right and true. Find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with acts of darkness. They do not produce anything good. Instead, expose what they are really like. It is shameful even to talk about what people who do not obey do in secret. Everything the light shines on makes everything clear. That is why it is said, 'Wake up, sleeper. Rise from the dead. Then Christ will shine on you.' "

Thank You Father for reminding us through Jacob to get rid of dark and evil things in our lives. Thank you for reminding us through Paul to wake up and put behind us "acts of darkness" which lead to spiritual death so that we will shine with the light of Jesus, our Saviour. Amen.

4th June 2024.

Isaiah 57:15-21. God spoke to His servant Isaiah. "I live in a high and holy place. But I also live with anyone who turns away from their sins. I live with anyone who is not proud. I give new life to them. I give it to anyone who turns away from their sins. I will not find fault with My people forever. I will not always be angry with them. If I were, I would cause their spirits to grow weak. The very breath of life would go out of the people I created. I was very angry with them. They always longed for more and more of everything. So I punished them for that sin. I turned my face away from them because I was angry. But they kept on wanting their own way. I have seen what they have done. But I will heal them. I will guide them. And I will comfort them just as I did before. Then the people who are sorry for their sins will praise Me... But those who are evil are like the restless sea. Its waves toss up mud and filth. There is no peace for those who are evil."

1 Corinthians 4:17-19. "I am sending Timothy to you... He will remind you of my way of life in serving Christ Jesus. And that agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church. Some of you have become proud. You act as if I were not coming to you. But I will come very soon, if that is what the Lord wants. Then I will find out how those proud people are talking."

Father God, thank You that You promised Isaiah to "live with anyone who turns away from their sins... who is not proud." We note that Paul also sent Timothy to deal with those who were

proud. Heal us, and guide us and comfort us "as before" so that we are sorry for our arrogance and then praise You! For Christ's sake. Amen.

5th June 2024.

Jeremiah 30:10-11 speaks of the restoration of Israel around 600 BC. Whilst in exile in Babylon, the LORD God Almighty spoke through Jeremiah, "People of Jacob [Israel], do not be afraid. You are My servant. Do not be terrified. You can be sure that I will save you... I will bring your children back from the land where they were taken. Your people will have peace and security again. And no-one will make them afraid. I am with you. I will save you. I will completely destroy all of the nations among which I scatter you. But I will not completely destroy you. I will correct you. But I will punish you in a way that is fair and right."

Acts 11:19-26. 'Some believers had been scattered by the suffering [persecution] that came to them after Stephen's death. They travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch-in-Syria. They preached only to Jews. However, some believers from Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch. There they began to speak to Greeks [Gentiles] also. They told them the Good News about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's power was with them. Large numbers of people believed and turned to the Lord. The church in Jerusalem heard about this. So they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad. He told them all to remain true to the Lord with... Large numbers of people came to know the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul [later called Paul]. He brought him to Antioch. For a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church. They taught large numbers of people. At Antioch the believers were called Christians for the first time.'

Father God, we uphold the truth You declared to Jeremiah and continue to pray for the modern state of Israel today. We also pray for the ongoing extension of the Christian churches even under persecution as in the time of Barnabas and Saul. Amen.

6th June 2024.

Exodus 12:29-33. In 1491 BC, God's angel of death killed Egypt's first-born children and animals prior to Israel's departure for the Promised Land. 'At midnight the LORD God Almighty struck down every eldest son in Egypt including the oldest son of Pharaoh... He also killed all the male animals that were born first among their flocks. Pharaoh and all his officials got up during the night... There was loud crying in Egypt because someone had died in every home. During the night, Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. He said to them, "Get out of here! You and the Israelites, leave my people! Go! Worship the LORD, just as you have asked. Go! Take your flocks of animals, just as you have said." ' This was the occasion of Israel's first Passover, when the angel of death passed over God's special people. This enabled them to escape from Egypt after 430 years living there as God had planned.

Luke 11:27-32. 'A woman in the crowd called out to Jesus. "Blessed is the mother who gave You birth and nursed You." He replied, "Instead, blessed are those who hear God's word and obey it." As the crowds grew larger, Jesus spoke to them. "The people of today are evil. They ask for a miraculous sign from God. But none will be given except the sign of Jonah. He was a sign from God to the people of Nineveh... The men of Nineveh will stand up on judgment day with the people now living. And the Ninevites will prove that those people are guilty. The men of Nineveh turned away from their sins when Jonah preached to them. And now, One who is more important than Jonah is here."

Thank You Father God for reminding us of Your salvation for the people of Israel and the people of Nineveh. Encourage us to pray for Your children and also for sinners to be saved. Encourage us to "hear God's word and obey it" as Jesus did. Amen.

7th June 2024.

Joshua 15 records the area of God's Promised Land occupied by the tribe of Judah. It reached down to the territory of Edom as far south as the Desert of Zin. Judah's border on the south started from the south end of the Dead Sea... It joined the Wadi of Egypt and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. The border on the east was the Dead [Salt] Sea up to where the Jordan River enters the Dead Sea. The border on the north started where the Jordan River enters the Dead Sea (15:1-5). It included the city of Jerusalem occupied at that time by Jebusites (15:8). The border on the west was the Mediterranean Sea... which included Ekron and the settlements and villages that were around it.

Judah was also given all of the settlements and villages that were near Ashdod. Also Gaza and its settlements and villages. Judah's territory went all the way to the Wadi of Egypt and the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. (15:12, 45-47).

John 8:31-39. Jesus said, "If you obey My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's children. We have never been slaves of anyone. So how can you say that we will be set free?" Jesus replied, "Everyone who sins is a slave of sin. A slave has no lasting place in the family. But a son belongs to the family forever. So if the Son [of God] sets you free, you will really be free. I know you are Abraham's children. But you are ready to kill Me. You have no room for My word... If you are really Abraham's children, you will do the things Abraham did."

Thank You God for these true records from Joshua and Jesus whose names both mean "Saviour". Thank You that their words have survived 3500 years of peace and war. May they continue to have importance for today, tomorrow and eternity. Amen.

10th June 2024.

Psalms 25:12-22. King David pleads with Almighty God, for himself and for his nation. "The troubles of my heart have increased. Set me free from my great pain. Look at how I am hurting! See how much I suffer! Take away all of my sins. Look at how many enemies I have! See how terrible their hatred is for me! Guard my life. Save me! Do not let me be put to shame. I come to You for safety. May my honest and good life keep me safe. I have put my hope in You. O God, set Israel free from all of their troubles!"

1 Corinthians 4:12-16. Paul here refers to himself and the other apostles. "We work hard with our own hands. When others call down a curse on us, we bless them. When we are attacked, we put up with it. When others say bad things about us, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the world's garbage. We are everybody's trash. But I am not writing this to shame you. You are my dear children, and I want to warn you. Even if you have 10,000 believers in Christ watching over you, you do not have many [spiritual] fathers. I became your father by serving Christ Jesus and telling you the Good News [of salvation in Christ alone]. So I am asking you to follow my example."

Thank You heavenly Father in revealing how both David and Paul suffered much in their calling in life. David's desire was to save Israel from disobeying You. Paul's desire was to save the New Testament churches from going astray. Help us to follow Paul's example in "telling the Good News of salvation in Christ alone". Help us also to follow David's example to lead an "honest and good life" with "my hope in You". As we suffer, encourage us to continue praying for the nation of Israel and for the churches of Christ around the world today. Amen.

11th June 2024.

Ruth Chapter 3 describes how Naomi told her widowed daughter-in-law to seek marriage through a family member. This was the custom in Israel 3300 years ago. Naomi spoke to Ruth. "Boaz is a relative of ours... So go down to the threshing floor... When he lies down [to sleep] go over and uncover his feet and lie down there. He will tell you what to do." ...In the middle of the night, something woke him up. He turned and found a woman lying there at his feet! "Who are you?" he asked. "I am Ruth. You are my family protector. So take good care of me by making me your wife." "It is true that I am a relative of yours. But there is a family protector who is more closely related to you than I am... If he wants to help you, let him help you. But if he does not want to, then I will do it. You can be sure that as the LORD God Almighty lives, you can be just as sure that I will help you." This led to the marriage of Ruth and Boaz. They had a son called Obed. He later married and had a son called Jesse who became the father of King David (4:13-17).

2 Peter 1. Peter, the disciple and apostle of Jesus, wrote to the churches he established. "Try very hard to add to your faith [in Jesus], goodness... knowledge... self-control... perseverance... godliness... kindness... love." (1:5-7) "If you do everything I have just said, you will never fall. You will receive a rich welcome into the Kingdom that lasts forever. It is the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (1:10-11)

Thank You Father for encouraging us to live righteous lives taught in Your Scriptures and in the teachings of the followers of Jesus our Saviour. Help us to trust You that Your purposes will be fulfilled in our lives which will have an everlasting impact for ourselves and those around us. Amen.

12th June 2024.

1 Samuel 15 describes how King Saul failed to obey the LORD God Almighty. The prophet Samuel told Saul to go with his army to destroy the Amalekites who years before had hindered the Israelites from entering the Promised Land of Canaan. Samuel ordered Saul to destroy everyone and everything (15:2-3). However, Saul and his men saved the best of the sheep, cattle and goats for themselves (15:9). When Saul met Samuel, he said, "I have carried out the LORD's instructions." Samuel wanted to know why he could hear the bleating of sheep! Saul made the excuse that the sheep were for making sacrifices to God. Saul replied, "What pleases the LORD most? Burnt offerings and sacrifices or obeying Him?" (15:13-15) The LORD was very sorry He had made Saul king over Israel (15:35).

2 Corinthians 13. Paul warned the church in Corinth, "When I return, I will not spare those who sinned earlier." (15:2) "Take a good look at yourselves to see if you are really believers. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you? (15:5) I pray that you will become perfect. That is why I write these things before I come to you. Then when I do come, I will not have to be hard on you when I use my authority. The Lord gave me the authority to build you up. He did not give it to me to tear you down! Finally, brothers and sisters. Try to be perfect. Pay attention to what I am saying. Agree with one another. Live in peace. And the God who gives love and peace will be with you." (15:9-11)

Father God in Heaven, thank You for Your concern and love You have for us to be more perfect and to obey You. Help us to be genuine in following Your instructions and guidelines given through people like Samuel and Paul, for we cannot deceive You. Help us to realise that Christ Jesus lives in us! Amen.

13th June 2024.

Leviticus Chapter 14 gives important instructions for cleansing from infectious diseases. Special provision was given to the poor who could not afford the normal sacrifices. He told Moses, "The priest will sacrifice the doves or the young pigeons that the person can afford. One is for a sin offering. The other is for a burnt offering. The priest must offer them together with the grain offering. In that way he will pay for the person's sin in My sight. He will do it to make him 'clean'. Those are the rules for anyone who has a skin disease. They include people who cannot afford the regular offerings that are required to make them 'clean'." (14:30-32)

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5. "We ask you to have respect for the godly leaders who work hard among you... Love them because of what they do. Live in peace with each other. Brothers and sisters, we are asking you to warn those who do not want to work. Cheer up those who are shy. Help those who are weak. Put up with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back one wrong act with another. Always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank Him because you believe in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Holy Spirit's fire. Do not treat prophecies as if they are nothing. Put everything to the test. Hold on to what is good. Stay away from every kind of evil." (5:12-22)

Thank you Father God for your concern for the poor at the time of Moses, and for the shy and weak at the time of Paul. Thank you for Your concern for us to live 'clean' lives, physically, mentally and spiritually. Enable us to understand what love and respect for others truly means. Keep us joyful! Keep us praying! Keep us thankful! Keep us open to Your Spirit! We "believe in Christ Jesus"! Amen.

14th June 2024.

Ezra 9:1-5. After the Jews had returned from exile in Babylon, God's prophet Ezra was told, "The people of Israel have committed sins... They have not kept themselves separate from the nations that are around them. The LORD hates the practices of those nations. He hates what the Canaanites, Hittites do... The men of Israel have married the daughters of some of those people... So they have mixed our holy nation with the nations around us. By getting married to women who do not worship the LORD, we leaders and officials have led the way in breaking our covenant with Him. We have not been faithful to Him." Then everyone trembled with fear because of what the God of Israel had said. They came to Ezra because the people who had returned from Babylonia had not been faithful. "So I sat there in shock until the time of the evening sacrifice." Ezra then prayed to God on behalf of the people for forgiveness.

Romans 12:1-2. Paul said, "Brothers and sisters, God has shown you His mercy. So I am asking you to offer up your bodies to Him while you are still alive. Your bodies are a holy sacrifice that is pleasing to God. When you offer your bodies to God, you are worshiping Him. Do not live any longer

the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed. Then you will be able to test what God wants for you. And you will agree that what He wants is right. His plan is good and pleasing and perfect."

Father God, forgive our worldly sins and failing to follow Your commandments. Raise up spiritual leaders who will "pray on behalf of the people for forgiveness". We thank you that in Ezra's time, the people themselves confessed their disobedience first. May we set good examples today as we prepare for Christ's return! We thank you for showing us Your mercy. May we "no longer live the way this world lives". Amen.

17th June 2024.

Malachi 2:1 to 3:5. God Almighty spoke to His prophet Malachi 400 years before Christ. "I am giving a warning to you priests... Honour Me with all your heart. If you do not, I will send a curse on you... because you have not honoured Me with all your heart... The lips of a priest should guard knowledge [truth]. People should look for true teaching from his mouth... But you have turned away from the right path. Your teaching has caused many people to stumble and fall. You have broken my covenant... They have lost respect for you. You have not done what I told you to do." (2:1-2,7-9) "I will send My Messenger. He will prepare My way for Me... He will come to His temple... He will act like refiner's fire which makes silver pure. And He will purify the priests... Then the LORD's people will bring proper offerings." (3:1-3)

Revelation 8 to 10 records the vision given to the Apostle John when six of the seven angels sounded their trumpets. There was hail and fire on Earth (8:7). The seas became polluted and the fish died (8:8-9). The rivers and springs became polluted and many people died (8:10-11). The sun, moon and stars became darkened (8:12-13). Locusts were released from Hell to punish unbelievers (9:1-4). Fire, smoke and sulphur was released to punish the others but they "still did not turn away... from their murders, witchcraft, sexual sins and stealing." John was then told, "In the days when the seventh angel is ready to blow his trumpet, the last part of God's plan will be carried out. God told all this to the prophets who served him long ago." (10:7)

Father God, thank You for Your warnings through Your Old and New Testament prophets. Accept our prayers on behalf of those who continue to disobey You. Make us all faithful and obedient during these times of the six trumpets and prepare us for Christ's return in the final age to come. Amen.

18th June 2024.

2 Samuel 9. King David enquired if there were any family members left of the former King Saul. He was told, "A son of Jonathan is still living. Both of his feet are crippled." (9:3) Mephibosheth was brought to David. He was the son of Jonathan, who was the son of Saul. Mephibosheth bowed down to David to show him respect (9:6). David said, "Do not be afraid. You can be sure that I will be kind to you because of your father Jonathan." Mephibosheth bowed down to David. "Who am I? Why should you pay attention to me? I am nothing but a dead dog." (9:7-8) Then David gave Mephibosheth the land that belonged to Saul. David provided all that he needed and he ate at the king's table. He was crippled in both feet (9:9-13).

Acts 24:22-25. When Paul was on trial, the Roman governor Felix asked to listen to Paul. "Felix knew all about the Way of Jesus. So he ordered Paul's trial to wait... He ordered the commander to keep Paul under guard... He allowed Paul's friends to take care of his needs. Then Felix sent for Paul and listened to him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. Paul talked about how to live a godly life and about the time when God will judge everyone. Felix became afraid. "When I find the time, I will send for you." Two years he was replaced by another governor.

Dear God, thank You for showing us what happens when Your chosen people are in charge. King David cared for the crippled son of Jonathan. Governor Felix also cared for Paul while in prison but became afraid to show his faith in Christ Jesus. Hear prayers for our leaders, that they will believe in our Saviour and declare their faith in public. May they not leave it until it is too late. Help us also to show mercy for the lame and for innocent prisoners whilst there is time in these "last days". Amen.

19th June 2024.

Leviticus 7:11-15 describes God instructions to Moses for the 'fellowship offering'. This became the most common of all the offerings. It was offered in thanks to God without being told to do it. It

was offered in response to God's blessings in the past and the hope of future blessings. It was offered as a freewill offering in addition to the offerings and sacrifices for confession of sins they were told to make. "When a person offers a friendship offering to show he is thankful, then he must offer flat cakes of bread without yeast... He must also bring a friendship offering along with his thank offering. It should be flat cakes of bread that are made with yeast. He must bring one of each kind of bread as an offering. Both of them are acceptable to the Lord."

Hebrews 9:6-14. We are told that the priests under the old covenant of God entered the outer room of the tabernacle to do their work for God. But only the high priest went into the inner room once a year. He offered the sacrificed blood for himself and for the sins of the people. But the offerings were unable to remove the guilt of the people. Christ came to be our High Priest. He did not offer the blood of animals. He sacrificed His own blood. "He did it once and for all time. He paid the price to set us free from sin forever." (9:12)

Thank You Father God for revealing Your desire for Your people to offer praise and thanks to You as a freewill offering without being told to do it. You even accepted bread made with yeast! Thank you that Jesus our Saviour offered His own blood as a sacrifice for our sins. Help us to understand the full meaning of this and offer You our thanks and praise freely. Encourage us to do it without being told what to do, just as we are, with or without yeast! Amen.

20th June 2024.

Joshua 24:1-27. God told Joshua to remind the people of Israel that Abraham and his father Terah and their relatives moved away from the River Euphrates where they worshipped other gods. "I took Abraham from the land that is east of the river and led him to Canaan... I gave him Isaac and Jacob and Esau. I gave the country of Seir to Esau. But Jacob and his family went down to Egypt." (24:1-4) Joshua then reminded them of their return to God's promised land of Canaan. "God gave you a land you had never farmed. He gave you cities you had not built... You are eating the fruit of vineyards and olive trees you did not plant. So have respect for the LORD God Almighty. Serve Him. Be completely faithful to Him. Throw away the gods your people worshipped east of the Euphrates and in Egypt. Serve the LORD!" Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law (24:13-14,26).

Matthew 19:2-9 is when the Jewish leaders questioned Jesus about divorce. Jesus said, "Have you not read that in the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female'? That is why a man will 'leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. The two will become one.' (Genesis 1:27; 2:24) So a man must not separate what God has joined together... Moses let you divorce your wives because you were stubborn. But it was not this way from the beginning. Listen to what I tell you. Anyone who divorces his wife and gets married to another woman commits adultery. A man may divorce his wife only if she has been unfaithful to him."

Thank You Father God for recording Your purposes and provisions which are the foundations of our faith. May we totally reject foreign religions and man-made rules. Encourage us to "throw away" other forms of worship and also selfish desires which attract us to consider adultery. Thank You for Joshua and Jesus whose names mean "Saviour". Amen.

24th June 2024.

Proverbs 3:5-8. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not depend on your own understanding. In all your ways remember Him. Then He will make your paths smooth and straight. Do not be wise in your own understanding. Have respect for the LORD and avoid evil. This will bring health to your body and make your bones strong."

Jude verses 17 to 23. "Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said was going to happen. They told you, "In the last days, people will make fun of the truth. They will follow their own ungodly longings." They are the people who separate you from one another. They do only what comes naturally. They are not led by the Holy Spirit. Dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ will bring you eternal life. As you wait for His mercy, remain in God's love. Show mercy to those who doubt. Pull others out of the fire. Save them. To others, show mercy mixed with fear. Hate even the clothes that are stained by the sins of those who wear them."

Thank You Father God for Your spiritual and practical advice which has blessed faithful believers over many centuries. Thank You for the connection You make between our spiritual and physical wellbeing. Thank You that this is encouraging as we come to terms with the probability we are now living "in the last days". Reveal to us how to prepare for our Saviour's return by obeying

Your desire for us to "show mercy to those who doubt" so they may be saved and meet Jesus when He returns to Earth. Help us to realise we are all weak human beings and need to fear the risk of ourselves going down the wrong path times! May we therefore experience Your wisdom and show Your love at all times. Amen.

25th June 2024.

Deuteronomy 4:32-40. Moses spoke to the people of Israel before giving them the Ten Commandments from the LORD God Almighty. "Learn what happened long before your time.... You heard the voice of God speaking out of fire and you lived! ...From Heaven He made you hear His voice to teach you. On Earth he showed you His great fire... He loved your people long ago... So He brought you out of Egypt. He drove out nations to make room for you... He will bring you into their land. He wants to give it to you as your very own. ...The LORD is God in Heaven above and on the Earth below. Today you must agree with that and take it to heart. There is no other God. I am giving you His rules and commands today. Obey them. Then things will go well with you and your children after you. You will live a long time in the land. The LORD your God is giving you the land for all time to come."

Matthew 22:29-40. Jesus spoke to the Jewish Sadducees before teaching them about God's Ten Commandments. "You are mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures... One of the Pharisees then tested Jesus with a question. "Teacher," he asked, "which is the most important commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' And the second is like it. 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself.' Everything that is written in the Law and the Prophets is based on these two commandments."

Again, heavenly Father, we ask for wisdom to understand your teachings from Moses and Jesus and Your love to apply them. We desire to take seriously Your eternal purpose for Your people of Israel and their Messiah, our Saviour, Jesus the Christ. Keep us faithful in these last days and enable us to grow in love for You and our "neighbours". Amen.

26th June 2024.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-14. The writer begins with a list of 28 activities, saying "there is a time for everything", good or bad! "What does the worker get for his hard work? I have seen the heavy load God has put on mankind. He has made everything beautiful in its time... But we cannot completely understand what He has done from the beginning to the end. We should be happy and do good while we live. There is nothing better than that. Everyone should eat and drink and be satisfied with hard work... God does that so that mankind will honour Him."

Romans 11:23-32. Paul writes to Gentile believers, "Here is a mystery I want you to understand... Part of Israel has refused to obey God. That will continue until the full number of non-Jews has entered God's kingdom. Then all Israel will be saved. It is written, 'The One who saves will come from Mount Zion. He will remove sin from Jacob [Israel]. Here is My covenant with them. I will take away their sins.' Regarding the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the people of Israel are 'enemies'. But God's choice is that the people of Israel are loved because of His promises to the founders of our nation. God does not take back His gifts. He does not change His mind about those He has chosen. At one time you too did not obey God. But now you have received mercy... In the same way, Israel has not been obeying God. But they too receive mercy because of God's mercy to you.... So now He can have mercy on everyone."

Father in Heaven, we fail to "understand what You have done from the beginning to the end." But we also acknowledge we "should eat, drink and be satisfied with hard work" and give thanks and honour You. Thank You for giving us a greater understanding through Paul regarding Your desire to save all who believe, both Jews and Gentles. Thank you for Your mercy. Amen.

27th June 2024.

Isaiah 44:6-8. God spoke these encouraging words before the return of Israel to Jerusalem in 539 BCE. "I am the LORD who rules over all. So listen to what I am saying. I am the First and the Last. I am the one and only God. Who is like Me? Let him come forward and tell Me everything that has happened since I created My people long ago. Let him tell Me what has not happened yet. Let him announce ahead of time what is going to take place... Do not be afraid. Did I not announce everything that has happened? Did I not tell you about it long ago? You are My witnesses. Is there any other God but Me? No! There is no other Rock."

Colossians 1:15-22. Paul writes, "Christ is the exact likeness of God, who cannot be seen. He is first, and He is over all of creation. All things were created by Him. He created everything in Heaven and on Earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that cannot be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities. Everything was created by Him and for Him. Before anything was created, He was already there. He holds everything together. And He is the head of the body which is the Church... God was pleased to have His whole nature living in Christ... God made peace through Christ's blood, through His death on the cross. At one time you were separated from God... But because Christ died, God has brought you back to Himself. Christ's death has made you holy in God's sight."

Thank You Father God for these amazing words given to Isaiah and Paul. Thank you for Your salvation in Jesus Christ and for the assurance You and He know the beginning from the end. In these final days, help us to believe that every event and every change is part of Your plan to redeem those who repent before Christ our Saviour returns to Jerusalem. Amen.

28th June 2024.

Joshua 24:14-24. Joshua told the people of Israel, "Respect the LORD God Almighty. Serve Him and be completely faithful to Him... Choose for yourselves right now whom you will serve. You can choose the gods your people served east of the Euphrates River. Or you can choose the gods the Amorites serve, where you are now living. But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD." Then the people answered Joshua. "We would never serve other gods! The LORD our God Himself brought us and our parents up out of Egypt where we were slaves... He kept us safe on our entire journey through all of the nations including the Amorites. We too will serve the LORD because He is our God." ...Then Joshua said, "You have said that you have chosen to serve the Lord... Now then, throw away the gods that are among you. Give yourselves completely to the LORD, the God of Israel."

Philemon verses 1 to 14. Paul makes an appeal to Philemon for Onesimus. "Because of the authority Christ has given me, I could be bold and order you to do what you should do anyway. But I make my appeal to you on the basis of our love for each other... Onesimus became a son to me while I was in chains... I am sending Onesimus back to you. My very heart goes with him. I would have liked to keep him with me. But I did not want to do anything unless you agreed. Any favour you do must be done because you want to do it, not because you have to."

Father God, we thank You for the freedom You have given us to choose to do what is right. Help us to understand the need to reject what is wrong and do what is right willingly and in love and not to compromise our faith and behaviour. Enable us to choose righteously through Christ our Saviour living within us. Amen.

1st July 2024.

Psalms 65:1-8. A Psalm of King David. "God Almighty... All people will come to You, because You hear and answer prayer. When our sins became too much for us, You forgave our lawless acts... You answer us by doing wonderful things. You save us by Your power. People all over the world put their hope in You. You formed the mountains by Your power... You calmed the oceans and their roaring waves. You calmed the angry words and actions of the nations. Those who live far away are amazed at the miracles You have done. What You do makes people from one end of the Earth to the other sing for joy."

Matthew 1:17-21. "There were 14 generations from Abraham to David. There were 14 from David until the Jewish people were forced to go away to Babylon. And there were 14 from that time to the time of Christ. This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary and Joseph had promised to get married. But before they started to live together... she became pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph did not want to put her to shame in public. So he planned to divorce her quietly. But an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife... She is going to have a son. You must give Him the name Jesus [which means Yeshua or Saviour]. That is because He will save His people from their sins."

Father God and Creator of the amazing plan of eternal salvation through the sacrifice of the blood of a lamb. We thank you for the old covenant with your people Israel and for the new covenant through the blood of the Lamb of God who is Christ our Saviour. Thank You for these writings of David and Matthew. We are amazed at Your miracles! Amen.

2nd June 2024.

Psalms 150 invites worship on Earth to our Heavenly Creator. "Praise the LORD! [Hallelujah Yahweh!] Praise God in His holy temple. Praise Him in His mighty heavens. Praise Him for His powerful acts. Praise Him because He is greater than anything else. Praise Him by blowing trumpets. Praise Him with harps and lyres. Praise Him with tambourines and dancing. Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes. Praise Him with clashing cymbals. Praise Him with clanging cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!"

Hebrews 10:19-25. "Brothers and sisters, we are not afraid to enter the 'Most Holy Room'. We enter boldly because of the blood of Jesus... It has been opened for us through the curtain. I'm talking about his body. We now have a Great Priest over the House of God. So let us come near to God with an honest and true heart. Let us come near with a faith that is sure and strong. Our hearts have been sprinkled [with the blood of the Lamb of God]. Our minds have been cleansed from a sense of guilt. Our bodies have been washed with purifying water. Let us hold firmly to the hope we claim to have. The One who promised is faithful. Let us [also] consider how we can stir up each another to love each other and do good works. Let us not give up meeting together. Some are in the habit of doing this. Instead, let us cheer each other up with words of hope. Let us do it all the more as you see the day coming when Christ will return."

Thank You heavenly Father for reminding us of Your delight in worship which includes the Where? Why? How? and Who? Thank You that Your joy is complete when those who are redeemed through the blood of the Lamb are united in praise and worship. Encourage us to "stir up each another to love" with "good works" and "words of hope" while waiting for Jesus to return. Amen.

3rd July 2024.

Psalms 11 (NIV). King David expressed his faith in the LORD God Almighty over 3000 years ago. "In the LORD I take refuge!" (v.1) "The LORD examines [tests, tries] the righteous, but the wicked, those who love violence, He hates with a passion." (v.5) "For the LORD is righteous. He loves justice. The upright will see His face."

James 2:24-26. The brother of our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, "A person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. In the same way, even Rahab the prostitute was considered righteous for what she did [in Jericho] when she gave lodging to the Jewish spies and sent them off in a different direction. As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead!" James adds later (3:13-17), "Whoever is wise and understanding among you, let them show it by their good life and by deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom... The wisdom that comes from Heaven is pure... It also loves peace. It thinks about others. It obeys. It is full of mercy and good fruit. It is fair. It does not pretend to be what it is not. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness."

Thank You Father God for the example of David's faith in You. Thank you that he knew that You test our own faith and righteousness. So help us to put right what is wrong in our lives through the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus Christ our Saviour. Thank You for the example of Rahab and how you forgave her and saved her. May we be "wise and understanding" and "show it by our good life and by deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom." May our wisdom be divine wisdom from Heaven, peace-loving, always thinking kindly toward others, obedient, merciful and sincere. Keep on changing us so that we take on and share the very nature, love and compassion of Jesus. For His sake. Amen.

4th July 2024.

Psalms 15. A psalm of David. "LORD God Almighty, who can live in Your sacred tent? Who can stay on Your holy hill? Anyone who lives without blame and does what is right. And speaks the truth from their heart. And does not tell lies about others. And does not do wrong to their neighbours... And hates sinful people. And honours those who have respect for the LORD. And keeps their promises even when it is difficult. And lends money without charging interest. And does not accept bribes. Anyone who lives like that will always be secure."

Revelation 21. John wrote down, "I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth... I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem. It was coming down out of Heaven from God. It was prepared like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne. 'Now God makes His home with the people. He will live with them. They will be His people. And God Himself will be with them

and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sadness. There will be no more crying or pain. I am making everything new! ...I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. I am the Beginning and the End. Anyone who is thirsty may drink from the spring of the water of life... Anyone who overcomes will receive all this from Me. I will be their God, and they will be My child.' The main street of the city was made out of pure gold, as clear as glass. I didn't see a temple in the city. This was because the Lamb and the LORD God who rules over all are its Temple... Only what is pure will enter in. No-one who fools others or does shameful things will enter it. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will enter the city."

5th July 2024.

Proverbs 30:5-9. "Every word of God is perfect. Those who trust in Him, He keeps them safe. Do not add to His words. If you do, He will correct you... LORD God Almighty, I ask You for two things... Keep lies far away from me. Do not make me either poor or rich, but give me only the bread I need each day."

Luke 16:16-31 is when Jesus upheld the importance of the Old Testament teachings. "The teachings of the Law and the Prophets were preached until John (the Baptist) came. Since then, the Good News of God's kingdom is being preached. And everyone is trying very hard to enter it." But Jesus warned them, "It is easier for Heaven and Earth to disappear than for the smallest part of a letter to drop out of the Law. (For example) anyone who divorces his wife and gets married to another woman commits adultery." Jesus then said, "Once there was a rich man... A man named Lazarus lay at his gate who was a beggar... When the beggar died, the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died but went to Hell. He saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, 'Father Abraham! Have pity on me! Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water. Then he can cool my tongue with it.' But Abraham replied, 'Son, in your lifetime, you received your good things. Lazarus received bad things...' 'Then I beg you, father. Send Lazarus to my five brothers to warn them.' Abraham replied, 'They have the teachings of Moses and the Prophets. Let your brothers listen to them... They will turn away from their sins.' Abraham said to him, 'They do not listen to Moses and the Prophets. So they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Thank You Jesus for the Law and the Prophets and the warning to believe in Your resurrection and salvation. Amen.

8th July 2024.

Isaiah 44:21-22. The LORD God Almighty spoke to His prophet Isaiah regarding the restoration of Jerusalem. "People of Israel, you are my servants. I have made you. I will not forget you. I will sweep your sins away as if they were a cloud. I will blow them away as if they were the morning mist. Return to Me. Then I will set you free."

Hebrews 10:8-18. "First Christ said, 'You did not want sacrifices and offerings. You did not want burnt offerings and sin offerings.' He said that even though the Law required people to bring them. Then he said, 'Here I am. I have come to do what You want.' He did away with the first. He did it to put the second in place. We have been made holy by what God wanted. We have been made holy because Jesus Christ offered His body once and for all time. Day after day every priest stands and does his special duties. He offers the same sacrifices again and again. But they can never take away sins. Jesus our priest offered one sacrifice for sins for all time. Then He sat down at the right hand of God. Since that time, He waits for His enemies to be put under His control. By that one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit gives witness to us about this. First He says, 'This is the covenant I will make with them after that time. I will put My laws in their hearts. I will write My laws in their minds.' The He adds, 'I will not remember their sins anymore. I will not remember the evil things they have done.' (Jeremiah 31:33-34) And where those of us have been forgiven, there is no longer any offering for sin."

Father God in Heaven, thank You for Your faithfulness to Your people Israel. Through them we have received salvation in Jesus Christ. Set our minds free!. Amen.

9th July 2024.

2 Samuel 8:7-14. David took the gold shields that belonged to the officers of Hadadezer to Jerusalem and a huge amount of bronze. Tou, king of Hamath, heard that David had won the battle over the army of Hadadezer. Tou sent ...articles that were made out of silver, gold and bronze. King

David offered those articles to the LORD God Almighty. He had done the same thing with the silver and gold he had taken from the other nations he had brought under his control: Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia and Amalek... The LORD helped David win his battles everywhere he went.

Matthew 20:17-28. Jesus told the 12 disciples that the chief priests and the teachers of the Law would sentence Him to death. Gentiles would make fun of Him and whip him. He would be nailed to a cross. But on the third day, he would rise from the dead. Then the mother of James and John came to Jesus with her sons. On her knees, she asked a favour of Him. "Promise me that one of my two sons may sit at Your right hand in Your Kingdom and the other one at your left." Jesus asked her two sons, "Can you drink the cup of suffering I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said, "You will certainly drink from My cup. But it is not for Me to say who will sit at my right or left hand. These places belong to those my Father has prepared them for... Anyone who wants to be important must be a servant... I did not come to be served. I came to serve others. I give My life as the price for setting many people free."

Dear Father in Heaven, we thank you for blessing Your servant King David and using his family to prepare the way for Christ our Saviour. Help us to be humble in serving You and others and receive honour in this world and the next. Amen.

15th July 2024.

Isaiah 14:24-27. After God's prophecy against Babylon, Isaiah received a further prophecy concerning Assyria. "The LORD God Almighty has sworn, 'Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will happen. I will crush Assyrians in My land. On My mountains I will trample them down. Their yoke will be taken from My people, and their burden removed from their shoulders. This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the LORD Almighty has purposed it, and who can thwart Him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?' "

Romans 16:17-20. Paul writes, "I am warning you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who try to keep you from staying together. They want to trip you up. They teach you things opposite to what you have learned. Stay away from them. People like that are not serving Christ our Lord. They are serving only themselves. With smooth talk and with words they do not mean they fool people who do not know any better. Everyone has heard that you obey God. So you have filled me with joy. I want you to be wise about what is good. And I want you to have nothing to do with what is evil. The God who gives peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you." Father God in Heaven, we praise You for Your prophetic words given to Isaiah for the people of Israel to be blessed. We note that Your many plans are "determined for the whole world".

Thank You for Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus that enabled him to open his mind to Your Scripture truths and receive Your anointing in ministry to share the Good News of Jesus to the Gentiles. Encourage us to read Your Bible daily and enable us "to be wise about what is good". Amen.

16th July 2024.

Numbers 23:8-12. Balaam had the gift of prophecy from the LORD God Almighty on Israel's journey to the promised land of Canaan. The king of Moab sent a messenger to Balaam asking him to curse Israel so that Moab would be saved. Balaam replied, "How can I put a curse on people God Himself has not cursed?" ...The messenger said, "I brought you here to put a curse on my enemies! But all you have done is give them your blessing!" Balaam answered, "I have to speak only the words the LORD puts in my mouth." Peace prevailed between Israel and Moab which the young men of Israel took advantage of to seduce the young girls of Moab (25:1-3).

Acts 7:41-43. The apostle Stephen reminded the high priest in Jerusalem how the people of Israel at the time of Moses "made a statue to be their god shaped like a calf. They brought sacrifices to it. They enjoyed what they had made with their own hands. But God turned away from them. He let them go on worshiping the sun, moon and stars as written in the book of the prophets. There it says, 'People of Israel, did you bring Me sacrifices and offerings for 40 years in the desert? You have taken with you the shrine of your false god Molek. You have taken with you the star of your false god Rephan. You made statues of those gods to worship. So I will send you away from your country.' God sent them to Babylon and beyond."

Thank You Father God for the examples of Balaam, Moses and Stephen in the Bible. May we never forget how easily Your people wanted to worship the gods of Egypt and later submitted to the

seducing spirits in the land of Moab. Forgive us for failing to uphold Bible truth at all times in these evil days and learning from the results of disobedience. For the sake of Jesus our Saviour who died for our sins. Amen.

17th July 2024.

2 Chronicles 34:27-33. In the early days of King Josiah, the people in Jerusalem burned sacrifices to the idols they had brought into God's Temple. 'But to Josiah, The LORD God Almighty sent a message. "You have made yourself humble in My sight. You heard what I spoke against this place and its people... You will not see all the trouble I am going to bring." ...Then the king went to the Temple... He had all the words of the Book of the Covenant read to the people which had been found in the Temple... The king promised to serve the LORD and obey His commands, directions and rules with all his heart and with all his soul... Then he had everyone in Jerusalem commit themselves to the covenant... and serve the LORD their God. As long as he lived, they did not fail to follow the LORD, the God of their people.' 1 Corinthians 12:1-7. Paul said, "I want you to know about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. You know that at one time you were unbelievers. You were drawn away to worship statues of gods that couldn't even speak. So I want you to know that ...without the help of the Holy Spirit no-one can say, 'Jesus is Lord'. There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given to believers by the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord. There are different ways the Spirit works. But the same God is working in all these ways and in all people. The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all." *Thank you heavenly Father that through Jesus our Lord and Saviour the Holy Spirit is at work among the believers of today. Encourage us to set aside what is selfish and untrue as did Josiah and worship You and obey Your teachings and those of Christ and His apostles. Amen.*

18th July 2024.

Ezekiel Chapter 18 (NIV) criticises the ancient proverb that the sins of the fathers will be punished and his children too. The LORD God Almighty told Ezekiel that "both father and son belong to Me" and only the person who sins and fails to repent will die." (vv.1-4) Then God explains in detail the good things He expects of His people (vv.5-9) and the wrong things He will punish (vv.10-13). He also explains again in detail that if the children of evil people do good things they will not be punished. "The right things a godly person does will be added to their account. The wrong things a sinful person does will be charged against them." (vv.14-20) However, "If a sinful person turns away from all the sins they have committed and obeys all My rules and does what is fair and right, then you can be sure they will live... That makes Me very happy." (v.21-23) God concludes, "I will judge each of you in keeping with what you have done... Turn from your sins and live!" (v.30-32)

Hebrews 10:14-18 (NIRV) reminds us of the work Christ did on the cross for all sinners. "By one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. 'This is the covenant I will make with them after that time. I will put My laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.' Then He adds: 'Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.' (Jeremiah 31:33-34) And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary."

Father God, thank You for Your intention to forgive sinners who repent recorded by Ezekiel and Jeremiah 600 years before You sent Jesus to Earth to take our punishment for sin. Thank You that we do not need to fear any inherited sins from our fathers nor fear for the salvation of what our children inherit from us. Amen.

19th July 2024.

Isaiah 14:28-32 gives God's prophecy regarding the Philistines who occupied the Mediterranean coastal strip 2750 years ago. "The rod of Assyria has struck all of you Philistines... The poorest people in Israel will have plenty to eat. Those who are in need will lie down in safety. But I will destroy your families. They will die of hunger. I will kill any of them who are still left alive. Cities of Philistia, cry out for help! Scream in pain! All you Philistines, melt away in fear! An army is coming from the north in a cloud of dust. No-one in its ranks is falling behind. What answer should be given to the messengers from that nation? Tell them, 'The LORD God Almighty has made Zion secure. His suffering people will find safety there.' "

James 4:1-8. "Why do you fight and argue among yourselves? Is it not because of your sinful desires within you? You want something, but you do not have it. So you kill. You want what others

have, but you cannot get what you want. So you argue and fight. You do not have what you want, because you do not ask God. When you do ask for something, you do not receive it because you ask for the wrong reason. You want to spend your money on your sinful pleasures. You are not faithful to God. Do you not know that to be a friend of the world is to hate God? So anyone who chooses to be the world's friend becomes God's enemy. Scripture says God wants the spirit in us to belong only to Him. God caused this spirit to live in us... God continues to give us more grace. That is why Scripture also says, 'God opposes those who are proud. But he gives grace to those who are humble.' (Proverbs 3:34) Come near to God, and He will come near to you." *Help us Father God to heed Scripture and receive your blessings this day! Amen.*

22nd July 2024.

Jeremiah 26:12-16. In the year 609 BC, the LORD God Almighty spoke to the people of Jerusalem through His prophet Jeremiah. "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city. So change the way you live and act. Obey the LORD your God. Then He will not bring on you the trouble He said He would bring. As for me, I am in your hands. Do to me what you think is good and right. But you can be sure of one thing. If you put me to death, you will be held responsible for spilling my blood... You will bring guilt on yourselves and this city and those who live in it."

1 Timothy 3:12-17. After warning of the "terrible times in the last day" (3:1), Paul wrote, "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be treated badly. Evil people and pretenders will go from bad to worse. They will fool others, and others will fool them. But I want you to continue to follow what you have learned and are sure about. You know the people you learned it from. You have known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a little child. They are able to teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus. God has breathed life into all Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. By using Scripture, the servant of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing."

Grant us boldness, Father God, to teach Bible truth and preach salvation through Christ in these last days. Forgive us if we limit what You can do through the Spirit of Christ at work in us. Help us to be prepared to suffer as did Jeremiah and Paul in the ministry You call us to do. Amen.

23rd July 2024.

Job 23. Job proudly confesses his faith in the LORD God Almighty. "Today my problems are more than I can handle. God's hand is heavy on me... I wish I could state my case to Him... He would not bring charges against me! Honest people can prove to Him they are not guilty. He would tell me once and for all that I am not guilty... When He has tested me, I will come out as pure as gold... I have not disobeyed His commands... But He is the only God. Who can oppose Him? He carries out his plans against me... That is why I am so terrified... But even the darkness of death will not make me silent!"

Romans 11:25-32. "Here is a mystery I want you to understand. It will keep you from being proud. Part of Israel has refused to obey God. That will continue until the full number of Gentiles has entered God's kingdom. In this way all Israel will be saved... As far as the Good News [of salvation in Christ] is concerned, the people of Israel are enemies. This is for your good. But as far as God's choice is concerned, the people of Israel are loved. This is because of God's promises to the founders of our nation. God does not change His mind about those He has chosen. At one time you did not obey God. But now you have received mercy because Israel did not obey... And now they receive mercy because of God's mercy to you! God has found everyone guilty of not obeying Him. So now He can have mercy on all."

Thank you God that You "do not change Your mind", whether it is one chosen person like Job or all of Jacob's chosen family born through Abraham, Sarah and Isaac. Thank you for the privilege You give to Gentiles to experience the mystery of salvation in Christ. Forgive our pride and keep us all humble yet bold in our calling. Amen.

24th July 2024.

Jeremiah 8:4-7. "The LORD God Almighty says, 'When people fall down, do not they get up again? When someone turns away, do not they come back? Then why have the people of Jerusalem turned away from Me? They refuse to come back to Me. I have listened carefully. But they do not say

what is right. They refuse to turn away from their sins... Each of them goes their own way... My people do not know what I require them to do.' "

Philippians 2:1-11. "So does belonging to Christ help you in any way? Does His love comfort you at all? Has Christ ever been gentle and loving toward you? If any of these things has happened to you, then agree with one another. Have the same love [for each other]. Be one in spirit and in the way you think and act... Do not do anything only to get ahead. Do not be proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves. None of you should look out just for your own good but also look out for the good of others... Think and act as Jesus did. In His very nature He was God and equal with God. But Jesus did not take advantage of that fact. Instead, He was made ... just like human beings. He was humble and obeyed God completely. He did this even though it led to His death. Even worse, He died on a cross! God lifted Him up to the highest place. God gave Him the name that is above every name. When the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone in Heaven and Earth will kneel down to worship Him. Everyone will say that Jesus Christ is Lord. And God the Father will receive the glory."

Father God, we pray on behalf of those believers who have turned away from the truth of your word and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Keep us humble and enable us to do everything to Your glory. Amen.

25th July 2024.

Obadiah verses 15 to 21. "The day of the LORD God Almighty is near for all the nations... You Edomites made My holy mountain of Zion impure by celebrating there. All the nations will drink from the cup of My anger... But Mount Zion will be My holy mountain once again. The people of Jacob will again receive the land as their own. They will be like a fire. But the nation of Edom will be like straw. Jacob's people will set Edom on fire and burn it up. No one will be left alive among Esau's people. Israelites from the Negev Desert will take over Esau's mountains. Israelites from the western hills [Judah] will possess the land of the Philistines, Ephraim and Samaria. Israelites from the tribe of Benjamin will possess the land of Gilead. Some Israelites will come back to Canaan and possess it all the way to the town of Zarephath [on the Mediterranean coast near Lebanon]... And the kingdom will belong to the LORD."

James 3:13-18. "Is anyone among you wise and understanding? That person should show it by living a good life. A wise person is not proud when they do good deeds. If your hearts are jealous and bitter and you are concerned only about getting ahead, then do not boast about it. Do not say no to the truth. Wisdom like this does not come down from Heaven but Earth. It does not come from the Holy Spirit but from the devil. Are you jealous? Are you concerned only about getting ahead? Then your life will be a mess. You will be doing all kinds of evil things. The wisdom that comes from Heaven is pure... It loves peace. It thinks about others. It obeys. It is full of mercy and good fruit. It is fair. It does not pretend to be what it is not. Those who make peace plant it like a seed. They will harvest a crop of righteous living."

Amen!

26th July 2024.

Psalms 63:1-5. A Psalm of King David whilst hiding from his persecutors in a solitary place. "O God, you are my God. I seek You with all my heart. With all my strength I thirst for You in a dry desert where there is no water. I have seen You in the sacred tent. There I have seen Your power and Your glory. Your love is better than life. So I will bring glory to You with my lips. I will praise You as long as I live. I will call on Your name when I lift up my hands in prayer. I will be as satisfied as if I had eaten the best food there is. My mouth will praise You."

Mark 1:35-39. Jesus went to pray in a solitary place to be alone. 'It was very early in the morning and still dark. There he prayed. Simon and his friends went to look for Jesus. When they found Him, they called out, "Everyone is looking for You!" Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else. I want to go to the nearby towns. I must preach there also. That is why I have come." So He travelled all around Galilee. He preached in their synagogues. He also drove out demons.' A man who had a skin disease came to Jesus. He begged Jesus, "If you are willing to make me clean, you can do it." Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. "I am willing to do it," Jesus said. "Be clean!"

Father God, we thank You for the witness of Your intervention in the ministry of Your appointed leader David. Thank you that his trust was in You to lead Israel and establish worship in

Jerusalem in preparation for the ministry of Jesus, our Messiah and Christ. Thank you, that despite David's persecution and the hindrance to the ministry of Jesus from both friendly and critical crowds, Your purposes were fulfilled for our eternal salvation. Amen.

29th July 2024.

Psalm 106:1-5. "Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, because He is good. His faithful love continues forever. Who can speak enough about the mighty acts of the LORD? Who can praise Him as much as He should be praised? Blessed are those who always do what is fair. Blessed are those who keep doing what is right. LORD, remember me when You bless Your people. Help me when You save them. Then I will enjoy the good things You give Your chosen ones. I will be joyful together with Your people. I will join them when they praise You."

1 Thessalonians 1:1-8. Paul, Silas and Timothy wrote, "We always thank God for all of you. We keep on praying for you. We remember you when we pray to our God and Father. Your work is produced by your faith. Your service is the result of your love. Your strength to continue comes from your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, you are loved by God. We know that He has chosen you. Our Good News did not come to you only in words. It came with power. It came with the Holy Spirit's help. He gave us complete faith in what we were preaching. You know how we lived among you for your good. We and the Lord were your examples. You followed us. You welcomed our message even when you were suffering terribly. You welcomed it with the joy the Holy Spirit gives. So you became a model to all the believers in the lands of Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you. That was true not only in Macedonia and Achaia. Your faith in God has also become known everywhere."

Thank You Father God for the words of the unknown psalmist who realised how You bless those who bless others. "I will join them when they praise You." Thank you for the example of Paul, Silas and Timothy who prayed for the churches overseas. Amen.

30th July 2024.

Isaiah 3:8-12 records the words of the LORD to Isaiah in 760BC. "Jerusalem is about to fall. They say and do things against the LORD... The look on their faces is a witness against them. They parade and show off their sin, just as the people of Sodom did... How terrible it will be for them! They have brought trouble on themselves. Tell those who do what is right that things will go well with them... But how terrible it will be for those who do what is evil! They will be paid back for the evil things they have done. Those who are young treat My people badly. Women rule over them. My people, your leaders have taken you down the wrong path."

Acts 26:9-15 records Paul's trial before King Agrippa. "I did everything I could to oppose the name of Jesus in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests, I put many of the Lord's people in prison. I agreed that they should die. I often went from one synagogue to another to have them punished... I even went looking for them in the cities of other lands. On one of these journeys I was on my way to Damascus with the authority of the chief priests. About noon I was on the road. I saw a light coming from Heaven brighter than the sun. It was shining around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground. I heard a voice speak to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why are you opposing Me? It is hard for you to go against what you know is right.' Then I asked, 'Who are you?' 'I am Jesus,' the Lord replied. 'I am the one you are opposing.' "

Father God in Heaven, forgive us when the people of our nation "parade and show off their sin, just as the people of Sodom did". Come, Lord Jesus, and intervene so that we can be forgiven and prepare the way for Your Kingdom on Earth. Amen.

31st July 2024.

Daniel 3:31-47 records the famous dream of King Nebuchadnezzar which Daniel miraculously repeated and then interpreted. "You saw a large statue standing in front of you. The head was made out of pure gold. Its chest and arms were made out of silver. Its stomach and thighs were made out of bronze. Its legs were made out of iron. And its feet were partly iron and partly baked clay. While you were watching, a Rock was cut out but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them to pieces. The wind blew them away without leaving a trace. But the Rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain. It filled the whole Earth... In the time of those kings, the God of Heaven will set up a Kingdom which will never be destroyed. It will last forever. That is what the vision of the Rock cut out of a mountain means."

Hebrews 10:22-25. "So let us come boldly near to God with a sincere heart because of our faith. We have been cleansed from a sense of guilt... Let us hold firmly to the hope we claim to have. The God who promised is faithful. Let us consider how we can stir up each another to love. Let us help each other to do good works. And let us not give up meeting together. Some are in the habit of doing this. Instead, let us encourage each other with words of hope. Let us do this even more as you see Christ's return approaching."

Thank you Father God for giving us the understanding that Daniel's interpretation 2600 years ago applies today. We look forward to the reign on Earth of Jesus our Rock and Saviour. In the meantime, help us to "hold firmly to the hope we claim to have". Also, encourage us to "stir up each other in love... to do good works... and not to give up meeting together". Amen.

1st August 2024.

Judges 10:6-18. 250 years after the people of Israel settle in God's Promised Land of Canaan, they 'did what was evil in the sight of the LORD God Almighty. They served gods that were named Baal and Ashtoreth... They also worshiped the gods of Ammon and the Philistines. So the LORD became very angry with them. He handed them over to the Philistines and the Ammonites... The Israelites said to the LORD, "We have sinned. Do to us what you think is best. Save us!" Then they got rid of their false gods and served the LORD. And He could not bear to see Israel suffer any longer.' The next chapter describes how Jephthah, the son of a prostitute who trusted in God, was used to save Israel from the Philistines and the Ammonites.

Revelation 19:11-16 records the vision given to John of Jesus Christ appearing on a white horse. "There in front of me was a white horse whose rider is called 'Faithful and True'. When He judges or makes war, He is always fair... He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood... He will strike down the nations with the sword. Scripture says, 'He will rule them with an iron sceptre' (Psalm 2:9). He treads on the grapes of God's winepress which shows the terrible anger of God who rules over all. The name that is written on the rider's robe and on His thigh says, 'The Greatest King of All and the Most Powerful Lord of All.' "

Father God, forgive us for the times we make You angry. Thank you for Scriptures which confirm that when we repent You make amazing plans to save true believers. Thank you for sending Japheth, the faithful son of a prostitute, who was called to save Your people. Thank you for sending Your Son Jesus, who was born to a faithful virgin to save the world. Thank you for the vision given to John of Jesus who will come to reign as King forever. Amen.

2nd August 2024.

Psalms 36. King David wrote about the sins of wicked people: "They do not have any respect for God. They praise themselves so much that they cannot see their sin or hate it. They never say no to what is wrong... LORD God Almighty, Your love is as high as the heavens. Your holiness is as great as the height of the highest mountains." (v.1-6) "Keep on loving those who know You. Keep on doing right to those whose hearts are honest." (v.10)

1 Corinthians 10:1-13. Paul writes about the exodus from Egypt: "I want you to know about our people who lived long ago... They ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual water from the spiritual Rock that went with them. That Rock was Christ. But God was not pleased with most of them and their bodies were scattered in the desert. Those things happened as examples for us to keep us from wanting evil things... So do not worship statues of gods as some of them did. It is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink. Then they got up to dance wildly in front of their god.' (Exodus 32:6)... We are living at the time when God's work is being completed. So be careful. When you think you are standing firm, you might fall. You are tempted in the same way all other human beings are. God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted any more than you can take. But when you are tempted, God will give you a way out. Then you will be able to deal with it."

Thank you God for these warnings to remain faithful in the wicked 'last days' when Your "work is being completed". Help us to stand firm under temptation and to "keep on loving those who know You and to keep on doing right". Help us also to witness the extent of Your love and holiness in the way that David and Paul did. Amen.

5th August 2024.

Job 16:16-17 records Job's distress under the attacks of Satan which God had allowed. "My face is red from crying. I have dark circles under my eyes. But I haven't harmed anyone. My prayers to God

are pure!" It is 26 chapters later before we read how God answered Job. "The Lord blessed the last part of Job's life even more than the first part." (42:12)

Mark 12:28-34. 'One of the teachers of the Law ... asked Jesus, "Which is the most important of all the commandments?" Jesus answered, "Here is the most important one... 'The Lord is our God. The Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love Him with all your mind and with all your strength.' (Deuteronomy 6:4,5) And here is the second one. 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself.' (Leviticus 19:18) There is no commandment more important than these." "You have spoken well, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one. There is no other God but Him. To love God with all your heart and mind and strength is very important. So is loving your neighbour as you love yourself. These things are more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus saw that the man had answered wisely. He said to him, "You are not far from God's kingdom." '

Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding us through Job of the need to ask with faith and patience for Your answers to our prayers, however long they take! Help us also to be ready for immediate answers as recorded by Mark. We therefore ask that we will be ever open to Your answers and grow in understanding how to live with love in hearts for You at all times without complaining. Also to reach out to our neighbours near and far in love. Thank you for the love You have for us which You want us to share with others. Amen.

6th August 2024.

Isaiah 36-37 (NIV). At the time of King Hezekiah's reign in Jerusalem, the king from Assyria sent a message to mock Israel for depending on support from Egypt (36:5-6). King Sennacherib even lied by saying, "the LORD Himself told me to march against your country and destroy it" (36:10). Hezekiah went to the Temple in fear and sent a message to the prophet Isaiah (37:1). Isaiah told him that God said, "Do not be afraid of what you have heard from the king of Assyria who has blasphemed Me. I will put a spirit in him so that he will return to his own country and be cut down by the sword" (37:6-7). Hezekiah went to the Temple again and said, "O LORD God Almighty of Israel... You alone are God over all the kingdoms of Earth... Now O LORD our God, deliver us so that all the kingdoms on Earth may know that You alone are God!" (37:14-20). The words of God given to Isaiah were fulfilled (37:36-38).

Revelation 21 (NIRV) is the vision given to John of the new Jerusalem, coming down from Heaven. A loud voice from the throne said, "Look! God now makes His home with the people. He will live with them. They will be His people. And God Himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death.' (Isaiah 25:8) I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down. You can trust these words. They are true."

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding us of these words from Scripture. Thank You for the example of Hezekiah to invite You to intervene in such a way that "all the kingdoms on Earth may know that You alone, O LORD, are God!" Thank You that John obeyed and wrote down the vision You gave him for us to read. Come Lord Jesus soon and establish the Kingdom of God on Earth! Amen.

7th August 2024.

1 Samuel 16:1-12. The LORD God Almighty rejected Saul as king of Israel. Then God said to Samuel, Israel's prophet and priest, "Fill your animal horn with olive oil... I am sending you to Jesse in Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." God warned Samuel not to judge a person by his appearance or height. "The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outside of a person. But the LORD looks at what is in the heart." Jesse introduced his sons to Samuel one by one. However, God made it clear to Samuel that none of them were His choice. Then Jesse told Samuel his youngest son was caring for the sheep. When David arrived, the LORD said, "Get up and anoint him with oil. This is the one."

Philippians 3:12-16. Paul wrote, "Christ Jesus took hold of me so that I could reach His goal. So I keep pushing myself forward to reach it. Here is the one thing I do. I forget what is behind me. I push hard towards what is ahead of me. I push myself forward towards the goal to win the prize. God has appointed me to win it. The heavenly prize is Christ Jesus himself. So all of us who are grown up in the faith should see things this way. Maybe you think differently about something. But God will make it clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already reached."

Father God, You appointed people like David and Paul at a time when their leaders failed to serve You. Help us to remember that You "look at what is in the heart". We therefore pray you will choose leaders today who will be humble and "forget what is behind". May we, too, aim to forget our failings and "live up to what we have already reached" then "move forward towards the goal to win the prize" in Heaven. Amen.

8th August 2024.

Nahum 2:1-2. Israel's unknown prophet in the 8th century before Christ confirmed the destruction of Nineveh. He also prophesied the restoration of Israel. "Nineveh, armies are coming to attack you... Get ready! Gather all your strength! You once took everything of value from God's people. Its army destroyed all their vines. But the LORD God Almighty will bring back the glory of Jacob's people. He will make Israel glorious again."

1 Timothy 1:12-17. Paul said, "I am thankful to Christ Jesus our Lord. He has given me strength. I thank Him that He considered me faithful. I thank Him for appointing me to serve Him. I used to speak evil things against Jesus. I tried to hurt His followers. But God showed me mercy. I did those things without knowing any better. I was not a believer. Our Lord God poured out more and more of His grace on me. Along with it came faith and love from Christ Jesus. Here is a saying that you can trust. It should be accepted completely. 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' And I am the worst sinner of all! But for that very reason, God showed me mercy. He showed me mercy so that Christ Jesus could show that He is very patient. I was an example for those who would come to believe in Him. Then they would receive eternal life. The eternal King will never die. He cannot be seen. He is the only God. Give him honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen!"

We thank You Father God for these prophetic words of the unknown Jew Nahum and these repentant words of the world famous Jew Paul. Thank You that Your concern is not just for Israel and its people but You planned that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners". Help us all to be "an example for those who would come to believe in Him", whether we are little known or known a lot. Amen.

9th August 2024.

Joshua 14-21 describes the allocation of land in God's promised land west of the River Jordan. In addition, God told Joshua to create cities of refuge to protect prisoners awaiting trial. Also, the Levite priests of Israel were allocated towns to live in as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Mark 6:18-44. John the Baptist told King Herod, "It is against the Law for you to be married to your brother's wife, Herodias." She could not forgive John for saying that and wanted to kill him. So Herod kept John safe. He knew John was a holy man who did what was right. He liked to listen to John. However, the time came for Herodias to plan the death of John. The daughter of Herodias danced at a banquet in the palace. She pleased Herod. The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want and I will give it to you." Herodias told the girl to ask for the head of John the Baptist. The king was very upset but did not break his promise. After this, the twelve disciples of Jesus reported all they had done and taught. Then they went away by themselves in a boat to a quiet place to rest. This was quickly by the teaching and miraculous feeding of five thousand people.

Thank You God for these amazing facts of land allocation for Your people Israel which included protection for prisoners and priests. Also for the persecution and death of John the Baptist who prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus in that same country. Also for the record of how His disciples went out preaching then resting and then helping to teach and feed the 5000! Help us to share in Your purpose and provision for Your people, including prisoners and priests. Keep us safe in our personal calling, even at risk of persecution and death, and know when to take rest, and when to share in ministry to thousands of people. Amen.

12th August 2024.

Psalms 68. King David said, "May God rise up and scatter His enemies. May they turn and run away from Him. As fire melts wax, so may God destroy sinful people. But may those who do what is right be glad and filled with joy when they are with Him. May they sing praises to His name... Be glad when you are with Him. His name is Yahweh, the LORD God Almighty. God is in His holy temple. He is a father to children whose fathers have died. He takes care of women whose husbands have died. God gives lonely people a family. He sets prisoners free. But those who refuse to obey Him live in a

land that is baked by the sun." (v.1-6) David concludes, "Sing to God, you kingdoms of the Earth. Sing praises to the Lord!" (v.32)

Romans 8:21-26. The apostle Paul says, "But now God has shown us His saving power... which the Law and the prophets told us about. We are made right with God by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. This happens to all who believe. It is no different for the Jews than for the Gentiles. Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory. The free gift of God's grace makes us right with Him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free. God gave Christ as a sacrifice to pay for sins through the spilling of His blood. So God forgives the sins of those who have faith. God did all this to prove that He does what is right... He makes right with Himself all who believe in Jesus."

Thank You Father God for giving David and Paul much faith in Your saving grace. Thank You that Your prophets spoke of Israel's Messiah to be born into David's family line which fulfilled the words of David "kingdoms of the Earth sing praises to the Lord!" Thank You that You "make right with Yourself all who believe in Jesus". Amen.

13th August 2024.

Amos chapters 2 to 5. In 787 BC, the LORD God Almighty spoke through His prophet Amos in judgement of His special people (chapters 2 to 4). He then called for repentance (chapter 5) and revealed His heart's desire in the famous words of 5:24: "Let justice flow like a river and righteousness like a never-failing stream!"

Ephesians 3:14-21. Paul knelt before his Father God in Heaven to pray for the church in Ephesus. "I pray that He will use His glorious riches to make you strong. May His Holy Spirit give you His power deep down inside you. Then Christ will live in your hearts because you believe in Him. And I pray that your love will have deep roots. I pray that it will have a strong foundation. May you have power together with all the Lord's holy people to understand Christ's love. May you know how wide and long and high and deep it is. And may you know His love, even though it cannot be understood completely. Then you will be filled with everything God has for you. God is able to do far more than we could ever ask or imagine. He does everything by His power that is working in us. Give Him glory in the church and in Christ Jesus. Give Him glory through all time and for ever and ever. Amen."

Thank You heavenly Father for revealing the desire in Your heart through Amos and Paul for those You have called to serve You. Thank You for showing mercy to Your people through repentance and forgiveness. Enable us to "let justice flow like a river and righteousness like a never-failing stream" from You to us and to others. Through Your Holy Spirit, may Jesus Christ live in us "that Your love will have deep roots" with a growing understanding. Show us how You are "able to do far more than we could ever ask or imagine" with glory to You and Christ and His Church. Amen.

14th August 2024.

Ezekiel 28:24-26. This prophecy for Israel was given 600 years before the ministry of Christ at a time of great rebellion and pending disaster. God said, "The people of Israel will no longer have neighbours who hate them... Then Israel will know that I am the LORD and King. I will gather the people of Israel together from the nations where they have been scattered... I will let the nations see it. Then Israel will live in their own land. I gave it to My servant Jacob. My people will live there in safety. They will build houses and plant vineyards. They will live in safety. I will punish all their neighbours who told lies about them. Then Israel will know that I am the LORD their God."

2 Peter 1:16-21. The apostle Peter wrote to the early believers. "With our own eyes we saw Jesus in all His majesty. God the Father gave Him honour and glory. He said, 'This is My Son, and I love Him. I am very pleased with Him.' We ourselves heard this voice that came from Heaven when we were with Him on the sacred mountain. We also have the message of the prophets. This message can be trusted completely. You must pay attention to it... No prophecy in Scripture ever came from a prophet's own understanding of things or because he wanted it to. Instead, the Holy Spirit guided the prophets as they spoke. So, although prophets are human, prophecy comes from God."

Father God, we thank You for Your prophetic words to Your people under the old and new covenants. History tells us that disaster struck soon after your words were given to Ezekiel and to Peter. But we also know of the wonderful restoration of Your people to the Holy Land in 538 BC and AD 1948. We praise You that during those intervening years, millions of people came to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Have mercy and establish Your Kingdom now! Amen.

15th August 2024.

2 Kings 21:10-15 describes the terrible deeds of king Manasseh in Jerusalem. This was before the reign of the good king Josiah in 641 BC when the book of the Law of Moses was found in the Temple. God spoke to His prophets about Manasseh. "Manasseh has committed terrible sins. I hate them. Manasseh has done more evil things than the Amorites who were in the land before him. And he has led Judah to commit sins by worshiping his statues of gods. I am the LORD, the God of Israel. I tell you, I am going to bring trouble on Jerusalem and Judah... I will send punishment against Jerusalem, just as I did against Samaria... I will wipe out Jerusalem, just as someone wipes a dish... I will hand them over to their enemies because My people have done what is evil in My sight. They have made me very angry."

1 Timothy 3:1-13 gives Paul's advice to church leaders. "A leader must be free from blame. He must be faithful to his wife... He must be able to teach. He must not get drunk. He must be gentle and not be a person who likes to argue. He must not love money. He must manage his own family well. He must make sure that his children obey him and gains him respect... The leader must also be respected by those who are outside the church... They must hold on to the deep truths of the faith... In the same way, the women must be worthy of respect... Those who have served well earn the full respect of others. They also become more sure of their faith in Christ Jesus."

Father God, we pray that Your people Israel will heed these warnings from Scripture and uphold Your commandments given to Moses. We also pray for righteous church leaders who will heed Paul's advice to Timothy. We take note that they will "become more sure of their faith in Christ Jesus." Amen.

16th August 2024.

Genesis chapters 27 and 28 record the family blessing of Isaac for his younger son Jacob instead of Esau, through Jacob's act of deceit (27:22-33). Esau demanded a blessing from his father who told him, "I have made Jacob ruler over you... You will live far away from the fruit of the Earth. You will live far away from the dew of Heaven above. You will live by using the sword. And you will serve your brother. But you will grow restless. Then you will throw off the heavy load he has caused you to carry." Jacob wanted to run away to avoid the anger of Esau. His mother Rebekah sent him to find a wife among Abraham's relatives. On the way, God told Jacob in a dream, "I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your children after you the land you are lying on. They will be as many as the dust of the Earth that cannot be counted... All nations on Earth will be blessed because of you and your children after you." (28:11-14)

Galatians 3:22-29. Paul says, "The Law [of Moses] was put in charge of us until Christ came. He came so that we might be made right with God by believing in Christ... So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God by believing in Christ. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free person, male or female. That is because you are all one in Christ Jesus. You who belong to Christ are Abraham's seed and will receive what God has promised."

Father God, thank You for the promises made to Jacob for the world to become children of Abraham. Forgive us for failing to believe Your plan to remove the barrier between Jacob's family and Esau's family. Help Jews and Gentiles today to live in harmony and meet each other's needs with the compassion of Christ Jesus our Saviour and Messiah. Amen.

19th August 2024.

Deuteronomy 8:1-11. After God gave His Ten Commandments to Moses, He warned the people of Israel not to forget He is the LORD God Almighty. "Make sure you obey every command I am giving you today. Then you will live... and take the land the LORD promised to your people of long ago. Remember how the LORD your God guided you in the desert and wanted to test you to know what was in your hearts. He wanted to see whether you would obey his commands... He let you go hungry. Then He gave you manna to eat... He tested you to teach you that man does not live only on bread. Mankind lives on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD... Obey the commands of the LORD your God... Have respect for Him. The LORD your God is bringing you into a good land... You will have everything you need. Its rocks have iron in them. And you can dig copper out of its hills. When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God... Make sure you do not forget the LORD your God. Do not fail to obey His commands, laws and rules I am giving to you today."

Mark 7:8-13. Jesus said, "You have let go of God's commands and hold on to teachings that people have made up. You do this so you can follow your own teachings... You make the word of God useless by putting your own teachings in its place."

Thank You Father God for Your commandments through Moses which Jesus supported. Thank you that He warned the people of Israel to stop making their own rules. Thank You that Jesus fulfilled all the commandments and provided a new covenant for Israel and the world to follow through faith in Him. Help us all to obey You and Your commands and put our trust in Your salvation through Christ's sacrifice on the cross as punishment for our sins. Amen.

20th August 2024.

Psalms 107 (NIV). "Give thanks to the LORD for He is good. His love endures for ever." (v.1) "Some wandered in desert wasteland... They cried out to the LORD in their trouble." (v.4-6) "Some sat in darkness in deepest gloom... They cried out to the LORD in their trouble." (v.10-13) "Some were fools through their rebellious ways... They cried out to the LORD in their trouble." (v.17-19) "Some went out on the sea in ships... and God stirred up a tempest... They cried out to the LORD in their trouble." (v.23-28) The psalmist records that the LORD saved them all. He repeats "Let them give thanks to the LORD for His unfailing love." (v.8, 15, 21, 31) He concludes, "Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the LORD." (v.43)

Matthew 13:13-16 (NIRV). Jesus told His disciples, "Here is why I use parables when I speak to the people... In them the words of the prophet Isaiah come true. 'You will hear but never understand. You will see but never know what you are seeing. The hearts of these people have become stubborn. They can barely hear with their ears. They have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes. They might hear with their ears. They might understand with their hearts. They might turn to the LORD, and then He would heal them.' (Isaiah 6:9,10) But blessed are your eyes because they see. And blessed are your ears because they hear."

Thank You Father God for Your unfailing love in saving us in times of trouble, despair, rebellion or seeking adventure. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus the Christ and Messiah, to warn us all about our blindness and deafness to Your light and truth. Grant us understanding of the need to "turn to the LORD" and trust in our Saviour's teaching to His followers. Open our spiritual eyes and ears in these difficult days to "consider the great love of the LORD". Amen.

21st August 2024.

Joshua chapter 15 records the allocation of God's Promised Land west of the Jordan River to the tribe of Judah. It included "the south slope of the Jebusite city now called Jerusalem" (v.8). This included the region around Hebron which Joshua allocated to Caleb. This was in recognition of his faith in God's future provision at the time Moses (v.13). Judah's share of the land also included "Gaza and all its settlements and villages all the way to the Wadi of Egypt and the coast of the Mediterranean Sea" (v.47).

Romans 2:6-16. Paul wrote, "God will reward each person in keeping with what they have done. God will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good... But there are others who only look out for themselves. They do not accept the truth. God will pour out His great anger on them... That is for Jews and for Gentiles. But there will be glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good... Hearing the Law does not make a person right with God. People are considered to be right with God only when they obey the Law. Gentiles do not have the Law. But sometimes they just naturally do what the Law requires... They show that what the Law requires is written on their hearts. Sometimes their thoughts will find them guilty. At other times their thoughts will find them not guilty. This will happen on the day God appoints Jesus Christ to judge people's secret thoughts. That's part of my Good News."

Thank You Almighty God for Your record of land allocation for Israel approximately 3450 years ago through Your servant Joshua. Thank You that it records a special provision for Your faithful servant Caleb. Thank you that Paul recognised Your provision for both Jews and Gentiles who "do what the Law requires". Dear God, write Your commandments "on our hearts" and enable us all to respond fully to the Good News of Jesus Christ taught by Your servant Paul. Amen.

22nd August 2024.

1 Kings 11:7-13. 'Solomon built a high place for worshiping Chemosh and Molek. Chemosh was the god of Moab. Molek was the god of Ammon... Solomon also built other high places so that all his

wives from other nations could worship their own gods... The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the God of Israel. He had appeared to Solomon twice and commanded him not to worship other gods. But Solomon did not obey the LORD. "You have chosen not to keep My covenant. You have decided not to obey My rules. I commanded you to do what I told you. But you did not do it. So you can be certain I will tear the kingdom away from you... But because of your father David I will wait. I will tear the kingdom out of your son's hand. But I will not tear the whole kingdom away from him. I will give him one of the tribes for the sake of my servant David and because of Jerusalem, the city I have chosen." "

Luke 16:17. Jesus said, "The teachings of the Law and the Prophets were preached until John the Baptist came. Since then, the Good News of God's kingdom is being preached... [However] it is easier for Heaven and Earth to disappear than for the smallest part of a letter to drop out of the Law." Jesus followed this with an example of a man who divorces his wife in order to marry another woman commits adultery.

Father God, thank You for showing us the importance of obeying the Law You gave to Moses. We note how Solomon disobeyed Your marriage laws and aroused Your anger when this led to worship of foreign gods. Help us God to obey Your Old Testament commandments and worship Jesus who fulfilled them all and personally performed the last blood sacrifice for forgiveness of sins by suffering on the cross for all who believe He is Your Saviour. Amen.

23rd August 2024.

Habakkuk Chapter 3 (NIV). "LORD God Almighty, I stand in awe of your deeds. Renew them in our day... In Your wrath remember mercy." (v.2) "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD! I will be joyful in God my Saviour." (v.17-18)

1 Peter 4:12-19 (NIRV). "Dear friends, do not be surprised by the terrible things happening to you. The trouble you are having has come to test you. So do not feel as if something strange is happening. Instead, be joyful that you are sharing in Christ's sufferings. Then you will have even more joy when Christ returns in glory. Suppose people say bad things about you because you believe in Christ. Then you are blessed, because God's Spirit rests on you. He is the Spirit of glory. If you suffer, it should not be because you are a murderer or a thief or someone who does evil things... If you suffer for being a Christian, then do not be ashamed. Instead, praise God because you are known by the name of Christ. It is time for judgment to begin... What will happen to people who do not obey God's Good News [of salvation in Christ alone]? 'If it is hard for godly people to be saved, what will happen to ungodly people and sinners? (Proverbs 11:31) Here is what people who suffer because of God's plan should do. They should commit themselves to their faithful Creator. And they should continue to do good."

Father God, in these evil days, help us to join with Your servant Habakkuk in saying "I will rejoice in the LORD!" We too ask, "In Your wrath remember mercy!" Like Paul, we believe "it is time for judgment to begin". Help us to "be joyful sharing in Christ's sufferings". Amen.

26th August 2024.

Psalms 133 was written by King David for worshippers to sing approaching the Temple area in Jerusalem. "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in peace! It is like the olive oil that was poured on Aaron's head. It ran down on his beard and on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Mount Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. There the LORD God Almighty gives His blessing. He gives life that never ends."

Mark 7:24-30. Jesus journeyed 70km from Galilee to the Mediterranean coast. 'Jesus went to a place near Tyre. He entered a house. He did not want anyone to know where he was. But He could not keep it a secret. Soon a woman heard about Him. An evil spirit controlled her little daughter. The woman came to Jesus and fell at His feet. She was a Greek, born in Syria. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. "First let the children eat all they want," He told her. "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She replied, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." Then He told her, "That was a good reply. You may go. The demon has left your daughter." So she went home and found her child lying on the bed. And the demon was gone.'

Thank you Father God for this Old Testament emphasises on the importance of spiritual unity and the blessings God will bring. We realise the words were prophetic regarding eternal life promised in Jerusalem for all believers. Thank You that 1000 years later, Jesus Himself agreed to heal a foreign Gentile believer in Tyre. He sacrificed His life on the cross in Jerusalem for Jews and Gentiles to be saved and worship together in unity. You told Abraham "All people on Earth will be blessed through you" fulfilled this day in the "mystery of Christ"! Amen.

27th August 2024.

1 Kings 11:29-36. After God rejected Solomon as king of Israel, He sent His prophet Ahijah to speak to Jereboam, one of Solomon's officials. "The LORD the God of Israel says, 'I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand. I will give you ten of its tribes. Solomon will have one of its tribes. I will let him keep it because of my servant David and because of Jerusalem. I have chosen that city out of all the cities in the tribes of Israel... Then my servant David will always have a son on his throne in Jerusalem... Jerusalem is the city I chose for my Name.'"

2 Thessalonians 2:7-15. Paul writes, "The secret power of sin is already at work. But the one who now holds back that power will keep doing it until he is taken out of the way. The Lord Jesus will overthrow Him with the breath of His mouth. The man of sin will show his power through all kinds of signs and wonders which will lead people astray. So people who are dying will be fooled by this evil because they refuse to love the truth. They will take pleasure in evil. But they will be judged. Brothers and sisters. Salvation comes through the Holy Spirit's work through believing the truth. He has chosen you to be saved by accepting the Good News that we preach. Remain strong in the faith."

Father God, we thank You for Paul's advice to "remain strong in the faith", unlike Solomon and many others today. Thank You for the Old Testament record of how you intervened and established Israel under Jereboam and the city of Jerusalem under the tribe of Judah in King David's line. Thank you that we also have the promise that "Jesus' coming will destroy the man of sin" in our midst. Meanwhile help us to minister to those You have "chosen to be saved by accepting the Good News" of salvation in Christ alone. Amen.

28th August 2024.

Obadiah verses 15-18. The LORD God Almighty said, "The day of the LORD is near for all the nations. Others will do to you what you have done to them. You will be paid back for what you have done. You made My holy mountain of Zion impure by drinking and celebrating there. So all the nations will drink from the cup of My anger. They will vanish as if they had never existed. But on Mount Zion My people will be left alive. I will save them. Zion will be My holy mountain once again."

Luke 6:27-36. Jesus said, "Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who treat you badly. If someone slaps you on one cheek, let them slap you on the other cheek. If someone takes your coat, do not stop them from taking your shirt as well. Give to everyone who asks and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not ask to get it back. Do to others as you want them to do to you... If you [only] do good to those who are good to you, should anyone praise you for that? Even sinners do that. And if you lend money to those who can pay you back should anyone praise you for that? ...But love your enemies. Do good to them. Lend to others without expecting to get anything back. Then you will receive much in return. And you will be children of the Most High God. He is kind to people who are evil and who are not thankful. So have mercy, just as your Father has mercy."

Heavenly Father, help us to apply today what You said to Your servant Obadiah 2600 years ago regarding Israel and Jerusalem. May we all heed the words of Jesus, Your Messiah, our Saviour, regarding loving all people including strangers. Help us to show Your mercy in dealing with "people who are evil and who are not thankful". Amen.

29th August 2024.

Daniel 11. According to the writings of Thomas Hale, the friend and colleague of Manna author Fred Morris, an angel told Daniel what was going to take place in the Middle East for the following 400 years (v.1-4). It includes the destruction of Jerusalem and God's Temple by the enemies of Israel (168 BC). But those who were faithful to God, with God's help, would see the spiritual preservation of Israel (v.29-35). This happened through 'the Maccabean revolt' (166 to 142 BC). It became part of God's preparation for Israel to receive their Messiah. Daniel also describes the battles between

various nations as well as their attempts to destroy Israel. It shows how God's focus is not only on Israel but on the nations of the world.

2 Thessalonians 2:16 to 3:6. After warning the believers about the "man of lawlessness", Paul gives his blessing, a prayer request and advice. "May our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father comfort your hearts. May they make you strong in every good thing you do and say... Brothers and sisters, pray for us that the Lord's message will spread quickly... He will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one... May the Lord fill your hearts with God's love. May Christ give you the strength to go on. Brothers and sisters, here is a command we give you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Keep away from every believer who is lazy and does not want to work."

Father God, there is much that we do not understand but we are encouraged to believe You watch over Israel and the nations of the world. May we heed Paul's warnings of men of lawlessness, but have his faith to believe we are "made strong in every good thing we do and say". Quicken the work of spreading the Gospel of Christ. Keep us safe from the evil one and help us to keep away from those who are lazy in their calling. Amen.

30th August 2024.

Exodus 19:1-8. 'After the people of Israel left Egypt, they came to the Desert of Sinai. They camped there in front of the mountain. Then Moses went up to God. The LORD God Almighty called out to him from the mountain and said, "Here is what I want you to say to My people, who belong to Jacob's family, the people of Israel. "You have seen for yourselves what I did to Egypt. You saw how I carried you 'on the wings of eagles' and brought you to Myself. Now obey Me completely. Keep My covenant. If you do, then out of all the nations you will be My special treasure. The whole Earth is mine. But you will be a kingdom of priests to serve Me.' "

Matthew 13:47-58. Jesus taught the crowds by the lake. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a net. It is let down into the lake to catch all kinds of fish. When it is full, the fishermen pull it up on the shore. They sit down and gather the good fish into baskets. But they throw the bad fish away. This is how it will be on judgment day. The angels will come. They will separate the people who did what is wrong from those who did what is right. They will throw the evil people into the blazing furnace. There the evil ones will weep and grind their teeth. Do you understand all these things?" "Yes," they replied. After this Jesus went to Nazareth to visit his mother and her other children. He taught in the local synagogue. Many were amazed but they found it difficult to accept Him as a prophet or their Messiah. He performed only a few miracles there because of their lack of faith.

Thank You God for reminding us how Your teachings through Moses and through Jesus were often rejected despite at first saying "Yes". Please forgive any lack of faith in serving You and following Your Messiah, our Saviour. Amen.

2nd September 2024.

Amos 1 to 9 (NIV) describes God's judgement on Israel and its neighbours alike. "Prepare to meet your God" (4:12). "Seek the LORD God Almighty and live!" (5:6). "Let justice roll like a river and righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (5:24). However, after exile in Babylon, God promised, "I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them" (9:15).

Philippians 2:1-11 (NIRV). Paul says, "Agree with one another by having the same love as Christ. Be one in spirit in the way you think and act... Be humble and value others more than yourselves. None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others. As you deal with each other, you should think and act as Jesus did. In his very nature he was God. Jesus was equal with God. But Jesus did not take advantage of that fact. Instead, He made Himself nothing by taking on the nature of a servant... He was humble and obeyed God completely. He did this even though it led to His death on a cross. But God lifted Him up to the highest place. God gave Him the name that is above every name. When the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone will kneel down to worship Him. Everyone in Heaven and on Earth and under the Earth will kneel down to worship Him. Everyone's mouth will say that Jesus Christ is Lord! And God the Father will receive the glory."

Thank You God for the records that confirm Your everlasting love for Your people Israel and the judgement You pass on them when they and the nations around them do wrong. Help us all this day to adopt "the same love as Christ", Your Messiah. Hasten the time when "everyone in Heaven

and on Earth and under the Earth will kneel down to worship Him" and may You "receive the glory". Amen.

3rd September 2014.

Judges 11 and 12 records the story of Jephthah who led Israel for six years. He had the background reputation of a great warrior. He was born to a prostitute and his brothers drove him away from home. (11:1-2) Some years later, the elders of Israel sent for Jephthah to help fight against the Ammonites. He successfully defeated them and saved Israel. (11:8,32-33)

Hebrews 11 is the famous chapter of people who lived in the Old Testament period who had great faith in God. "Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see. That is what the people of long ago were praised for. We have faith. We believe that everything was made when God commanded it. That is why we believe that what we see was not made out of what could be seen." (11:1-3) Then follows a list of 16 men and women of faith, all with very different backgrounds. "But none of them received what God had promised for us!" (11:39) The writer goes on to tell us to throw off everything that hinders our walk of faith in Jesus. He is "the author and finisher of our faith. He suffered the shame of the cross because of the joy he was looking forward to. Then He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." He did this so that we will not grow weary and lose our faith and hope in God. (12:1-3)

Father and Jesus in Heaven, thank You that the writer of Hebrews had faith to believe You created the world and called many people to show their faith in You. We see that these men and women were from very different backgrounds as was Your servant Jephthah. Help us to realise that our former mental, spiritual and physical backgrounds will not hinder Your purpose and provision if we walk in faith. Help us not to "grow weary and lose our faith and hope in God". Amen.

4th September 2024.

Exodus chapters 20 to 24. After Moses read out the Ten Commandments of God's new covenant with Israel (chapter 20) plus His additional 613 laws (chapters 21-23), the people replied, "We will do everything the LORD God Almighty has told us to do." Then Moses took the blood [of sacrificed bulls] and sprinkled it on the people. He said, "This is the blood that puts the covenant into effect." (24:3-8).

Hebrews 9:11-15. "Christ came to be the Great High Priest of the good things already here now... He did not enter by spilling the blood of goats and young bulls. He entered the Most Holy Room by spilling His own blood. He did it once and for all time. In this way, He paid the price to set us free from sin forever. The blood of goats and bulls is sprinkled on people... whom the law called 'unclean', to make them holy. That makes them 'clean' on the outside. But Christ offered Himself to God... So how much cleaner will the blood of Christ make us! It washes away our feelings of guilt for committing sin which leads to death. But now we can serve the living God. That is why Christ is the go-between of a new covenant. Those God calls to Himself will receive the eternal gift He promised now that Christ has died to save them. He died to set them free from the sins they committed under the first covenant." This covenant was first given to Noah then confirmed to Abraham and to Moses.

Thank You Father God for confirming the importance of repentance and forgiveness through sacrificed blood to Noah after You destroyed the unfaithful families of Your 'first Adam'. Thank You for renewing Your covenant through Abraham and Moses with many additional promises and laws. Thank you that in Jesus, Your 'second Adam', we are saved through the sacrifice of His innocent blood. Help us to obey Your laws and commandments through faith in Christ alone. Amen.

5th September 2024.

Lamentations 5:19-22. Jeremiah wrote, "LORD God Almighty, You rule forever! Your throne lasts from generation to generation. But why have You deserted us for so long? Lord, please bring us back to You... Make our lives like new again. Or have you completely turned away from us?"

Matthew 24:2-14. Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem which happened in the year 70 AD. Then He told His disciples about the end of the present time we live in. "Keep watch! Be careful that no-one fools you. Many will come in My name and claim, 'I am the Messiah!' They will fool many people. You will hear about wars and future wars. Do not be alarmed. Those things must happen. But the end still isn't here. Nation will fight against nation. Kingdom will fight against kingdom. People will go hungry. There will be earthquakes in many places. All these are like the beginning of birth pains. Then people will hand you over to be treated badly and killed. All nations

will hate you because of Me. At that time, many will turn away from their faith. They will hate each other. They will hand each other over to their enemies. Many false prophets will appear. They will fool many people. Because evil will grow, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who remains strong in the faith will be saved. This Good News of God's Kingdom will be preached in the whole world. It will be a witness to all nations. Then the end will come."

Dear God, too often we lament and say, "Restore our days of old!" Many of our brothers and sisters have lost everything! You are God. Help us to rejoice over what we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. Enable us Lord to use what we have to help the poor in these terrible days that You predicted would happen. We praise You for those who are being saved in the ministry of God's word. Amen.

6th September 2024.

Ruth 1:15-22. Naomi said, "Your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." But Ruth replied, "Do not try to make me leave you and go back. Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God... I will not let even death separate you from me. If I do, may the LORD your God punish me greatly." Naomi stopped trying to make her go back... So Naomi returned from Moab with Ruth, her daughter-in-law. They arrived in Bethlehem just when people were beginning to harvest the barley.

Acts 6:8-15 records the time when Stephen was arrested for preaching the Good News of Jesus the Christ. They found witnesses who were willing to tell lies. "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place. He also speaks against the Law. We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place. He says Jesus will change the practices that Moses handed down to us." All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked at Stephen. They saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Father God, we thank you for the amazing story of Ruth, a young woman from Moab, whom You used to visit Bethlehem in Israel. She had a child who became the ancestor of David, Israel's famous king. We also note the story of Mary, a young woman from Nazareth, whom You used to visit Bethlehem. She too had a child there who became King Jesus, Israel's Messiah. We note too the opposition in Israel to Jesus of Nazareth. Thank You Father for Your amazing purpose and provision of the family line of King David in the town of Bethlehem and our Saviour, Israel's Messiah, 1350 years later. May these Bible truths be taught and believed and fully understood in these last days as we, like Stephen, prepare the way for the return of Jesus. Amen.

9th September 2024.

Micah 2:1-4. "How terrible it will be for those who plan to harm others by making evil plans before they even get out of bed! As soon as daylight comes, they carry out their plans because they have the power to do it. If they want fields or houses, they take them. They cheat people out of their homes and their property. So the LORD God Almighty says to them, "I am planning to send trouble on you. You will not be able to save yourselves from it... At that time people will mock you by singing a song of sadness, 'We are totally destroyed. Our enemies have divided up our land. The LORD has taken it away from us! He has given our fields to those who turned against us.'"

Philemon verses 4 to 7. Paul writes to his friend. "I always thank my God when I remember you in my prayers. That is because I hear about your love for all God's people. I also hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus. I pray that what we share by believing will help you understand even more... the good things we share by believing in Christ. Your love has given me great joy. It has encouraged me. My brother, you have renewed the hearts of the Lord's people."

Dear God Almighty. Thank You for Paul's letter which verifies the nature of Christ in other true believers. He confirms that Philemon's acts of love "will help you understand even more". Unlike non-believers who plan evil "before they even get out of bed"! Forgive us Lord for any wrong thoughts as we wake up each morning. Help us to reject any false dreams, ideas or fantasies that we know are not of You, even if we "have the power to do it". May we seek You daily for your Holy Spirit's guidance. Thank you for Your warning that You will deal with unrighteous people in the same way they deal with their neighbours. Amen.

10th September 2024.

Psalms 119:41-48. "LORD, show me Your faithful love. Save me as You have promised. Then I can answer anyone who makes fun of me, because I trust in Your word. Help me always to tell the truth about how faithful You are. I have put my hope in Your laws. I will always obey Your Law, for ever

and ever. I will lead a full and happy life, because I have tried to obey Your rules. I will talk about your covenant laws to kings. I will not be put to shame. I take delight in obeying Your commands because I love them. I reach out for Your commands that I love. I do this so that I may think deeply about Your guidance."

Matthew 22:34-40. The Pharisees heard that the Sadducees were unable to answer Jesus. So the Pharisees got together. One of them was an authority on the Law. So he tested Jesus with a question. "Teacher," he asked, "which is the most important commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied, "'Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love Him with all your mind.' (Deuteronomy 6:5) This is the first and most important commandment. And the second is like it. 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself.' (Leviticus 19:18) Everything that is written in the Law and the Prophets is based on these two commandments."

Thank You heavenly Father for the passion, compassion and understanding we find in Your written word. Thank You that Your commandments were upheld by Jesus our Saviour but not the man-made rules added by the Pharisees and Sadducees. Help us to "trust in Your word" and not in our own understanding. Help us to see the fulfilment of Your commandments in Jesus Christ. Help us to believe in Your new covenant of eternal salvation in and through the 'blood of the Lamb of God' through His sacrifice on the cross for our sins. For Christ's sake who died for all. Amen.

11th September 2024.

Leviticus 20:1-8. After giving Moses over 600 more laws for the people of Israel to obey, He said to Moses, "Suppose a person sacrifices one of his children to the god Molek... He must be put to death by throwing stones at him... He has made My sacred tent 'unclean'. He has treated My name as if it were not holy... I will also separate all those who follow him by joining themselves to Molek. They are not faithful to Me. If someone seeks advice from people who receive messages from those who have died and talk to the spirits of the dead and do what those people say, then they have not been faithful to Me. So I will turn against them. I will separate them from their people. So set yourselves apart for Me. Be holy. Obey My rules and follow them. I am the LORD God Almighty. I make you holy.' "

Acts 11:19-24. After a time of much persecution, "Some believers had been scattered by the suffering that unbelievers had caused them. They were scattered after Stephen was killed. Those believers travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. But they spread the word only among Jews. Some believers from Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch. There they began to speak to Greeks (Gentiles) also. They told them the Good News about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's power was with them. Large numbers of people believed and turned to the Lord. The church in Jerusalem heard about this. So they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad. He told them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts... Large numbers of people came to know the Lord."

Father God we see how You established Your truth, first through Moses then through the apostles of Your Messiah and our Saviour, Jesus the Christ. We seek Your favour in our own ministry of Your truth. Amen.

12th September 2024.

Job 24. Poor Job asks, "Why doesn't the Mighty One set a time for judging sinful people? Why do those who know Him have to keep waiting for that day?" Job then lists a great number of sinful actions and attitudes of the people living 3500 years ago. He included moving boundary stones to steal neighbour's sheep; lack of compassion for orphans and widows; driving away the poor people; forcing people to pay their debts; ignoring those who are dying or wounded. "Yet God doesn't charge anyone with doing what is wrong... For a while they are honoured... Then they die like everyone else!"

2 Thessalonians 1:3-12. Paul writes, "Brothers and sisters, we should always thank God for you. That is only right, because your faith is growing more and more. We also thank God that the love you all have for one another is increasing. So among God's churches we boast about the fact that you do not give up easily. We boast about your faith in all the suffering and testing you are going through. All of this proves that when God judges, He is fair. So you will be considered worthy to enter God's Kingdom. You are suffering for his Kingdom. God is fair. He will pay back trouble to those who give you trouble. He will help you who are troubled. And He will also help us." (1:3-7) This is written in the context of Christ Himself will punish those who do not obey the Gospel (1:8)

"Keeping this in mind, we never stop praying for you... We pray that He will make perfect all that you have done by faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus will receive glory through what you have done." (1:11-12)

Thank you God for the example of Paul towards fellow-believers, unlike the example of poor Job's friends! Help us to care for the poor and needy as witnessed by Job to the glory of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

13th September 2024.

Jeremiah 9:21-26. "Death has climbed in through our windows. It has entered our forts. It has removed the children from the streets and taken the young men out of the market. Say, 'The LORD God Almighty announces, "Dead bodies will be like human waste lying in the open fields. They will lie there like grain that is cut down at harvest time. No one will gather them up." The LORD says, "Do not let wise people boast about how wise they are. Do not let strong people boast about how strong they are. Do not let rich people boast about how rich they are... They should boast only that they have the understanding to know Me. I want them to know that I am the LORD. No matter what I do on Earth, I am always kind, fair and right. And I take delight in this," announces the Lord.' " Jeremiah then warns that God will punish those who are uncircumcised in their hearts.

2 Timothy 4:1-5. "I give you a command in the sight of God and Christ Jesus. Christ will judge the living and the dead. Because He and His kingdom are coming, here is the command I give you. Preach the word. Be ready to serve God in good times and bad. Correct people's mistakes. Warn them. Encourage them with words of hope. Be very patient as you do these things. Teach them carefully. The time will come when people will not accept true teaching. Instead, they will try to satisfy their own desires. They will gather a large number of teachers around them. The teachers will say what the people want to hear. The people will turn their ears away from the truth. They will turn to stories that are not true. But I want you to keep wise no matter what happens. Do not fail when times are hard. Work to spread the Good News. Do everything God has given you to do." *Thank You Father God. Amen.*

16th September 2024.

Jeremiah 32:44 is where the LORD God Almighty promises to restore the land once occupied by Benjamin and Judah in and around Jerusalem after the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. Luke 10:1-20 is when Jesus sent out 72 of His followers. He told them, "The harvest is huge, but the workers are few. So ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals... When you enter a house, first say, 'May this house be blessed with peace.' If someone there works to bring peace, your blessing of peace will rest on them... When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is given to you. Heal the sick people who are there. Tell them, 'God's Kingdom has come near to you.' But what if you enter a town and are not welcomed? Then go into its streets and say, 'We wipe from our feet even the dust of your town. We do it to warn you. But here is what you can be sure of. God's Kingdom has come near.' ...Whoever does not accept you does not accept Me. But whoever does not accept Me does not accept the One who sent Me." The 72 returned with joy. They said, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we speak in Your name." Jesus replied, "I have given you authority to walk all over snakes and scorpions. You will be able to destroy all the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you. But do not be glad when the evil spirits obey you. Instead, be glad that your names are written in Heaven." *Heavenly Father, thank You for restoring the land around Jerusalem to Your people to prepare for the ministry of Your Messiah, Christ Jesus our Saviour. Expand Your Kingdom today among Jews and Gentiles as followers of Jesus proclaim the Good News of salvation in Christ. Amen.*

17th September 2024.

Exodus 18:13-26. 'Moses took his seat to serve the people as their judge. They stood around him from morning until evening. His father-in-law Jethro saw everything Moses was doing for the people. He said, "You are trying to do too much for the people. You are the only judge. And all these people are standing around you from morning until evening." Moses answered, "The people come to me to find out what God wants them to do... I decide between them. I tell them about God's rules and instructions." Jethro replied, "You will just get worn out...There is too much work for you. You cannot possibly handle it by yourself. I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must continue to speak to God for the people. Take their problems to Him. Teach them His rules and

instructions. Show them how to live and what to do. But choose men of ability from all the people. They must have respect for God. You must be able to trust them. Appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Let them serve the people as judges. But have them bring every difficult case to you. They can decide the easy ones themselves. That will make your load lighter. If this is what God wants and if you do it, then you will be able to carry the load." Moses listened to Jethro and everything he said. Soon after this, the people camped near Mount Sinai where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and over 600 other laws.

John 3:21. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Whoever lives by the truth comes into the light. They live by the truth with God's help. They come into the light so that it will be easy to see their good deeds." "

Father God, thank You for Your truth revealed through Moses and Your Messiah, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Help us to apply it to as many people as possible in the way Jethro advised. Amen.

18th September 2024.

Joshua 14:6-15. This records the allocation of land in Canaan to Caleb, one of the spies that Moses sent into the Promised Land before they crossed the River Jordan. Caleb said to Joshua, "Moses sent me to check out the land. I was 40 years old at that time. I brought back an honest report to him. I told him exactly what I had seen. Several other men of Israel went with me. What they reported worried the people. But I followed the LORD my God with my whole heart. So Moses made a promise to me. 'The land you have walked on will be your share and your children forever. That's because you have followed the LORD my God with your whole heart.' That was 45 years ago... So give me this hill country the LORD promised me that day." Then Joshua blessed Caleb. He gave him Hebron as his share. Ever since that time Hebron has belonged to Caleb because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, with his whole heart.

2 Corinthians 1:12-13. Paul writes, "Here is what we take pride in. Our sense of what is right and wrong shows us how we act. We have lived with honour and godly honesty. We have depended on God's grace and not on the world's wisdom. We lived that way most of all when we were dealing with you. We therefore write only what you can read and understand."

Father God, we thank You for Paul's honesty in what he said to God's people, ignoring the wisdom of the world. We also see how Joshua was glad to bless Caleb and his family for his honesty at the important stage of establishing the state of Israel. Help us all to realise the importance of living with honour and God-given honesty in our progress in life. Help us to realise the importance to You of how our actions in faith affect Your plans for our own future and that of others. Amen.

19th September 2024.

Ezekiel 37 records the passage of the "Valley of Dry Bones". God told his prophet Ezekiel to pray over the dead bones of many people. He did this and they came alive like a huge army (v.10). Then God said, "These bones stand for all the people of Israel... Tell them, the LORD and King says, 'My people, I am going to open up your graves. I am going to bring you out of them. I will take you back to the land of Israel... Then you will know that I am the LORD God Almighty. You are My people. I will put my Spirit in you. And you will live again. I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I have spoken.' "

1 Timothy 6:11-16 gives Paul's commands to Timothy. "Try hard to do what is right and godly. Have faith, love and gentleness. Hold on to what you believe. Fight the good fight along with all other believers. Take hold of eternal life. You were chosen for it when you openly told others what you believe. Many witnesses heard you... In the sight of God and Christ, I give you a command. Obey it until our Lord Jesus Christ appears. Then no one can find fault with it or you. God will bring Jesus back at a time that pleases Him. God is the greatest King of all kings and Lord of all lords. He is immortal and lives in light that no one can get close to. No one has seen Him. No one can see Him. Honour and power belong to Him forever. Amen."

Thank You Father for the wise instructions Paul gives us all through Timothy. Paul knew about the disobedience of his forefathers at the time of Ezekiel and valued being born at the right time to instruct others in following their Messiah, Jesus the Christ. May we, too, value the time we have been born to prepare for His return. Amen.

20th September 2024.

Isaiah 14:4-27. God sent a warning through His prophet Isaiah to the Philistines who lived in Gaza. "You can be sure that what I have planned will happen... I will crush the Assyrians in my land... The

yokes they put on My people will be removed. The heavy load they put on their shoulders will be taken away." Isaiah then applies this prophecy to the Philistines. "That is how the LORD God Almighty carries out His plan all over the world. He reaches out His powerful hand to punish all the nations." The Philistines were destroyed in the year 604 BC by the Babylonians, freeing Israel from persecution.

Colossians 2:6-16. Paul warns the Jewish and Gentile believers, "You received Christ Jesus as Lord. So keep on living your lives in Him... Grow strong in what you believe, just as you were taught... Make sure no-one controls you... Their ideas depend on human teachings and the basic spiritual powers of this world. They do not depend on Christ. God's whole purpose is to live in Christ in human form. Because you belong to Christ, you have been made complete. He is the ruler over every power and authority. When you received Christ, your circumcision was not done by human hands. Instead, your circumcision was done [within] by Christ. He put away the person you used to be. At that time, sin's power ruled over you. When you were baptized, you were buried together with Christ. And you were raised to life together with Him... by believing in God's work. God himself raised Jesus from the dead... So do not let anyone judge you."

Father God, we thank You for the teachings of Your servant Paul who told the early believers, "Make sure no-one controls you... You belong to Christ... who is the ruler over every power and authority." Thank You for Your plans to free Your people from evil powers now as in Isaiah's time. May Jewish and Gentile believers acknowledge this is true. Amen.

23rd September 2024.

Numbers 15:22-31 shows the mercy of God for those Israelites who sinned without realising it. God told Moses, "Suppose you fail to keep any of the commands of the LORD God Almighty without meaning to. And suppose they do not know they have sinned. Then the whole community must offer a young bull in sacrifice as a burnt offering. Its smell will please the LORD. Along with it, they must offer the required grain offering and drink offering. They must also sacrifice a male goat for a sin offering. With it the priest will pay for the sin of the whole community of Israel. Then they will be forgiven... The same law applies to everyone who sins without meaning to. It does not matter whether they are an Israelite or an outsider. But suppose someone sins on purpose and speaks evil things against the LORD. They must be separated from the community of Israel. They have not respected what the LORD has said. They have broken the LORD's commands."

Matthew 23. After teaching the importance of loving God and loving your neighbour (22:34-39), Jesus accused the religious leaders of doing seven wrong things (23:13,15,16,23,25,27,29). He then said, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and throw stones in order to kill those who are sent to you. Many times I have wanted to gather your people together. I have wanted to be like a hen who gathers her chicks under her wings. And you would not let Me! Look, your house is left empty. I tell you, you will not see Me again until you say, 'Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the LORD! (Psalm 118:26)' "

Forgive us Lord Jesus for any wrong teachings which leaves the house of God empty. Thank You Father God for Your readiness to forgive those "who sin without meaning to". Help us to remember to love You and our neighbours and keep Your commandments. For Christ's sake who fulfilled them all for our salvation. Amen.

24th September 2024.

Obadiah verses 15 to 21 records the vision of Obadiah, a minor prophet of Israel whose name means 'servant of the LORD'. "The day of the LORD is near for all the nations. Others will do to you what you have done to them. You will be paid back for what you have done. Edomites made Zion, My holy mountain, impure by drinking and celebrating there. All the nations will drink from the cup of My anger... They will vanish. But on Mount Zion some of My people will be left alive. I will save them. Zion will be My holy mountain once again. The people of Jacob will again receive the land as their own... They will set Edom on fire and no-one will be left alive among Esau's people." The LORD has spoken. Israelites from the Negev Desert will take over Esau's mountains. Israelites from the western hills will possess the land of the Philistines. They will take over the territories of Ephraim and Samaria. Israelites from the tribe of Benjamin will possess the land of Gilead... And the kingdom will belong to the LORD.

Hebrews 2:14 to 3:1. Jesus became human like us in order to die for us. He did this to destroy the one who rules over the kingdom of death, the devil. He sets people free from the slavery

and fear of death. He came as one of the family of Abraham to serve as a High Priest. He paid for the sins of the people by dying for them. He also suffered under temptation so is able to help all who suffer in the same way. So keep thinking of Him as your High Priest.

Thank You again LORD God Almighty for declaring Your purposes for the children of Abraham and the Promised Land of Your choosing. Thank You for sending Your Son as Israel's Messiah and Saviour of the world. Help us to trust in His sacrifice to free us from yielding to temptation. Amen.

25th September 2024.

1 Samuel 1:24-28. The book of 1 Samuel begins with the desperate prayers of Hannah for a son. She promised to "give him to the LORD God Almighty all the days of his life" if her prayers were answered (1:13). After Samuel was born, 'she brought him to the LORD's house with a bull that was three years old... After the bull was sacrificed, Hannah and her husband Elkanah brought the boy to Eli the priest. Hannah said to Eli, "I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD for a son... I prayed for this child. The LORD has given me what I asked Him for. So now I am giving him to the LORD. As long as he lives he will be given to the LORD." And that is where Samuel worshiped the LORD God Almighty.'

Romans 2:2-11. Paul says, "We know that when God judges those who do evil things, he judges fairly... So how do you think you will escape when God judges you? ...Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to turn you away from your sins? But you are stubborn... The day of God's anger is coming. Then His way of judging fairly will be shown. God 'will give back to each person what they have done' (Psalm 62:12). God will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good... But there will be trouble and suffering for everyone who does evil. That is meant first for the Jews, then for the Gentiles. But there will be glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good. First for the Jews, then for the Gentiles. God treats everyone the same."

Thank You Father God for reminding us of the sacrifice of Hannah and Elkanah in seeking a son and then dedicating him to You. Help us also to remember Paul's words, "God's kindness is meant to turn you away from your sins" through our sacrifice to "keep on doing good". Amen.

26th September 2024.

Psalms 18:1-4. These are the words of God's chosen king David when he was delivered from his enemies. "I love you, LORD. You give me strength. The LORD God Almighty is my rock and my place of safety. He is the God who saves me. My God is my rock... He is like a shield to me. He is the power that saves me. He is my place of safety. I called out to the LORD. He is worthy of praise. He saved me from my enemies."

1 Corinthians 1:10-18. Paul wrote to the New Testament church of Jews and Gentiles in Corinth. "Brothers and sisters, I make my appeal to you. I do this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I ask that all of you agree with one another in what you say. I ask that you do not take sides. I ask that you are in complete agreement in all that you think. My brothers and sisters, I have been told you are arguing with one another... Christ did not send me to baptize you. He sent me to preach the Good News (of salvation in Christ alone). He commanded me not to preach with worldly wisdom and fancy words. That would take all the power away from the cross of Christ. The message of the cross seems foolish to those who are lost and dying. But it is God's power to us who are being saved."

Thank You Father God for the examples of David and Paul of faith in You. Thank You that they understood Your calling, purpose and provision in this world for Your eternal plan of salvation. This was fulfilled through the sacrifice of Israel's Messiah as a Son of God in the form of a son of man. May we live in unity and teach these Bible truths and the Good News of salvation in Christ alone. Prompt us especially to teach them to our children at home, at school and at church. Amen.

27th September 2024.

Jeremiah chapter 44 records the word of the LORD God Almighty to Jeremiah regarding the Jews who left the Promised Land and moved back to Egypt to live. They began to worship Egyptian gods and refused to obey the Law given to Moses. God warned them that they would all perish. They refused to listen so failed to escape the destruction of the Babylonian forces.

Galatians 3:17-22. Paul spoke to the Jewish believers in Jesus their Messiah. "The Law (given to Moses) came 430 years after the promise (given to Abraham). But the Law does not remove God's covenant promise. The covenant had already been made by God. So the Law does not do away with

the promise. The great gift that God has for us does not depend on the Law... God gave it freely to Abraham through a promise. Then why was the Law given at all? It was added because of human sin as a warning until God's promised Seed (Messiah) had come... So is the Law opposed to God's promise? Certainly not... The promise comes through faith in Jesus Christ."

Father God, thank You for Your Law that reveals Your truth about our sinful nature and need of a Saviour. Thank You for Your promise made to Abraham that a Messiah would come to fulfil all the requirements of the Law on our behalf. May we understand these things and act wisely in these difficult days. Do not let us behave like your people at the time of the Babylonian empire who sinned against Your Law and ran away and sinned further by worshipping foreign gods! Thank You that Your Law proves we cannot save ourselves nor make ourselves righteous in Your sight. Thank You that it shows clearly our need to trust in You for our salvation in Your Christ and Messiah. Thank you that Jesus Christ alone has saved us, even when we are found guilty by the Law, by taking the punishment Himself which we deserve. Amazing grace!

30th September 2024.

Habakkuk 3:17-18. "The fig trees might not bud. The vines might not produce any grapes. The olive crop might fail. The fields might not produce any food. There might not be any sheep in the pens. There might not be any cattle in the barns. But I will still be glad because of what the LORD God Almighty has done. God my Saviour fills me with joy."

Galatians 3:23-29. "Before faith in Christ came, we were guarded by the Law (given to Moses)... The Law was put in charge of us until Christ came. He came so that we might be made right with God by believing in Him. Now faith in Christ has come, the law is no longer in charge of us. So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God by believing in Christ. This is because all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Him. (You have put Him on as if He were your clothes.) ...You are now all one in Christ Jesus. You who belong to Christ are Abraham's seed. So you will receive whatever God promised him."

Thank You Father God for once again reminding us, through Your prophet Habakkuk, to rejoice in Your loving kindness, even when life becomes difficult. Thank You for the guidelines in the Law You gave to Moses. Thank You for choosing to sacrifice the blood of Your only Son to fulfil all the requirements of the holy Law. Thank You for Your amazing Good News that "in Christ Jesus you are all children of God by believing in Christ". Thank that we are now able "to fulfil all the requirements of the holy Law" through the promised work of Your Holy Spirit. Thank You for the Spirit at work within all who believe that You sent Jesus to take our punishment for failing to obey the Law. Thank You that we are all now united in Christ our Saviour. Thank You Jesus! Amen.

1st October 2024.

Judges 13:1-25. 'The Israelites did evil in the sight of the LORD God Almighty. So the LORD handed them over to the Philistines for 40 years. A man named Manoah from the tribe of Dan had a wife who was unable to have children. The angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "You will have a baby boy... He will be set apart to God and will save Israel from the power of the Philistines... The woman had a baby boy. She named him Samson. As he grew up, the LORD blessed him and began to work in his life while he lived in Dan.'

Acts 16:6-15. 'Paul and his companions ... tried to enter Bithynia. But the Spirit of Jesus would not let them. So they went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision. He saw a man from Macedonia begging him. "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" They decided that God had called them to preach there the Good News of salvation in Christ... From there they travelled to Philippi... On the Sabbath day they went outside the city gate down to the river to find a place of prayer... One of the women was Lydia, and her business was selling purple cloth. She was a worshiper of the LORD God Almighty. The LORD opened her heart to accept Paul's message. She and her family were baptized.'

Thank You LORD God for how You established Your provision for Your people. Thank You for the miraculous birth of Sampson who defeated the Philistines but at the cost of his own life. Thank you for the account of Lydia who believed in You and then believed the Good News of Jesus Christ, Your Messiah. She became the first believer in Europe which later became a centre for the Christian faith that spread across the world. We pray You will send Your Spirit to prepare even more people to put their trust in You and Your Messiah our Saviour. Amen.

2nd September 2024.

Amos 7:10-17 In the days when Israel sinned and stopped worshipping the LORD their God, Amos prophesied. "The people of Israel will be taken away as prisoners and carried off from their own land." The king told Amos to go away but Amos explained further. "I was not a prophet... I was a shepherd... But the LORD God Almighty took me away from taking care of the flock. He said to me, 'Go! Prophesy... Your sons and daughters will be killed by swords. Your land will be measured and divided up... The people of Israel will surely be taken away as prisoners and carried off from their own land.'" Later, the LORD told Amos, "I will bring my people Israel back home. I will bless them with great success again. They will rebuild the destroyed cities and live in them... They will never again be removed from the land I have given them." (9:14-15)

Titus 1:10-16. Paul writes, "Many people refuse to obey God. All they do is talk about things that mean nothing... They are making trouble for entire families. They do this by teaching things they should not teach... So give a strong warning to people who refuse to obey God. Then they will understand the faith correctly and pay no attention to Jewish stories that are not true. They will no longer listen to human commands of people who turn away from the truth... Their minds and their sense of what is right and wrong are twisted. They claim to know God. But their actions show they do not know Him. They are hated by God. They refuse to obey Him." In the next chapter, Paul begins, "What you teach must agree with true teaching."

Father God, we pray that Your people this day will seek You for Your truth in order to stand firm in this age of sin and persecution. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour and Israel's Messiah. Amen.

3rd October 2024.

Exodus 24:4-8. This confirms God's covenant with His people Israel through Moses. This was first given to Noah, then to Abraham. This time it was written down. 'Moses built an altar at the foot of the mountain. He set up 12 stone pillars for the 12 tribes of Israel. Then he sent men to sacrifice burnt offerings... Moses put half of the blood in bowls. He splashed the other half on the altar. Then he took the covenant and read it to the people. They answered, "We will do everything the LORD God Almighty has told us to do. We will obey Him." Then Moses took the blood in the bowls and sprinkled it on the people. "This is the sacrificed blood that makes the covenant effective. The LORD has made this covenant with you."'

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. Paul wrote, "You know the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. People will be saying that everything is peaceful and safe. Then suddenly they will be destroyed... No-one will escape. But, you are not in darkness. So that day should not surprise you. All of you are children of the light... So let us not be like the others. They are asleep. Instead, let us be wide awake and in full control of ourselves... So let us show self-control and put on the armour of faith and love. Let us put on the hope of salvation like a helmet... He chose us to receive salvation because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done. Jesus died for us. Some will be alive when He returns. Others will be dead. Then we will all live together with Him. So encourage one another with the hope you have. Build each other up."

Thank you Father God for reconfirming Your covenant with Your faithful people down the centuries. Thank You for Your final covenant fulfilled through Christ our Saviour who sacrificed His own innocent blood instead of the blood of animals. Amen.

7th October 2024.

Ezekiel 16:58-63. After the LORD God Almighty rebuked Israel for their extreme immorality, He said, "You will be punished for your impure conduct... in keeping with what you have done. I sealed with a promise the covenant I made with you. You broke My covenant but I will remember My covenant with you. I made it with you when you were young. Now I will make a new covenant with you which will last forever. Then you will remember how you have lived. You will [remember and] be ashamed when I give you back Samaria and Sodom... That cannot happen under My old covenant... Then you will know that I am the LORD. I will pay for all the sins you have committed. Then you will remember what you have done. You will be ashamed of it. Because of your shame, you will never speak against Me again."

1 Timothy 5:24-25. "The sins of some people are easy to see. They are already being judged for all the sins committed. Other sins will be judged later. In the same way, good works are easy to see. But even good works that are hard to see cannot stay hidden forever."

Thank You Father God for Your everlasting covenant which You made with mankind after Your new beginning with Noah's family. Thank You that You extended Your covenant with us through Abraham, Moses and David. Thank You also for Your reminder, through Ezekiel, of Your covenant which offers many blessings but also punishment and shame. Thank You that in Christ You tell us that You "pay for all the sins committed". Thank You also that You will continue to shame us through past memories so that we are not tempted to open our mouths against you ever again! Thank You that Paul warns us that some of our wrong ways will condemn us in the future. So help us to live righteously and hope for more evidence of Your blessings through our good works You do through us. Amen.

8th October 2024.

Job 40:6-9 After Job complained to God, Elihu came and spoke wisely to him (Chapters 32 to 37). Elihu concluded, "Everything that God Almighty does is fair and right. So He does not oppress people. He cares about all those who are wise in heart." Then God Himself spoke directly to Job. He asked Job many questions including: "Would you dare to claim that I am not being fair? Would you judge Me in order to make yourself seem right? Is your arm as powerful as Mine is?" In the final chapter, Job repents and the LORD blessed the last years of his life.

Acts 11:14-21 Peter was asked to explain to the early believers in Jerusalem why he had preached to non-Jews about the Good News of Jesus their Messiah. "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them. He came just as He had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered the Lord's words. 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' God gave them the same gift He gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. So who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?" When they heard this, they did not object any more. "So then, God has allowed even Gentiles to turn away from their sins." After this, 'believers from Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch. There they began to speak to Greeks also. They told them the Good News about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's power was with them. Large numbers of people believed and turned to the Lord.'

Father God, thank You for allowing Job to experience oppression and worldly advice before speaking to him through godly Elihu. Elihu prepared the way for Your act of mercy to bring repentance and salvation and blessing. Thank You also for sending Peter to preach to Gentiles who received salvation and Your Holy Spirit which prepared the way for the worldwide church of Christ. Amen.

9th October 2024.

Psalms 14. David wrote these words for musicians to offer public worship. "Foolish people say in their hearts 'There is no God'. They do all kinds of horrible and evil things... The LORD God Almighty looks down from Heaven. He wants to see if there are any who understand and trust in Him... Do all these people who do evil know nothing? They destroy God's people as if they were eating bread. They never call out to the LORD. But... God is among those who do right... The Lord is their place of safety. How I pray that the God who saves... will bless His people with great success again!

Philippians 2:1-5. Paul wrote, "So does belonging to Christ help you in any way? Does His love comfort you at all? Do you share anything in common because of the Holy Spirit? Has Christ ever been gentle and loving toward you? If any of these things has happened to you, then agree with each other in love. Be united in spirit in the way you think and behave. By doing this, you will make my joy complete. Do not do anything to get ahead of others. Do not live in pride. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves. Live for the good of others. You should think and live as Jesus did... Jesus was equal with God. But He did not take advantage of that fact. Instead, He made Himself nothing. He was made just like human beings. He took on the nature of a servant."

We thank you Almighty God for revealing Your divine nature in the hearts of your servants David and Paul. May we sing out like David how you "look down from Heaven on all people" to see who understands and trusts You and calls out to You! May our "joy be complete" like Paul when we share with others what it means to belong to Christ and welcome His love and Spirit at work in our lives! Amen.

10th October 2024.

Psalms 27 (NIV). "The LORD God Almighty is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked advance against me to condemn me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me,

my heart will not fear. (v.1-3) LORD, hear my voice when I call. Be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of You, 'Seek His face!' Your face, LORD, I will seek. Do not hide Your face from me. Do not turn Your servant away in anger. You have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Saviour." (v.7-9) "I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land. Wait for the LORD. Be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD." (v.13-14)

Matthew 12:1-8. 'One Sabbath day Jesus walked through the corn fields. His disciples were hungry. So they began to break off some heads of grain and eat them. The Pharisees saw this. They said to Jesus, "Look! It is against the Law to do this on the Sabbath day." Jesus answered, "Scripture says, 'I want mercy and not sacrifice.' (Hosea 6:6) You do not know what those words mean! If you did, you would not bring charges against those who are not guilty. The Son of Man [Jesus] is Lord of the Sabbath.'"

Thank You Jesus that You had the answer we need to speak kindly but firmly to those who seek to condemn us. The rules of the Pharisees had turned the Sabbath into a day of fear and judgement instead of joy and freedom to worship our God and our Saviour. We join with David in saying, "The LORD God Almighty is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? You have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Saviour." Amen.

11th October 2024.

Obadiah verses 15 to 21 records the vision of Obadiah, a minor prophet of Israel. "The day of the LORD God Almighty is near for all the nations. Others will do to you what you have done to them. You will be paid back for what you have done... All the nations will drink from the cup of My anger... Zion will be My holy mountain once again. The people of Jacob [Israel] will again receive the land as their own... They will set Edom on fire and no-one will be left alive among Esau's people. The LORD has spoken. Israelites will take over Esau's mountains and will possess the land of the Philistines. They will take over the territories of Ephraim and Samaria. Benjamin will possess the land of Gilead... And the kingdom will belong to the LORD."

2 Corinthians 10:2-6. Paul writes, "I am coming to see you. Please do not make me be as bold as I am toward some people! They think the way the people of this world live. I too live in the world, but I do not fight my battles the way the people of the world do. The weapons I fight with... have the power of God to destroy the camps of the enemy. But instead we seek to destroy every argument and every reason that keeps people from knowing God. We keep every thought under control in order to make it obey Christ. Until you have obeyed completely, we will be ready to punish you every time you do not obey!"

Father God, we note how Paul has Your authority to say, "We will be ready to punish you every time you do not obey!" But we also realise this is achieved by keeping "every thought under control in order to make it obey Christ". We therefore pray that Israel and its enemies will put their trust in You and in Jesus Christ Your Messiah in order that "the kingdom will belong to the LORD". Amen.

14th October 2024.

Psalms 66 is a testimony for singing. "Shout to Almighty God for joy everyone on Earth! Sing about the glory of His name! Give Him glorious praise! Say to Him, 'What wonderful things You do! Your power is so great that Your enemies bow down to You in fear. Everyone on Earth bows down to You. They sing praises to You.' (66:1-4) Come and hear, all you who have respect for God. Let me tell you what He has done for me. I cried out to Him with my mouth and praised Him with my tongue. If I had enjoyed having sin in my heart, the LORD would not have listened. But He has surely listened. He has heard my prayer. Give praise to God... He has not held back His love from me!" (66:16-20)

1 Corinthians 1:4-10. Paul writes, "I always thank my God for you. I thank Him because of the grace He has given to you who belong to Christ Jesus. You have been blessed in every way because of Him. You have been blessed in all your speech and knowledge. God has shown that what we have spoken to you about Christ is true. There is no gift of the Holy Spirit that you do not have. You are full of hope as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to come again. God will also keep you strong in faith to the very end. Then you will be without blame on the day our Lord Jesus Christ returns. God is faithful. He has chosen you to share life with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Paul has one request. "I ask that all of you agree with each another in what you say... and think."

Thank You heavenly Father for these testimonies from many years ago. Help us apply them today for ourselves. Also those who share in worshipping You in thanks to Christ our Saviour. Help us to "keep strong in faith to the very end." Amen.

15th October 2024.

Joshua 13:1-8. Joshua was very old. The LORD God Almighty said to him, "There are still very large areas of land that have not yet been taken over." It included all the areas controlled by five Philistine rulers. They ruled over Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron (13:3). The rest of the land that remained to be taken included parts of Lebanon (13:5). "Make sure you set that land apart for Israel as their share. Divide it up among the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh." The other half of Manasseh's tribe had already received the share of land Moses had given them east of the Jordan River with the tribes of Reuben and Gad (13:6-8).

Acts 4:1-10. After the healing of the lame beggar in the name and power of Jesus Christ, 'The priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees came up to the apostles and arrested Peter and John and put them in prison until the next day. But many who heard the message believed. The number of men who believed grew to about 5,000. The next day the rulers wanted to question them... Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said, "Rulers and elders of the people! Are you asking us to explain our actions? Do you want to know why we were kind to a man who could not walk? Then listen to this, you and all the people of Israel! You nailed Jesus Christ of Nazareth to the cross. But God raised Him from death. It is through the name of Jesus that this man stands healed in front of you." '

Thank you heavenly Father for revealing Your purposes 3500 years ago to Your people in Your promised land of Israel. Thank You this prepared the way in Jerusalem for the apostles to preach and heal in the power of the risen Christ, Israel's Messiah. Thank you that today, millions of believers worldwide await Christ's return to reign in person. Amen.

16th October 2024.

Exodus 25:10-22 describes the instructions God gave to Moses to build The Ark of the Covenant made from acacia wood. It was a sacred chest or box that held the Ten Commandments and 630 other commands for the Israelites. The cover included two golden cherubim facing each other with their wings spread upwards. God said, "Place the cover on top of the Ark. I will give you the tablets of the covenant laws. Put them in the Ark... I will meet with you above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the Ark. There I will give you all my commands for the Israelites." It was built in 1491BC by Bezalel (37:1-9). It was later placed in the Temple in Jerusalem for the atonement ceremonies to forgive sins and restore relationships with God our Creator. The atonement ceremonies and the laws inside the Ark were fulfilled 1500 years later through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17. Paul writes, "Do you not know that you yourselves are God's temple? Do you not know that God's Spirit lives among you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. God's temple is holy. And you all together are that temple."

Thank You Father God for establishing Your covenant laws with Your people in Israel 3500 years ago. Thank You for fulfilling them through Christ our Saviour for the world to experience "the atonement to forgive sins and restore relationships with God our Creator". The Ark and the Temple have been lost or destroyed for many centuries, but we praise You for re-establishing Your Temple among believers in all nations today. Help us to continue to walk in the light of Your Bible truth regarding the Old Testament laws. We acknowledge that we can only do this in the power of Your Holy Spirit promised through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Enable us to live and preach the Good News of salvation through Christ alone. Amen.

17th October 2024.

Daniel 2:19-23. God gave Daniel a vision. He showed him what the mystery [of king Nebuchadnezzar's dream] was all about. Then Daniel praised the God of Heaven. 'May God be praised for ever and ever! He is wise and powerful. He changes times and seasons. He removes some kings from power. He causes other kings to rule. The wisdom of those who are wise comes from Him. He gives knowledge to those who have understanding. He explains deep and hidden things. He knows what happens in the darkest places. And where He is, everything is light... I thank and praise You. You have given me wisdom and power and made known what we asked You for.'

2 Thessalonians 1-7. Paul wrote, "Pray that the Lord's message will spread quickly. Pray that others will honour it just as you did. And pray that we will be saved from sinful and evil people. Not everyone is a believer. But the Lord is faithful. He will strengthen you. He will guard you from the evil

one. We trust in the Lord. So we are sure that you are doing the things we tell you to do. And we are sure that you will keep on doing them. May the Lord fill your hearts with God's love. May Christ give you the strength to go on. Brothers and sisters... keep away from every believer who does not want to work and makes trouble. Keep away from any believer who does not live up to the teaching you received from us. Follow our example."

Thank You Father God for the belief and witness of Your chosen people Daniel and Paul. May we, too, seek to be wise witnesses of Your amazing truth. May we always read the Bible and act in the faith it reveals to trust You in all things. Guide us in our prayers for our spiritual leaders and other believers. Save us from sinful people and the evil one and from those who make trouble. Amen.

18th October 2024.

Genesis Chapter 6. The LORD God Almighty saw how bad the sins on Earth had become. He was very sad and said, "I created human beings, but I will wipe them out." But the LORD was very pleased with Noah. He was a godly man and walked faithfully with God. God told Noah, "I am going to put an end to everyone. So make yourself an ark out of cypress wood... I am going to bring a flood on the Earth. It will destroy all life under the sky. But I will make my covenant with you. You will go into the ark. Your sons and your wife and your sons' wives will enter with you. Two of every kind of bird and animal will come to you. All of them will be kept alive with you." Noah did everything as God commanded him. After the flood the LORD established His covenant with Noah and his family. The rainbow reminded everyone of His promises (Genesis 9:8-17).

Matthew 5:13-20. Jesus taught His disciples, "You are the salt of the Earth... You are the light of the world... Let your light shine so others can see it. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will bring glory to your Father in Heaven. Do not think I have come to get rid of what is written in the Law or in the Prophets. I have come to fulfil what is written. Heaven and Earth will disappear before the smallest letter disappears from the Law... Do not ignore even one of the least important commands... Instead, practice and teach these commands. Then you will be called important in the Kingdom of Heaven. You must be more godly than the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law."

Thank you Father God for establishing Your covenant with mankind, first through Noah then later through Abraham, Moses, David and finally fulfilled in the life and death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

21st October 2024.

Psalms 37:3-8 is a psalm of King David. *Trust* in the LORD God Almighty and do good. Then you will live in the land and enjoy its provision. *Delight* in the Lord. Then He will give you everything your heart really wants. *Commit* your life to the Lord... He will make your godly ways shine like the dawn. He will make your honest life shine like the sun at noon. *Be still* before the LORD and be patient and wait for Him to act. *Do not be upset* when other people succeed nor when they carry out their evil plans. *Avoid* being angry and *do not be afraid* which only lead to making wrong decisions.

1 John 2:15-20. "Do not love the world or anything in it. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. People who belong to this world try to satisfy what their sinful desires want to do. They long for what their sinful eyes look at. They take pride in what they have and what they do. All of this comes from the world. None of it comes from the Father. The people of this world and its evil desires are passing away. But whoever does what God wants them to do lives forever. Dear children, we are living in the last days. You have heard that the great enemy of Christ is coming. But even now many enemies of Christ have already come. That is how we know that these are the last days. These enemies left our community of believers.... By leaving they showed that none of them belonged to us. [However] you have received the Spirit from the Holy One. And all of you know the truth."

Father God, thank you for recording what is important for holy living through the writings of David and John. Also, thank You for the warnings about these last days before Christ returns. Thank You also for Your Holy Spirit living within us. Amen.

22nd October 2024.

Ruth 1:1-13. This story happened during the time before kings ruled Israel. There was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem went to live in the country of Moab with his wife and two sons. Naomi's husband died in Moab. Their two sons married women from Moab named Orpah and

Ruth. Then the two sons also died. So Naomi prepared to go from Moab back to her home in Israel with Orpah and Ruth. They started out but Naomi said to them, "Both of you go back to your own mother's home. May the LORD help each of you find rest in the home of another husband. Why would you want to come with me? My life is more bitter than yours. The LORD's power has turned against me!" But Ruth stayed with Naomi and they travelled to Bethlehem.

Acts 2:42-47. The followers of Jesus remained in Jerusalem and "studied what the apostles taught. They shared their lives together. They ate and prayed together. Everyone was amazed at what God was doing when the apostles performed many wonders and signs. All the believers shared everything they had. They sold property and other things they owned. They gave to anyone who was in need. Every day they met together in the Temple courtyard. They ate meals together in their homes. Their hearts were glad and sincere. They praised God. They were respected by all the people. Every day the Lord added to their numbers."

Thank You Father God for the reminder of the sad story of Naomi. Yet through her and Ruth, You established Your purpose for Israel that led to the reign of King David. Then through his family, You sent the King of Kings, Israel's Messiah, to establish the Kingdom of Christ on Earth. May we rejoice with the followers of Jesus past, present and future and trust in Your provision in these sad days. And may we learn from Bible history of Your eternal purposes in Israel's Messiah. Amen.

23rd October 2024.

Ezekiel 28: 24-26. This prophecy declares God's purposes and blessing for Israel given around 590BC. "The people of Israel will no longer have neighbours who hate them. Those neighbours will not be like sharp and painful thorns any more. Then Israel will know that I am the LORD and King. I will gather the people of Israel together from the nations where they have been scattered. That will prove that I am holy and the nations will see it. Then Israel will live in their own land which I gave to my servant Jacob... They will build houses and plant vineyards and live in safety. I will punish their neighbours who told lies about them. Then Israel will know that I am the LORD their God."

1 Corinthians 4:9-13. Paul wrote, "God has put us apostles on display. We are like people sentenced to die in front of a crowd... Angels and people are staring at us. We are fools for Christ. But you are so wise in Christ! We are weak. But you are so strong! You are honoured. But we are looked down on! Up to this very hour we are hungry and thirsty. We are dressed in rags and treated badly. We have no homes. We work hard with our own hands. When others curse us, we bless them. When we are attacked, we put up with it. When others say bad things about us, we answer with kind words. We are the world's rubbish, right up to this moment."

Thank You Father God for confirming Your covenant blessings through Ezekiel given originally to Noah, Abraham and Moses. Thank You that Your covenant was fulfilled through Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ, Your Son and our Saviour. May Your people Israel continue to put their trust in You today and in Your written word. May Jews and Gentiles alike fully proclaim Your Bible truth even at risk of persecution, as with Paul and the other apostles. Help us to be "wise in Christ". Amen.

24th October 2024.

1 Samuel 25:26-33. Abigail met David and said, "Sir, the LORD has kept you from killing Nabal and his men. I have brought a gift for you... The LORD your God will certainly give you and your family line a kingdom that will last... The LORD will do for you every good thing he promised to do. He will appoint you ruler over Israel. When that happens, you will not have this heavy load on your mind about how you killed people without any reason."

Roman 4:13-18. Paul wrote, "Abraham and his family received a promise. God promised that Abraham would inherit the world... because of his faith, which made him right with God... All of Abraham's children will certainly receive the promise. And it is not only for those who are ruled by the Law. Those who have the same faith that Abraham had are also included. He is the father of us all. It is written, "I have made you a father of many nations." (Genesis 17:5) God considers Abraham to be our father... He became the father of many nations, exactly as God had promised."

Thank You Father God for the promise You made to Abraham as explained by Paul. Help us to believe we are all children of Abraham and trust in Your salvation plan through Israel's Messiah. Thank You that Abigail had Your awareness of the need to bless Abraham's descendant David, to stop him from doing wrong. She had the faith to believe that he would become a servant king one day. Thank You that through Abraham's family and King David's family, our Saviour and Servant King was born. Thank You that He now enables us to become part of Your worldwide family of believers.

Thank You for Your Old Testament Law and its fulfilment in Christ our Saviour. Help us to live by faith and prepare the way for our Servant King to reign on Earth. May we live without "a heavy load on our mind"! Amen.

25th October 2024.

Micah 5:2-4. The word of the LORD God Almighty was given to Israel's prophet Micah in the year 710BC. "Bethlehem, out of you will come for Me a ruler over Israel... The LORD will hand over His people to their enemies until the pregnant woman bears her promised Son... He will stand firm and be a Shepherd for His flock... The LORD His God will give Him the authority to rule... His greatness will reach from one end of Earth to the other." Micah also prophesied about the future destruction and deliverance of Israel. He concludes in faith (7:18-20), "You do not stay angry forever. Instead, You take delight in showing Your faithful love and concern for us. You will completely wipe out the evil things we have done. You will throw all our sins into the bottom of the sea. You will be faithful to Jacob's people and show your love to Abraham's children. You will do what You promised to do for our people long ago."

1 Peter 1:24 to 2:5. Peter quoted Isaiah, "All people are like grass. All their glory is like the flowers in the field. The grass dries up. The flowers fall to the ground. But the word of the Lord lasts forever." Peter continued, "And this is the word that was preached to you. So get rid of every kind of evil... As you come to Christ, you are being built into a house for worship. There you will be holy priests. You will offer spiritual sacrifices. God will accept them because of what Jesus Christ has done."

Father God in Heaven, accept our praise and worship "because of what Jesus Christ has done". Thank You for Your everlasting truth recorded in the Bible for our eternal salvation. Thank you for Micah's amazing words that out of Bethlehem would come Your promised "ruler over Israel" through Mary "bearing Your promised Son". Make us, Jews and Gentiles, Your "holy priests" today to sacrifice everything in serving You. Amen.

28th October 2024.

Esther 3:1-6. Mordecai's cousin Esther was made queen over 127 provinces ruled by King Xerxes. "After those events, King Xerxes honoured Haman... The king gave Haman a higher position than he had before and higher than the positions any other noble. All the royal officials at the palace gate got down on their knees to give honour to Haman. The king had commanded them to do it. But Mordecai refused to get down on his knees to give Haman any honour. The royal officials at the palace gate asked him 'Why do you not obey the king's command? ...Mordecai told them he was a Jew... So Haman was very angry. When he had found out who Mordecai's people were, he did not want to kill only Mordecai. He also looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people who were Jews everywhere in the kingdom of Xerxes.' Mordecai asked Esther to speak to the king. Then the king found out who Mordecai was and how he had helped to prevent the assassination of the king (6:1-2). King Xerxes then ordered that Jews in every city should be protected and their enemies destroyed (8:11).

1 Peter 2:6-8. "Scripture says, 'Look! I am placing a stone in Zion. It is a chosen and valuable stone; the most important stone in the building. The one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.' (Isaiah 28:16) This stone is very valuable to you who believe. But to people who do not believe, 'The stone the builders rejected has become the most important stone of all.' (Psalm 118:22) And, 'It is a stone that causes people to trip and stumble and fall.' " (Isaiah 8:14)

Thank You Father God for upholding Your people Israel and all who accept their Messiah as our rock and Saviour. Thank You for the words recorded in our Bibles by writers known and unknown. May we uphold Your Bible truth today and witness the fall of those who reject Jesus the Christ. Amen.

29th October 2024.

Job 33:12-14,28. Job's good friend Elihu comforted him. "God is greater than any human being. Why do you claim that God never answers anybody's questions? He speaks in one way and then another. But we may not even realise it." Elihu then testified, "I sinned. I made what is wrong appear to be right. But I was not punished as I should have been. God has set me free. He has kept me from going down into the darkness of the grave."

Matthew 5:3-11 records the teachings of Jesus known as the Beatitudes. "Blessed are those who are spiritually needy. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them. Blessed are those who are

sad. They will be comforted. Blessed are those who are humble. They will be given the Earth. Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for what is right. They will be filled. Blessed are those who show mercy. They will be shown mercy. Blessed are those whose hearts are pure. They will see God. Blessed are those who make peace. They will be called children of God. Blessed are those who suffer for doing what is right. The kingdom of Heaven belongs to them. Blessed are you when people make fun of you and hurt you because of Me. You are also blessed when they tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of Me." Then Jesus added, "Be joyful and glad. Your reward in Heaven is great. In the same way, people hurt the prophets who lived long ago."

Father God in Heaven, thank you for the comforting words Elihu gave to Your servant Job 3500 years ago. Especially we thank You for the comforting words that Jesus our Saviour gave to His followers 2000 years ago. Help us to understand them and apply them in these last days before His promised return. Thank You for Your mercy that He has "set us free". Help us to "be joyful and glad" and also encourage others with comforting words. Amen.

30th October 2024.

Ecclesiastes 4:1-2. "I looked and saw how much people are suffering on Earth. I saw their tears. They do not have anyone to comfort them. Power is on the side of those who treat them badly. Those who are suffering do not have anyone to comfort them. Then I decided that those who have already died are happier than those who are still alive." But later in 5:6-7 the writer says, "Do not let your mouth cause you to sin... What I said was a mistake... Dreaming too much and talking too much are meaningless. Instead, have respect for God."

1 Timothy 4:1-10. Paul writes, "The Holy Spirit clearly says that in the last days some people will leave the faith. They will follow spirits that will fool them. They will believe things that demons teach them. Teachings like those come from liars who pretend to be what they are not. Their sense of what is right and wrong has been destroyed... [For example] they do not allow people to get married. They also order them not to eat certain foods. But God created all foods... Everything God created is good and you should thank God for it. Then you will serve Christ Jesus well. You will show that you have grown in the truths of the faith. You will show that you have been trained by the good teaching you obeyed. Do not have anything to do with godless stories and silly tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. Training the body has some value. But being godly has physical and spiritual value. It promises help for this life and the life to come. This is the truth you can trust and accept completely. This is why we persevere. It is because we have put our hope in the living God. He is the Saviour of all people. Most of all, He is the Saviour of those who believe."

Thank you God for Your Bible truth and salvation in Jesus Christ alone. Amen.

31st October 2024.

Haggai 1. "The people of Judah say, 'It is not yet time to rebuild the LORD's Temple.' My Temple is still in ruins. But you are living in your houses with beautiful wooden walls... Think carefully about how you are living. You have planted many seeds. But the crops you have gathered are small. You eat but you never have enough. You drink but you are never full. You put on your clothes but you are not warm. You earn your pay but it will not buy everything you need. Think carefully about how you are living! Go up into the mountains. Bring down logs and use them to rebuild the Temple, My house. Then I will enjoy it. And you will honour Me... Because of what you have done, the earth has not produced its crops." ...Then everyone began to work on the Temple of the LORD who rules over all.

Revelation 16:5-7. Chapter 16 describes the 'seven bowls of God's anger' which tell of the terrible judgement for those who refuse to worship God Almighty. But an angel said, "Holy One, the way You judge is fair... Those who worship the beast have poured out the life blood of Your holy people and Your prophets. So you have given blood to drink to those who worship the beast. That is exactly what they deserve... LORD God Almighty who rules over all, the way You judge is true and fair."

Father God, thank You for reminding us how You withhold blessings from believers who put themselves first, as in the time of Haggai. Thank You for the Revelation You gave to John 600 years later to warn non-believers of the terrible events on Earth that will happen to everyone because of Your anger. Forgive us when we fail to honour You in our selfish life-styles. Help us to persevere in these last days as we experience the outcome of disbelief and evil. Help us prepare the way for Christ's return! Amen.

1st November 2024.

Exodus 36:2-7. During the building the Tabernacle the workers received all the offerings the people of Israel had brought... The people kept bringing them morning after morning. So the workers said to Moses, 'The people are bringing more than enough for us to do the work.' Then Moses gave an order. 'No man or woman should make anything else as an offering for the holy tent.' J

Jude verses 14-23. "Enoch was the seventh man in the family line of Adam [before the time of Noah]... He said, 'Look! The LORD is coming with thousands and thousands of His holy ones... He will judge them for all the ungodly acts they have done.' These people complained and found fault with others. They followed their own evil desires. They boasted about themselves... Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said would happen. 'In the last days, people will make fun of the truth. They will follow their own ungodly desires.' They are the people who separate you from each other... They are not led by the Holy Spirit. Build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. Remain in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you eternal life. Show mercy to those who doubt. Save others by pulling them out of the fire."

Thank You God for the example of true believers who offered many good things for worship. But thank you also for the honesty of the workers who said they had enough offerings to complete the sanctuary. Forgive us when we make offerings out of habit to build and decorate our places of worship more and more without thinking. Open our eyes to see the evil around us now as in the time of Enoch. May we make offerings to help others in need. And may the Holy Spirit guide us as we worship and pray in the last days. Amen.

4th November 2024.

Job 19:25-27. Despite feeling that God had deserted him, Job said in faith, "I know that my Redeemer lives. In the end He will stand on Earth. Though my skin will be destroyed, in my body I will see God. I myself will see Him with my own eyes. I will see Him, and He will not be a stranger to me. How my heart longs for that day!" At the end, 'The Lord blessed the last part of Job's life even more than the first part.' (42:12)

Luke 11:1-13. 'One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. One of His disciples spoke to Him. "Lord," he said, "teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." Jesus said to them, "When you pray, this is what you should say. 'Father, may Your name be honoured. May Your Kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive everyone who sins against us. Keep us from falling into sin when we are tempted.' ...Ask, and it will be given to you. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. Everyone who asks will receive. The one who searches will find. And the door will be opened to the one who knocks. Fathers, suppose your son asks for a fish. Which of you will give him a snake instead? Or suppose he asks for an egg. Which of you will give him a scorpion? Even though you are evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your Father who is in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'" '

Father God, may we learn from the story of Job to live in faith praising You and trusting You for Your wisdom and provision. Thank You for the guidance Jesus gave His followers how to pray. Thank You that He promised "the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" Amen.

5th November 2024.

Jeremiah 5:20-31. God spoke to His prophet Jeremiah in 612BC. "Listen to this, you foolish people, who do not have any sense. You have eyes, but you do not see. You have ears, but you do not hear. Should not you have respect for Me? Should not you tremble with fear in front of Me? ...But you people have stubborn hearts. You refuse to obey Me. You have turned away from Me and gone astray. You do not say to yourselves, 'Let us have respect for the LORD our God. He sends rain in the fall and the spring. He promises us that the harvest will come at the same time each year.' But the things you have done wrong have robbed you of these gifts. Your sins have kept these good things far away from you. Jeremiah, some of my people are evil... They do not stand up for poor people. Should not I punish them for this? ...The prophets prophesy lies. The priests rule by their own authority. And My people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?"

1 Timothy 2:2-8. "Pray for everyone who is in authority. Pray that we can live peaceful and quiet lives, godly and holy... God wants all people to be saved. He wants them to come to know the truth. There is only one God. And there is only one go-between for God and human beings, Christ

Jesus. He gave Himself to pay for the sins of all people... I am telling the truth. I am not lying. God appointed me to be a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles. So I want the men in every place to pray. I want them to lift up holy hands. I do not want them to be angry when they pray. I do not want them to argue."

Have mercy Father God and encourage us to obey the truth You taught through Jeremiah and Paul for this sinful age we live in. Amen.

6th November 2024.

Hosea 6:4-7. "The LORD says, "Ephraim, what can I do with you? And what can I do with you, Judah? Your love for Me vanishes like the morning mist and like the early dew. So I used the words of My prophets to cut you in pieces. I used My words to put you to death. Then My judgments blazed out like the sun. I want mercy and not sacrifice. I want you to recognize Me as God instead of bringing Me burnt offerings. Just as at the time of Adam, they disobeyed Me, they have broken the covenant I made with them. They were not faithful to Me."

2 Thessalonians 2:10-17. "People are dying because they refuse to love the truth. The truth would save them. So God will fool them completely. Then they will believe the lie. Many will not believe the truth. They will take pleasure in evil. They will be judged. Brothers and sisters, we always thank God for you. The Lord loves you. That is because God chose you among the first to be saved. Salvation comes through the Holy Spirit's work. He makes people holy. It also comes through believing the truth. He chose you to be saved by accepting the Good News [of salvation in Christ alone]. You will share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, remain strong in the faith. Hold on to what we taught you. We passed our teachings on to you by what we preached and wrote. Our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father loved us. By his grace God gave us comfort that will last forever. The hope He gave us is good. May our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father comfort your hearts. May they make you strong in every good thing you do and say."

Thank You Father God for Your eternal gift of salvation "through believing the truth" proclaimed in the Bible and "accepting the Good News of salvation in Christ alone". Amen.

13th November 2024.

2 Kings 4 records some of the amazing miracles performed by God's prophet Elisha. The jars he filled with oil for the widow who needed money to pay off a big debt of her late husband (4:1-7). The son of a foreign woman whom he brought back to life (4:8-37). The poisoned stew he made pure to eat (4:38-41). The 100 men he fed from 20 loaves of barley (4:42-44).

Luke 3:1-23. John the Baptizer prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus Christ. 'At that time God's word came to John. He went into the desert around the Jordan River. There he preached that people should be baptized and turn away from their sins. Then God would forgive them. This was written in the book of Isaiah the prophet. "A messenger calls out in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord... And all people will see God's salvation.'" John spoke to the crowds. "Live in a way that shows you have turned away from your sins." ... "Anyone who has extra clothes should share with the one who has none. And anyone who has extra food should do the same." ... John said, "I baptize you with water. But One who is more powerful than I am will come. I am not good enough to untie the straps of His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." ... When Jesus came, He was baptized too. And Heaven was opened. The Holy Spirit came to rest on Him in the form of a dove. A voice from Heaven said, "You are my Son, and I love You. I am very pleased with You." Up to that time everyone thought Jesus was the son of Joseph.'

Thank You Father in Heaven for preparing the way for your Messiah through Elisha, Isaiah and John and many others. Help us also to trust the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives to prepare the way for the return of Jesus. Amen.

14th November 2024.

Daniel 2:24-28. Daniel went to Arioch. The king had appointed Arioch to put the wise men of Babylon to death. Daniel said to him, "Do not kill the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king. I will tell him what his dream means." So Arioch took Daniel to the king at once. Arioch said, "I have found a man among those you brought here from Judah. He can tell you what your dream means."

Nebuchadnezzar spoke to Daniel. "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream? And can you tell me what it means?" Daniel replied, "No wise man can do that. And those who try to explain by using

magic cannot do it either. But there is a God in Heaven who can explain mysteries. King Nebuchadnezzar, He has shown you what is going to happen."

Jude verses 3-12. "I write and ask you to stand up for the faith... Certain people have secretly entered in among you. They are ungodly people who use the grace of our God as an excuse for sexual sins. They say no to Jesus Christ, our only Lord and King. Remember that the Lord saved His people and brought them out of Egypt. But later He destroyed those who did not believe... These ungodly people are like stains at the meals you share. They have no shame. They are shepherds who feed only themselves."

Dear God, we note how Daniel asked for the wise men not to be killed by the king. We also note that the king asked Daniel two questions, not one: to tell him what the dream was and then explain its meaning. Thank You for recording Daniel's compassion. Also the faith You gave him to reveal the truth and then the wisdom to understand it. Help us to "to stand up for the faith" with the compassion of Daniel who refused to judge nonbelievers. Help us to know and understand and speak Your truth for today. Amen.

15th November 2024.

Daniel 10:15-21. Daniel's vision. "I was speechless! Then someone who looked like a man touched my lips. I opened my mouth and began to speak to the One who was standing in front of me. 'My master, I am greatly troubled because of the vision I have seen. And I feel very weak. How can I talk with You? My strength is gone. I can hardly breathe.'" The One who looked like a man touched me again. He gave me strength. 'Do not be afraid. You are highly respected. May peace be with you! Be strong.' When He spoke to me, I became stronger. I said, 'Speak, my master. You have given me strength.' So He said, 'Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia. When I go, the prince of Greece will come. But first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth.' "

Revelation 7:9-10. John's vision. "After this I looked, and there in front of me was a huge crowd of people. They stood in front of the throne and in front of the Lamb. There were so many that no-one could count them. They came from every nation, tribe and language... They were wearing white robes. In their hands they were holding palm branches. They cried out in a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne. Salvation also belongs to the Lamb.' "

Father God in Heaven we thank You for these visions given to Daniel and John. We thank You for the confirmation they give that You alone are in control of mankind. You destroyed the nation of Persia and then established the nation of Greece. We also thank You for confirmation of the countless thousands of believers from every nation who will worship You before Your throne because of salvation in Christ our Saviour, Your Son and Lamb of God. Thank You that He is with You on the throne, mediating for His followers. Amen.

18th January 2024.

1 Samuel 8:10-22. Samuel told the people who were asking him for a king, "Here is what the king who rules over you will do. He will take your sons and make them serve him... He will choose some of them to be commanders. Others will have to plough his fields and gather his crops. Others will have to make weapons of war and parts for his chariots. He will also take your daughters to make perfume and cook and bake. He will take away your best fields and vineyards and olive groves. He will take a tenth of your grain and your grapes. He will also take your servants and your best cattle, donkeys, sheep and goats. You yourselves will become his slaves. You will cry out for help because of the king you have chosen. But the LORD will not answer." Despite what Samuel said, the people refused to listen. "We want a king to rule over us like all the other nations!" The LORD said, "Listen to them. Give them a king."

Philippians 3:2-9. Paul wrote, "Watch out for those people who do evil things... We serve God by the power of His Spirit... We do not put our trust in who we are or what we can do. I have many reasons to trust in who I am and what I have done... But now I consider them to be nothing because of Christ and to know Him as my Lord. This is worth much more than anything else... Being right with God... comes from believing in Christ. It comes from God through faith."

Thank You God for warning us about who to choose as our leaders of church and state. We pray they will be humble like Paul and "be right with God" through faith in believing in Christ. Encourage us to pray for our leaders in these difficult and dangerous days that their faith will be in You to make righteous decisions, locally and nationally. Amen.

19th November 2024.

Genesis Chapter 1. In the beginning, God created Heaven and Earth... God said, "Let there be light." ...He separated the light from the darkness... Then God said, "Let there be a huge space between the waters." ...He separated the water under the space from the water above it... Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place and dry ground appear." ...Then God said, "Let the land produce plants and trees and let each kind have its own kind of seeds." ...Then God said, "Let there be two great lights in the sky to separate the day from the night." ...He also made the stars... Then God said, "Let the seas be filled with living things and let birds fly above the Earth." ...Then God said, "Let the land produce every kind of living creature." ...Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our own image... to rule over the fish in the seas and the birds in the sky and every living creature that moves on the ground."

Matthew Chapter 1 gives the family line of Jesus the Messiah from Abraham through King David to Joseph who planned to marry the virgin Mary (verses 1 to 16). This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary and Joseph had promised to get married. But before they started to live together, it became clear that she was going to have a baby. She became pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit... An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Joseph, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The baby inside her is from the Holy Spirit. She is going to have a Son. You must give Him the name Jesus (Saviour). That is because He will save His people from their sins." (verses 18, 20-21).

Thank You Father for these scriptures which are the foundation of our faith in You and Jesus our Saviour.

20th November 2024.

Ezekiel 28:24-26. God gave this prophecy to Ezekiel in 588 BC. "The people of Israel will no longer have neighbours who hate them... Then Israel will know that I am the Lord and King. I will gather My people together from the nations where they have been scattered. That will prove that I am holy. I will let the nations see it. Israel will live in their own land which I gave to my servant Jacob. My people will live there in safety. They will build houses and plant vineyards. I will punish all their neighbours who told lies about them. Then Israel will know that I am the LORD their God."

Hebrews 10:1-10. "The Law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming... The same sacrifices were offered over and over again... That is why the Law can never make perfect those who come near to worship... The worshipers would have been made 'clean' once and for all time... But those offerings remind people of their sins. It is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. So when Christ came into the world, He said, 'You did not want sacrifices and offerings. Instead, You prepared a body for Me. You were not pleased with burnt offerings and sin offerings. Here I am. It is written about Me that I have come to do what You want, my God.' (Psalm 40:6-8)... Christ did away with the shadow of the good things that were coming. He did it to put in place the good things themselves... We have been made holy because Jesus Christ offered His body once and for all time."

Father God, establish again Your wisdom and safe keeping for Your people Israel in the 'Holy Land' You promised. Bring on the return of their Messiah our Saviour who fulfilled all the requirements of Your righteous Law. For His sake, whose body was sacrificed for the punishment we deserve. Thank You Jesus. Amen.

21st November 2024.

Habakkuk 2:2-14. The LORD answered Habakkuk's complaints. "Write down the message I am giving you... Then a messenger can run to announce it... It speaks about what is going to happen. All of it will come true... It will happen when I want it to... The person who is godly will live by their faithfulness... How terrible it will be for you who pile up stolen goods! You get rich by cheating others. How long will this go on? ...I am the LORD God Almighty who rules over all. Human effort is no better than wood that feeds fire. So the nations wear themselves out for nothing! ...The Earth will be filled with the knowledge of My glory."

Mark 6:6-13. 'Jesus taught from village to village. He then called the 12 disciples to Him. He sent them out two by two. He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits in His name. He told them, "Take only a walking stick for your trip. Do not take bread or a bag nor money... Do not take extra clothes. When you are invited into a house, stay there until you leave town. Some places may not welcome you or listen to you. If they do not listen, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet."

That will be a witness against the people living there." They went out and they preached that people should turn away from their sins. They drove out many demons. They poured oil on many sick people and healed them.'

Father God, make us bold in these difficult days instead of complaining like Habakkuk. Help us to walk in faith and believe in Your love and provision. Help us to preach the Good News of salvation in Jesus so that "the Earth will be filled with the knowledge of Your glory". Help us to take authority in the power of Your Spirit to perform signs and wonders as we prepare for the return of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.

22nd November 2024.

Ezekiel 17:22-24. "The LORD and King says, 'I Myself will get a twig from the very top of a cedar tree and plant it... I will plant it on a very high mountain of Israel. It will produce branches and bear fruit. It will become a beautiful cedar tree. All kinds of birds will make their nests in it. They will live in the shade of its branches. All the trees in the forest will know that I bring down tall trees. I make short trees grow tall. I dry up leafy trees. And I make dry trees green. I the LORD have spoken it and I will do it.'" This refers to Israel's promised Messiah despite God's condemnation of Israel in the earlier verses.

Galatians 3:26-29. Paul writes, "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God by believing in Christ. This is because all of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. You have put him on as if he were your clothes. There is no Jew or Greek (Gentile). There is no slave or free person. There is no male or female. That's because you are all one in Christ Jesus. You who belong to Christ are Abraham's seed. So you will receive what God has promised."

Father God, thank You that Paul reminds us You see no difference between Jew or Gentile, master or slave, man or woman, if they seek to worship You and put their faith in Jesus our Saviour. At the time of Paul, there were huge social differences between Jews and Gentiles, masters and slaves, men and women! Thank you for Your evidence in Scripture that You judge fairly our wrong desires and attitudes and actions and "will produce branches that bear fruit" and bring unity when we are "all one in Christ Jesus". We pray that Christians and Jews in the Middle East and beyond will seek unity together through prayer and worshipping the one true God. Amen.

25th November 2024.

Song of Songs 2:7 and 3:5. Solomon twice warns, "Women of Jerusalem, make me a promise... Do not stir up love. Do not wake it up until it is ready." Solomon is wise enough to know the wonders of the sexual desires God has created in us. But he also knows that these desires are given to make love and produce children for married couples. He warns the women not to arouse and lose control of their feelings outside of marriage until the time is right.

1 Corinthians 1:4-9. Paul writes, "I always thank my God for you. I thank Him because of the grace He has given to you who belong to Christ Jesus. You have been blessed in every way because of Him... in all your speech and knowledge. God has shown that what we have spoken to you about Christ is true. There is no gift of the Holy Spirit that you do not have. You are full of hope as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to come again. God will also keep you strong in faith to the very end. Then you will be without blame on the day our Lord Jesus Christ returns. God is faithful. He has chosen you to share life with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." *Thank You heavenly Father that we "have been blessed in every way" in speech, knowledge and spiritual wisdom. Thank you that in these wicked days of sexual exploitation of our God-given desires You will keep us "strong in faith to the very end". Grant us the wisdom of Solomon to understand the wonders of your creation in mankind and the evil seducing spirits that the ungodly exploit. Help us in those times when we are wrongly aroused by what we see and hear and think about. Save us from sexual fantasies that destroy our relationship with You and hinder the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives promised through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.*

26th November 2024.

2 Chronicles 35:1-4; 17-18. In the year 623BC, after King Josiah found a copy of God's Law he made everyone promise to obey it (34:32). Then "Josiah celebrated the Passover Feast in Jerusalem to honour the LORD God Almighty. The Passover lamb was killed on the 14th day of the first month. Josiah appointed the priests to their duties. He encouraged them as they served the LORD at His Temple. The Levites taught all the people of Israel... Then Josiah told them, 'Put the sacred Ark of

the covenant in the Temple Solomon built... The ark must no longer be carried around on your shoulders. Serve the LORD your God. Serve His people Israel. Prepare yourselves by family groups as written by King David.' ...Then the Israelites celebrated the Passover Feast and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Feasts had not been celebrated in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet [400 years before]... All the people of Israel were there with the people of Jerusalem to celebrated it with Josiah."

John 14:21-24. Jesus said, "Whoever has My commands and obeys them loves Me. My Father will love the one who loves Me. I too will love them. And I will show Myself to them... Anyone who loves Me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them. We will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love Me will not obey My teaching. The words you hear Me say are not My own. They belong to the Father who sent Me."

Father God, help us to love and obey the commands of Jesus in the same way as King Josiah instructed the people of Israel over 2600 years ago to obey Your commandments. Put a strong desire in us to do this in love for our Saviour. We acknowledge the truth that "anyone who does not love Me will not obey My teaching". Help us to serve You and Your people "by family groups". Amen.

27th November 2024.

Zechariah 10:2-5. 500 years before the ministry of Christ in Israel, God spoke to His prophet Zechariah. "Idols or gods speak lies. Those who practice magic see visions that are not true. They tell dreams that deceive people. They give false words of comfort. So the people wander around like lost sheep without a shepherd. The LORD God Almighty who rules over all says, 'I the LORD will take care of His flock, the people of Judah. They will be like a proud horse in battle. The most important building stone [Cornerstone] will come from the tribe of Judah. From Him will come the tent stake and the bow used in battle and also every ruler. Together they will be like warriors in battle. They will trample their enemies into the mud. The LORD will be with them.' "

Matthew 21:1-9. Jesus sent out two disciples. "Go to the village ahead of you. You will find a donkey tied up with her young foal. Untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them. The owner will send them right away." This took place so that what was spoken through the prophet would come true. 'Say to the city of Zion, your King comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey.'" (Zechariah 9:9) The disciples brought the donkey and the foal. They placed their coats on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their coats on the road. Others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Some of the people went ahead of him, and some followed. They all shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the LORD God Almighty!" (Psalm 118:26)

Father in Heaven we thank You for Your words given to Zechariah that confirm Your plans for the world through Jesus the Christ, Israel's Messiah and Cornerstone. Hosanna to our gentle King! Come soon Lord Jesus!

28th November 2024.

Joshua 2:8-11. In 1451BC, Joshua sent two spies into the city of Jericho before the Jews crossed the Jordan River to possess the land of Canaan that God had promised them. Rahab went up on her roof before the spies settled down for the night. She said to them, "I know that the LORD God Almighty has given you this land. We are very much afraid of you. Everyone who lives in this country is weak with fear because of you. We have heard how the LORD dried up the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt. We have heard what you did to the two Amorite kings who ruled east of the Jordan River and destroyed them all. When we heard about it, we were terrified. Because of you, we are not brave anymore. The LORD your God is the God who rules in Heaven above and on Earth below." Rahab became the first Gentile convert in what is now Israel. She became the mother of Boaz, the husband of Ruth. It was their family that later gave birth to King David and to Mary the mother of Israel's Messiah, Jesus the Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:3-4. Paul wrote to the early church in Corinth. "Eve's mind was tricked by the snake's clever lies. And I am afraid your minds will also be led astray from your true and pure love for Christ. If someone comes to you and preaches about a Jesus different from the Jesus we preached about. Or if you receive a spirit different from the Spirit you received before. Or if you receive a different message of the Good News to the one you accepted earlier. Then you accept those teachings too easily."

Thank You Father God that through Rahab, Ruth and Mary, Your purpose for Israel and the rest of the world was established in Boaz, David and Jesus. Thank You that Paul believed salvation is in Christ alone. May we teach this Good News today. Amen!

29th November 2024.

Psalms 106:40-48. "The LORD God Almighty became angry with His people. He turned away from His own children. He handed them over to the nations. Their enemies ruled over them and treated them badly... Many times the Lord saved them. But they refused to obey Him. So He decided to destroy them because of their sins. However, He heard them when they cried out. He listened to their suffering. Because they were His people, He remembered His covenant. Because of His great love, He felt sorry for them. He made all those who held them as prisoners have mercy on them. Lord our God, save us. Bring us back from among the nations. Then we will give thanks to You, because Your name is holy. We will celebrate by praising You."

Matthew 24:36-39. Jesus said, "No-one knows about that day or hour. Not even the angels in Heaven know. The Son does not know. Only the Father knows. Remember how it was in the days of Noah. It will be the same when the Son of Man comes. In the days before Noah's Flood, people were eating and drinking. They were getting married. They were giving their daughters to be married. They did all those things right up to the day Noah entered the ark. They knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be when the Son of Man comes [returns]. Give praise to the LORD, the God of Israel, for ever and ever. Let all the people say, 'Amen! Praise the LORD!'"

Heavenly Father, forgive us when we fail to worship You and praise You. Thank you for Your written word that reminds us of Your mercy when Your people failed to obey You. Thank you for the Good News of salvation in Christ alone. Thank You for the promised Holy Spirit to guide us and empower us in these last days before Jesus returns. Praise the LORD!

2nd December 2024.

Jonah 2:1-9. From inside the great fish Jonah prayed to the LORD God Almighty. "When I was in trouble, I called out to the LORD and You answered me. When I was deep in the place of the dead, I called out for help and You listened to my cry. But when You threw me deep into the sea... I thought, 'I have been driven away from You. But I will look again towards your holy Temple.' I thought I had died and gone down into the grave forever. But you are the LORD my God and You have saved me from death. Whith my life nearly at an end, I remember you, LORD. My prayers go up to you in Heaven. Some people worship the worthless statues of their gods. They turn away from Your love for them. But I shout with thankful praise. You are the One who saves."

1 Corinthians 3:18-23. Paul warns, "Do not fool yourselves. Suppose some of you think you are wise by the standards of the world. Then you should become 'fools' so that you can become truly wise! The wisdom of this world is foolish in God's eyes. Job warned, 'God catches wise people in their own evil plans.' (Job 5:13) It is also written, 'The thoughts of wise people are useless.'" (Psalm 94:11) ...You are joined to Christ and belong to Him. And Christ is joined to God."

Thank You Father God for confirming Your truth to Paul to pass on to us all. Help us to know that the world's decisions are foolish compared to being "joined to Christ and belonging to Him". Thank You that Job realised he had done wrong and was freed from death to preach Your truth to the city of Nineveh. Thank You that when we are mentally, physically or spiritually close to death You can save us. May all whose lives are "nearly at an end" be saved to live a useful life as a blessing to others. Amen.

3rd December 2024.

Psalms 120 to 134 are known as 'songs of ascents' sung by pilgrims as they climbed up to worship God in His Temple in Jerusalem. "For too long I have lived among those who hate peace." (Ps 120) "My help comes from the LORD God Almighty, creator of Heaven and Earth." (Ps 121 & 124) "I rejoice with those who said to me 'Let us go to the house of the LORD'." (Ps 122) "I lift my eyes up to You whose throne is in Heaven." (Ps 123) "Do good LORD to those who are upright in heart." (Ps 125) "The LORD has done great things for us and filled us with joy" (Ps 126) "Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain" (Ps 127) "Blessed are all who fear the LORD" (Ps 128) "The LORD is righteous; He has cut me free from the bonds of the wicked" (Ps 129) "With You there is forgiveness... In You I put my hope." (Ps 130 & 131) "May Your priests be clothed with righteousness

and Your saints sing for joy." (Ps 132) "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity." (Ps 133) "Praise the LORD all you servants of the LORD." (Ps 134)

Acts 8:4-7. "The believers who had been scattered [by persecution] preached the word everywhere they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and preached about the Messiah. The crowds listened and saw the signs he did... Evil spirits screamed and came out of many people. Many who were disabled or who could not walk were healed. So there was great joy in that city."

Thank You Father God for these Old Testament examples of faith and worship. May there be much joy today as Your purposes are fulfilled in the blessed name of Jesus Your Messiah, our Saviour. Strengthen our faith so that we may serve our Lord with great signs and wonders through His Holy Spirit at work in our lives. Amen.

4th December 2024.

1 Samuel 6:10-13. Seven months after the Philistines captured the Ark of the LORD God of Israel, they decided to return it because the LORD sent a plague of tumours on the people (5:6-8). 'They took two cows and tied a cart to them... They placed the Ark of the LORD on the cart... Then the cows went straight up towards Beth Shemesh without turning to the right or to the left. The Philistine rulers followed them all the way to the border with Israel. The people of Beth Shemesh looked up and saw the Ark and were filled with joy.'

Luke 6:22-28. Jesus was condemned by the Pharisees for healing a man on the Sabbath day (6-11). Afterwards, Jesus told His disciples, "Blessed are you when people hate you... and say bad things about you and treat your name as something evil. They do all this because you are followers of the Son of Man. The prophets of long ago were treated in the same way. When these things happen to you, be glad and jump for joy. You will receive many blessings in Heaven. But how terrible it will be for those who are rich! They have already had an easy life. How terrible for those who are well fed now! they will go hungry. How terrible for those who laugh now! They will cry and be sad. How terrible for those when everyone says good things about you! Their people treated the false prophets the same way long ago. But here is what I tell you who are listening. Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who call down curses on you. And pray for those who treat you badly."

Thank You God for the example Jesus gave to His followers to love others, even our enemies. Help us to leave the judgement to You. Thank you for showing us how You gave glory to Your name and Your people in the time of Samuel. Amen.

5th December 2024.

Micah 2:7. This is the word of the LORD God Almighty to His prophet Micah in the sixth century before Christ. "What I promise brings good things to those who lead honest lives."

Titus 2:1-8. Paul writes, "What you teach must agree with true teaching. Tell the older men that in anything they do, they must not go too far. They must be worthy of respect. They must control themselves. They must have true faith. They must love others. They must not give up. In the same way, teach the older women to lead a holy life. They must not tell lies about others. They must not let wine control them. Instead, they must teach what is good. Then they can advise the younger women to love their husbands and children. The younger women must control themselves and be pure. They must take good care of their homes. They must be kind. They must follow the lead of their husbands. Then no one will be able to speak evil things against God's word. In the same way, help the young men to control themselves. Do what is good. Set an example for them in everything. When you teach, be honest and serious. No one can question the truth. So teach what is true. Then those who oppose you will be ashamed for they will have nothing bad to say about us."

Almighty God, grant us the faith to believe in Your promise that You will bring "good things to those who lead honest lives". Thank You for the provision of Your Holy Spirit to live within us for the wisdom to lead righteous and sober and self-controlled lives. Thank You for Your eternal salvation through sending Your Son our Saviour in the form of a human being to experience the shame and suffering and punishment we deserve. Help us to "have true faith" and "not give up". Help us at all times to "do what is good" and "set a good example". Amen.

6th December 2024.

Genesis 28:11-15. Isaac sent his son Jacob to visit his relatives to find a wife. "He reached a certain place and stopped for the night... In a dream he saw a stairway standing on Earth reaching up to

Heaven. The angels of God were going up and coming down on it. The LORD God Almighty stood above it and said, 'I am the LORD. I am the God of your grandfather Abraham and your father Isaac. I will give you and your children after you the land you are lying on. They will be like the dust on the ground that cannot be counted. They will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All nations on Earth will be blessed because of you and your children after you. I am with you. I will watch over you everywhere you go. And I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.'" Jacob called that place 'Bethel', which means 'House of God' (28:19). It became a holy place for the Jews before Jerusalem.

Luke 3:2-6. God's word came to John in the desert. There he preached that people should be baptized and turn away from their sins. Then God would forgive them. It is written in the book of Isaiah the prophet. "A messenger is calling out in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight paths for Him... And all people will see God's salvation.'" (Isaiah 40:3-5) John spoke to the crowds coming to be baptized by him. He said, "Live in a way that shows you have turned away from your sins."

Thank You Father God for revealing to Jacob, Isaiah and John Your purpose for Israel to be a blessing to the entire world through their promised Messiah. Help us to believe and "live in a way that shows we have turned away from our sins." Amen.

9th December 2024.

Nahum Chapter 3. In 713 BC, the little-known prophet Nahum spoke to the people of Israel about the evil kingdoms to the east, Ninevah and Assyria. "I am against you" declares the LORD God Almighty." (3:5) The result of God's action would be, "Everyone who hears the news about you will clap their hands at your fall, for who has not felt your endless cruelty?" (3:19)

1 John 3:1-6. John, the disciple of Jesus and last surviving apostle, wrote these words. "How great is the love the Father has given us! Because of it, we are called children of God. And that is what we really are! The world doesn't know us because it did not know Him. Dear friends, we are children of God and we wait for Him to let us know what we will become. But we know that when Christ appears, we will be like Him. We will see Him as He really is. Christ is pure and all believers who hope to be like Him make themselves pure. Everyone who sins breaks the Law for breaking the Law is sin. But you know that Christ came to take our sins away for there is no sin in Him. Therefore, no-one who remains joined to Him keeps on sinning."

Thank You Father God for upholding Your holy and everlasting commandments which Christ Jesus alone fulfilled. Thank You that through His sacrifice we, too, are "joined to Him" to prepare us for His return. Thank You for the evidence of living in the last days before His return. Thank You for the evidence today that enables Your people to "clap their hands" when "evil kingdoms to the east" are destroyed. Open the eyes of both Jews and Gentiles to see Your purposes and provision yesterday, today and for ever. Thank You that through faith in Israel's Messiah "we are called children of God". Forgive our fears and doubts and sins that hinder the work of Your Spirit in our lives. Amen.

10th December 2024.

Numbers 14:1-9. On the way to God's Promised Land of Canaan, 'all the members of the community [of Israel] raised their voices and wept out loud. They told Moses and Aaron, "We wish we had died in Egypt or even in this desert. Why is the LORD God Almighty bringing us to this land? We are going to be killed by swords. Our enemies will capture our wives and children. It would be better for us to go back to Egypt!" ...Then Moses and Aaron fell with their faces to the ground... Joshua and Caleb were two of the men who had visited the land. They spoke to the whole community of Israel. "We passed through the land and checked it out. It is very good. If the LORD is pleased with us, He will lead us into that land. It is a land of milk and honey. He will give it to us. But do not refuse to obey Him. And do not be afraid of the people of the land. We will swallow them up. The LORD is with us. So nothing can save them. Do not be afraid of them.'" ' However, the people wanted to go back to Egypt so the LORD waited for 40 years to take their children instead to the Promised Land. Only Joshua and Caleb entered of those who were over 20 years old. (14:29-31)

John 21:18-19. After the resurrection of Jesus, He said to Peter, "When you were younger, you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you. And someone else will lead you where you do not want to go... Follow me!"

Father God, help us to learn from the Bible how to trust You and Jesus our Saviour for what lies ahead. We know it is wrong to look back at the things we miss. Forgive us and we will obey and follow You! Amen.

11th December 2024.

2 Samuel 20:2-3 and 22:1-4. This record of King David occurs after the time God's prophet Nathan rebuked him for stealing Bathsheba to be his wife. It was the time when the ten northern tribes of Israel separated from Judah and Benjamin. 'David returned to his palace in Jerusalem. He had left ten concubines there to take care of the palace. He put them in a house and kept them under guard. He gave them what they needed. But he did not sleep with them. They were cared for until the day they died.' Gradually, things went well for David from that time. When the Philistines were defeated in battle, 'David sang a song of praise to the LORD God Almighty for delivering him from the hands of his enemies. "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer. My God is my rock... and my salvation."

John 13:1-5. 'Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and return to His Father. Jesus loved His disciples... They were having their evening meal. The devil had already tempted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to hand Jesus over to His enemies. But Jesus knew that the Father had put everything under His power. He also knew He had come from God and was returning to God. So He got up from the meal and took off his outer clothes. He wrapped a towel around His waist and poured water into a large bowl. Then He began to wash His disciples' feet.'

Thank You Father for revealing how David repented. Thank You that he proved, like Jesus, You "had put everything under His power". Thank you for the many times You have forgiven us to humble us, as in the time of Your prophet Nathan. Thank You for the example of Jesus, even under danger from Judas and His enemies, how He showed love to those who supported Him. Deliver us from our sins and fears to care for true believers. Amen.

12th December 2024.

Jeremiah 24:4-8. Jeremiah declared this message from the LORD God Almighty. "I am the LORD, the God of Israel. I consider the people who were forced to leave Judah to be like good figs. I sent them away from this place to Babylon. My eyes will watch over them. I will be good to them. And I will bring them back to this land... I will plant them and not pull them up by the roots. I will change their hearts. Then they will know that I am the LORD. They will be My people. And I will be their God. They will return to Me with all their heart. But there are also some bad figs. Zedekiah, the king of Judah, is like the bad figs. So are his officials and the people in Jerusalem who are left behind. I will punish them whether they remain in this land or escape to Egypt."

2 Corinthians 9:6-9. Paul writes, "The one who plants only a little will gather only a little. And the one who plants a lot will gather a lot. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give. You should not give if you do not want to. You should not give because you have to. God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to shower all kinds of blessings on you. So in all things and at all times you will have everything you need. Then you will do more good works. It is written, 'They have shared their gifts to the poor people. Their good works will remain for ever.'" (Psalm 112:9)

Father in Heaven, as in Jeremiah's time, some of Your people deserve punishment but the righteous will be saved. Thank You that Paul sees clearly the fulfilment of Scripture through the ministry of the early church. May we, too, "share gifts to the poor" that our "good works remain for ever". Change us and save us in the name of Jesus! Amen.

13th December 2024.

Psalms 128 to 130 are three of the 15 'songs of ascent' which were sung by the pilgrims on their way to the Temple in Jerusalem. "Blessed are all those who have respect for the LORD God Almighty. They live as He wants them to live... As a vine bears a lot of fruit, so may your wife have many children by you. May they sit around your table like young olive trees. Only a man who has respect for the LORD will be blessed like that." (128:1-4) "Israel says, 'My enemies have treated me badly ever since I was a young nation. But they have not won the battle. They have made deep wounds in my back... But the LORD does what is right. Sinners had tied me up with ropes. But the LORD has set me free.' " (139:1-4) "O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, because His love never fails. He sets His people completely free. He himself will set Israel free from all their sins." (130:7-8)

Matthew 19:13-15. Jesus went to the far side of the River Jordan to teach and heal the crowds. 'Some people brought little children to Him. They wanted Him to place His hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me... The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to people like them." ' Jesus placed His hands on them to bless them. Then He moved on from there.

Thank You Father in Heaven for the examples of faithful believers on the way to the Temple who witnessed of Your righteous love and provision. Thank You that in Jesus, we have the freedom to witness through the Holy Spirit as He did, wherever we are. Forgive us for restricting the times and places where Your Spirit will bring blessings as we "move on". Forgive us for excluding children who are in need of Your blessings as part of the Kingdom of God. Amen.

16th December 2024.

Malachi 4. This gives Malachi's understanding in 397 BC of Israel's coming Messiah. "You can be sure the 'day of the Lord' is coming. My anger will burn like a furnace. All those who are proud and do evil will be like straw", says the LORD God Almighty who rules over all. "But here is what will happen for you who have respect for Me... You will go out and leap for joy like calves that have just been fed. Then sinful people will be like ashes under your feet. That will happen on the day I judge [the world]," says the LORD. "[Meanwhile], remember the Law my servant Moses gave you... Then I will send the prophet Elijah to you. He will come before the 'day of the Lord' arrives." Someone like Elijah first came as John the Baptist 2000 years ago. We believe that other Elijahs will come before the final 'day of the Lord'.

Revelation 22:12-17. Jesus spoke directly to the apostle John between the years AD 90 and 100. "Look! I am coming soon! I will reward each person for what they have done... Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will have the right to come to the tree of life. They will be allowed to go through the gates into the heavenly city. Outside the city are those who are impure and who practice witchcraft. Also those who commit sexual sins and murder and who worship statues of gods and does what is false. I, Jesus, am the bright Morning Star [in the new Kingdom of Christ on Earth]. The Holy Spirit and the bride [the Church of Christ] say, 'Come!' Anyone who is thirsty should come. Anyone who wants to take the free gift of the water of life should do so."

Thank You Father in Heaven for giving us this understanding of the final 'day of the Lord' that even Malachi and John could not fully understand. Prepare us and others for that day! Amen.

17th December 2024.

Haggai 1:7-12. The prophet Haggai warned Israel 500 BC. 'This is what the LORD God Almighty says. "Think carefully about how you are living. Go up into the mountains and bring logs down. Use them to rebuild the Temple, My house. Then I will enjoy it and you will honour Me. You expected a lot. But you can see what a small amount it turned out to be. I blew away what you brought home. I will tell you why. It is because My Temple is still destroyed. In spite of that, each one of you is busy with your own house. So because of what you have done, the heavens have held back their dew. And the earth has not produced its crops. I ordered the rain not to fall on the fields and mountains. Then the ground did not produce any grain. There were not enough grapes to make fresh wine. The trees did not bear enough olives to make oil. People and cattle suffered. All your hard work failed." Then the leaders and the people all obeyed the LORD their God. The LORD gave His message to them through me. He sent me to speak to them. And the people respected Him.'

James 4:7-10. "Obey God. Stand up to the devil. He will run away from you. Come near to God, and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners. Make your hearts pure, you who cannot make up your minds. Be full of sorrow. Cry and weep. Change your laughter to mourning. Change your joy to sadness. Be humble in front of the Lord. Then He will lift you up."

Father God, forgive us for seeking pleasure through our own endeavours. Open our eyes to see around us the need for sorrow and mourning. Humble us so that we experience joy in our lives as You "lift us up". May we truly value the change that faith in Christ our Saviour brings. For His sake. Amen.

18th December 2024.

Daniel 6:22-28. This is the famous story around 540 BC of Daniel being thrown into the lions den and being saved. Daniel told the king, "My God sent His angel to shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me at all. That is because I have not done anything wrong in God's sight. I have never done

anything wrong to you either, Your Majesty." The king was filled with joy. He ordered his servants to lift Daniel out of the den. They did not see any wounds on him because he had trusted in His God... Then King Darius wrote to people of all nations, "I order people in every part of my kingdom to respect and honour Daniel's God. He is the living God who lives forever. His kingdom will not be destroyed. His rule will never end. He sets people free and saves them. He does miraculous signs and wonders. He does them in Heaven and on Earth. He has saved Daniel from the power of the lions." So Daniel had success while Darius was king and during the rule of Cyrus, the Persian.

1 Timothy 2:1-8. Paul said, "I want you to pray for all people. Ask God to help and bless them. Give thanks for them. Pray for kings. Pray for everyone who is in authority. Pray that we can live peaceful and quiet lives, godly and holy... God wants all people to be saved. He wants them to come to know the truth. There is only one God. And there is only one go-between for God and mankind, Christ Jesus. He gave Himself to pay for the sins of all people... God appointed me to be a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles. So I want everyone in every place to lift up holy hands and pray."

Thank You Father for the righteous lives of Daniel and Paul through whom Your name is glorified around the world! Lord Jesus, hear prayers for our nation and its leaders. Amen.

19th December 2024.

Psalms 27:7-14. David wrote, "LORD God Almighty, hear my voice when I call out to You! My heart says, 'LORD, I seek you.' Do not turn Your face away from me, even when You are angry. You have helped me. God my Saviour, do not desert me even if my father and mother desert me. LORD, teach me Your ways. Lead me along a straight path. There are many people who treat me badly. My enemies want to harm me. So do not turn me over to them... They say all sorts of evil things about me. But here is something I am still sure of. I will see the LORD's goodness while I am still alive... Be strong and do not lose hope. Wait for the LORD!"

1 Thessalonians 2:10-14. Paul wrote, "You are witnesses of how we lived among you believers. God is also a witness that we were holy and godly and without blame. You know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children. We gave you hope and strength. We comforted you. We wanted you to live in a way that is worthy of God. He chooses you to enter his glorious kingdom. We never stop thanking God for the way you received His word. You heard it from us... You accepted it for what it really is. It is God's word which is at work in you who believe. Brothers and sisters, you became like the members of God's churches in Judea. They are believers in Christ Jesus, just as you are. Your own people made you suffer. You went through the same persecution the church members in Judea suffered."

Father God, we note the persecution of believers at the time of David and Paul which is still true today. We also note the need to accept "God's word at work in you who believe." Thank You for helping us as a father. Help us treat others "as a father treats his own children". Amen.

20th December 2024.

Esther 2:5-23. 'A Jew from the tribe of Benjamin named Mordecai was taken from Jerusalem to Babylon during the exile. Mordecai had a cousin called Esther whom he had cared for like his own daughter... Many young women were brought to the king's palace... Esther was also taken to the king's palace.... The king liked Esther more than he liked any of the other women... So he put a royal crown on her head. He made her queen in Vashti's place... Bigthana and Teresh were two of the king's officers. They guarded the door of the royal palace. They became angry with King Xerxes. So they decided to kill him. They made their evil plans while Mordecai was sitting at the palace gate. So Mordecai told Queen Esther. Then she reported it to the king. She told him that Mordecai had uncovered the plans against him. Some people checked Esther's report and found out it was true. So the two officials were put to death.' This began the process when the whole of the kingdom was ordered to pay respect to the Jews living in the land (8:17; 10:1-2).

2 Corinthians 13:8-11. Paul wrote, "I cannot do anything to stop the truth [of God]. I can only work for the truth. I am glad when I am weak but you are strong... The Lord gave me the authority to build you up not to tear you down. Brothers and sisters, be joyful! Work to make things right with one another. Help one another and agree with one another. Live in peace. And the God who gives love and peace will be with you."

We thank You Father God for making Mordecai and Paul great in their weakness. May nations show respect to all Jews and Christians as happened at the beginning of the sixth century BC and the

first century AD. Help us to establish "the truth of God" in our land and expose the plans of evil men and live in peace. Amen.

23rd December 2024 (with acknowledgement to Pastor Rab Donald).

Isaiah 11:1-4. Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, Isaiah gave this prophecy of Israel's promised Messiah. "Jesse's family is like a tree that has been cut down. But a new shoot will grow from its stump. From its roots a Branch will grow and produce fruit. The Spirit of the LORD God Almighty will rest on that Branch. He will be wise and know the LORD and have respect for Him... He will not judge things only by the way they look or by what people say. He will always do what is right when He judges those who are in need. He will be completely fair."

Matthew 1:1-21. Matthew records the 42 generations of the family line of Abraham through Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Rahab, Boaz and Ruth, Jesse, King David and down to Joseph the carpenter who became the husband of the Virgin Mary. This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary and Joseph had promised to get married. But before they started to live together, she became pregnant through the Holy Spirit... So Joseph planned to divorce her. But an angel of the LORD appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife. The baby inside her is from the Holy Spirit. She is going to have a Son. You must give Him the name Jesus. He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to bring about what the LORD God Almighty had said would happen through His prophet Isaiah."

Thank You Father God for revealing to Isaiah how the family of Abraham included the prostitute Rahab and the Moabite girl Ruth and poor old Jesse as part of the family line down to Israel's Messiah! This family line included King David and Joseph the carpenter. Thank You that our own humble and sinful backgrounds do not hold us back from salvation through Christ our Messiah! Amen.

24th December 2024.

Malachi 3:13-18. "You have spoken with pride against me," says the LORD God Almighty. "But you ask, 'What have we spoken against you?' You have said, 'It is useless to serve God. What do we gain by obeying His laws? ... Things go well with those who do what is evil. And God doesn't even punish those who test Him.'" Those who had respect for the LORD talked with each another. The LORD heard them and said, "The day is coming when I will judge. On that day they will be My special treasure. I will spare them just as a father loves and spares his son who serves him. Then once again you will see the difference between godly people and sinful people. And you will see the difference between those who serve Me and those who do not."

Revelation 22:11-12. Jesus said, "Let the person who does wrong keep on doing wrong. Let the evil person continue to be evil. Let the person who does right keep on doing what is right. And let the holy person continue to be holy. Look! I am coming soon! I will bring My rewards with Me. Then I will reward each person for what they have done." John ends his book of revelations by testifying of the words of Jesus. John says, "Come Lord Jesus! And the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen." (22:20-21)

Father God, on the day before many people in the world remember the birth of Your Son, help us, like John, to testify of Your truth with Your warnings and promises. We are amazed how you said to Malachi "a father loves and spares his son who serves him". We thank You that Your Son, Jesus the Christ, came to Earth to serve You and was prepared to die for You so that we could experience Your forgiveness and salvation and eternal life. Open the eyes of the world to rejoice over the full meaning of Christmas! Amen.

25th December 2024.

Obadiah verse 15. Six hundred years before the first ministry of Jesus Christ on Earth, Obadiah hints at His return one day soon. "The day of the LORD God Almighty is near for all the nations... Your deeds will return upon your own head." He concludes, "The Kingdom will belong to the LORD." (v.21)

Titus 2:11-15; 3:4-7. Paul confirms, "God's grace has now appeared. By His grace, God offers to save all people. His grace teaches us to say no to godless ways and sinful desires. We must control ourselves. We must do what is right. We must lead godly lives in today's world. That is how we should live as we wait for the blessed hope God has given us. We are waiting for Jesus Christ to appear in His glory. He is our great God and Saviour. He gave Himself for us. By doing that, He set us free from all evil. He wanted to make us pure. He wanted us to be His very own people. He wanted

us to desire to do what is good. These are the things you should teach. Encourage people and give them hope. Correct them with full authority. Do not let anyone look down on you." Paul adds, "When the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, He saved us. It was not because of the good things we had done. It was because of His mercy. He saved us by washing away our sins. We were born again. The Holy Spirit gave us new life. God poured out the Spirit on us freely. That is because of what Jesus Christ our Saviour has done. His grace made us right with God. So now we have received the hope of eternal life as God's children."

Thank you, heavenly Father, for the hope you have given us in Christ our Saviour. We celebrate today His birth, His life, His sacrifice, His resurrection. Return soon Lord Jesus! Establish the Kingdom of God on Earth! Amen.

26th December 2024.

Isaiah 22: 1-11. This is a prophecy against Jerusalem that the LORD God Almighty gave Isaiah over 700 years before the birth of their Messiah. Jerusalem is also known as the Valley of Vision. "The LORD sent the noise of battle against you. The LORD Himself brought disorder and terror to the Valley of Vision. The walls of the city were knocked down... Your rich valleys filled up with chariots. Horsemen took up their battle positions at your city gates. The LORD made Judah a place where it was no longer safe to live. At that time, you depended on the weapons in the Palace... But you did not look to the God who planned everything long ago."

Romans 12:14-21. "Bless those who hurt you. Bless them, and do not curse them. Be joyful with those who are joyful. Be sad with those who are sad. Agree with one another. Do not be proud. Be willing to be a friend of people who are not important. But do not think that you are better than others. Do not pay back evil with evil. Be careful to do what everyone thinks is right. If possible, live in peace with everyone... My dear friends, do not try to get even (with your enemies). Leave room for God to show His anger. He is the One who judges people. (Deuteronomy 32:35) Scripture says, 'If your enemies are hungry, give them food to eat. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink.' (Proverbs 25:21,22) Do not let evil overcome you. Overcome evil by doing good."

Father God in Heaven, thank You that You revealed to Isaiah and Paul an understanding of Your love, mercy and judgement. Thank You for the way they applied it to Jews and Christians alike. Help us to show Your love and mercy today, leaving judgement to You who "planned everything long ago". In the name of Jesus Your Messiah and our Saviour, help us all to "overcome evil by doing good". Amen.

27th December 2024.

1 Samuel 15:22-23 and 16:1. The prophet Samuel said to King Saul, "It is better to obey God than to offer a sacrifice. It is better to do what He says than to offer the fat of rams. Refusing to obey the LORD God Almighty is as sinful as using evil magic or worshiping statues of gods. You have refused to do what the LORD told you to do. So He has refused to have you as king." Some years later, the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you be filled with sorrow because of Saul? ...Fill your animal horn with olive oil. I am sending you to Jesse in Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." Through the humble family of Jesse, God called David to be king of Israel. And through his family over 1000 years later, Joseph the carpenter married Mary, the virgin mother of Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (Matthew 1:6; 16)

Romans 3:9-24. Paul claimed, "Jews and Gentiles are sinners. Everyone is under the power of sin." He then quoted scriptures from six of the Psalms and from Ecclesiastes and Isaiah (verses 10-18). "But now God has shown us His saving power without the help of the Law. But the Law and the Prophets warned us about this. We are only made right with God by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. This happens to all who believe. It is no different for the Jews than for the Gentiles. Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory. The free gift of God's grace makes us right with Him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free."

Thank You Father God for this overview of Your purpose and provision for mankind since You judged the world of sin at the time of Noah. Thank You that You established everything necessary for Your blessings on Earth as declared in the Law of Moses and fulfilled in Christ Jesus. Amen.

30th December 2024.

Obadiah verses 15-16. At a time when Judea was being overrun by Edom and other foreign nations, Obadiah prophesied the divine judgement and future downfall of Edomites (verses 1-14) and divine

judgement and future hope for Jews during and after their exile in Babylon. "It is not just Edom but all ungodly nations who will be judged. The LORD God Almighty uses the nations to serve His purposes. And in the final day of the LORD, the nations will receive the judgement they deserve." (Dr Tomas Hale, former colleague and friend of the late Fred Morris, author of Manna Publications Bible teaching commentaries. Fred encouraged his editors to refer to Tom's commentaries published by David C. Cook in 2007.)

Hebrews 12:5-11. The writer quotes from Proverbs 3:11-12. "My son, think of the LORD's training as important. Do not lose hope when He corrects you. The LORD trains the one He loves. He corrects everyone He accepts as His son." The writer continues, "Put up with hard times. God uses them to train you. He is treating you as His children... God trains all His children... We all had human fathers who trained us... How much more should we be trained by the Father of our spirits and live! Our parents trained us for a little while. They did what they thought was best. But God trains us so we may share in His holiness. No training seems pleasant at the time. But later on it produces a harvest of godliness and peace for those who have been trained."

Thank You Father God for the words of the unknown author of Hebrews. Encourage us to come under Your righteous spiritual discipline as our heavenly Father. Help us also to trust in the words of Your little-known prophet Obadiah. May we welcome not only Your discipline for Your children but also Your righteous judgement of all people and nations. For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ who died to save us from our sins. Amen.

31st December 2024.

Jeremiah 4:1-4 records words of God Almighty similar to the words given to His prophets before and since. "If you, Israel, will return, then return to Me! ...Stop going astray. Make all your promises in My name. Be truthful, fair and honest when you make these promises. Then the nations will ask for blessings from Me. And they will glory in Me." Here is what the LORD is telling the people of Judah and Jerusalem. He says, "Your hearts are as hard as a field that has not been ploughed. So change your ways... Obey Me. Do not let your hearts be stubborn. If you do, My anger will blaze out against you!"

John 14:1-10. Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God. Believe also in Me. There are many rooms in my Father's house... And I will take you to be with Me... I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you really know Me, you will know My Father also. From now on, you do know Him. And you have seen Him." Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father." Jesus answered, "Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. So how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ...The words I say to you I do not speak on My own authority. The Father lives in Me. He is the One who is doing His work."

Dear Father in Heaven, on this eve of the new year, help us to "stop going astray". Help us to be "truthful, fair and honest" so that the nations will begin to "ask for blessings from Me". Do not let our "hearts be stubborn". We trust in the words of Jesus, "Do not let your hearts be troubled... You believe in God. Believe also in Me". Help us to believe Jesus is "the way and the truth and the life" so that others will believe the same. Amen.