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**Weekend Manna: FRED SAID**

**Extracts from Manna Bible teaching commentaries by Fred Morris**

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**Archive for 2023**

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**Weekend of 31st December/1<sup>st</sup> January 2022/3.**

**John Chapter 11: *Jesus raises Lazarus from death***

Once more Jesus became very sad. He went to the place where the body of Lazarus lay. There was a heavy stone across the entrance of the tomb (11:38).

"Take away the stone", He said (11:39).

"But Lord," said Martha... "By this time there is a bad smell. Lazarus has been in the tomb four days" (11:39).

Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (11:40). So they took away the stone (11:41).

Jesus looked up and thanked His Father for hearing Him. "I know that You always hear Me." He said this for the sake of the people standing there. He wanted them all to believe that His Father, our Almighty God and Creator, had sent Him (11:42).

Then Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man walked out of the tomb covered in strips of cloth. Our Father God listens to the voice of His Son when He makes requests on behalf of His people today (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25).

Jesus said to them "Take off his burial clothes and let him go" (11:44).

Extracted from "THE GOSEPL OF JOHN PART 2" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2008, 2015, 2022.

**Weekend of 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> January 2023.**

**Acts Chapter 5: *God punishes sin***

Sin separates us from God. He sent Jesus to die for sinners so that we can be saved by God through the punishment Jesus received in our place. When we repent and receive a new life we should leave our old lives and bad habits behind us.

Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold some land. They took some of the money to Peter. They told him it was all the money they got for their land, but it was only part of the money. They lied. This is called 'deception' and it is a sin. Peter did not say that keeping some of the money was wrong, but telling a lie about it was wrong. They could do what they wished with the money, but they could not lie to God (5:4).

Peter said, "Satan ... made you lie to the Holy Spirit ... You have lied to God" (5:3-4). When Peter said this, Ananias fell dead at his feet.

Three hours later his wife came in and told the same lie. "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord?" Peter asked her. She, too, fell down dead (5:9-10).

'The whole church ... were filled with fear' (5:11). We all deserve punishment when we sin against the Spirit of God. He wants us to repent (1 Peter 3:10-12).

Every day more and more people believed in the Lord Jesus. The believers met together in the Temple courtyards near the Porch of Solomon on the east side of the Temple in Jerusalem (5:12). Many people came from far and near to hear their teaching and to see miracles of healing by the apostles in the name of Jesus. This made some of the Jewish leaders very angry and jealous, so they put the apostles in prison (5:18).

God punishes sin and allows persecution (and temptation), which enable us to grow in obedience and faith.

Extracted from "THE EARLY CHURCH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2004, 2012, 2019.

### **Weekend of 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> January 2023.**

#### **Acts Chapter 16: *God saves the prison officer***

In prison, in the middle of the night, Paul and Silas sang hymns and prayed to God. As the other prisoners listened, an earthquake shook the prison. The head prison officer woke up and saw the doors open. He thought the prisoners had escaped. He drew his sword to kill himself, but Paul shouted, "Do not harm yourself! We are all here!" (16:25-28).

The prison officer was frightened. If the prisoners escaped, the Roman authorities would blame him.

The man fell on his knees in front of Paul and Silas. He cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you and your family will be saved" (16:30-31). Then they told him and his family about Jesus. The jailor and his family believed. At midnight, he took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds and gave them food. This showed that he was a changed man.

Paul baptized the prison officer and his whole family. For Paul and Silas, this was the most important thing to do: obey the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20, "Go and teach all people in all countries to believe and follow Me. Baptize them in the name of the Father, and in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to do all things I have told you to do." Their troubles in prison did not stop the power of God from working.

In the morning, the city leaders told the prison officer to set Paul and Silas free (16:35). They begged them to leave (16:39) because Paul was a Roman and it was wrong to whip Romans. This story shows how we should trust God in all things.

Extracted from "PAUL BRINGS GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2005, 2012, 2021.

### **Weekend of 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023.**

#### **Romans 8: *A life of power through the Spirit of Christ***

Paul knew that in the old life:

- the Law of God made him feel guilty.
- His own sinful acts made him feel guilty.

But Paul was able to write the wonderful words in Romans 8:1-2. "Those who belong to Christ Jesus are no longer condemned by God. I am now controlled by the law of the Holy Spirit. That law gives me life because of what Christ Jesus has done. It has set me free from the law of sin that brings death."

Paul is able in Chapter 8 to break away from the dark struggle with sin that he describes in chapter 7. Instead, he describes the light or law of the Spirit of life written on our hearts, as Jeremiah prophesied (Jeremiah 31:33).

If we trust in Christ alone, He gives us the power of His Spirit (8:9). So now we can live, not governed by our old sinful nature, but by God. We live as the Spirit wants (8:4). We can then keep the Law of God because we begin to take on the righteousness of God. We want to do what He wants. Because the Spirit is in our lives we no longer fear the judgement of God. We are free from 'the law of sin and death'. We have the Spirit of God all the time to give us power to live as God wants us to live. Paul called it "the law of the Spirit that gives us life" (8:2).

God's law of life in the Spirit is greater than the law of sin and death. We are set free by this greater law.

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

Extracted from "IN CHRIST ALONE" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2008, 2012.

### **Weekend of 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> January 2023.**

#### **Romans 9: *Salvation through the remnant of Israel***

Paul next uses the words of the prophet Hosea to show God's love and mercy to the Gentiles (9:25-26). God did not give them any special help, yet a great many would become 'children of the living God' through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the fulfilment of Bible prophecy. And it reveals the greatest theme of the Bible. This was God's purpose and promise of a Saviour for all mankind through Father Abraham's seed in Sarah (Genesis 17:16) and later through the Holy Spirit creating a seed in Mary (Luke 1:26-35).

The birth of Isaac in Sarah's old womb was a miracle promised by God. So was the birth of Jesus in Mary's young virgin womb over 2000 years later. Mary's children were descendants of Adam, Noah, Abraham and King David (Luke 3:23-37). This is why Jesus is often called 'a second Adam' and also 'Son of David'.

Paul then quotes the words of the prophet Isaiah: though the number of Israelites were 'like the sand by the sea', only a few would be saved. We call this a remnant (Romans 9:27-29; Isaiah 1:9; 10:22,23).

The church at the time of Paul contained both Jews and many others who were not Jews (Gentiles) (9:24). Paul asks, 'What then shall we say about the Gentiles?' They did not look for God's salvation and righteousness, but many received it (Romans 9:30). These godless people were made right with God through faith. Paul said this earlier in his letter to the Romans: 'The one who is right with God will live by faith' (1:17; Habakkuk 2:4).

Extracted from "LIVING IN CHRIST" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2007, 2012.

### **Weekend of 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**

#### **1 Corinthians Chapter 2: The prophet's words**

Paul then quoted from the prophet Isaiah: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has known what God has prepared for those who love Him" (2:9; Isaiah 64:4). This mystery is part of the amazing secret of the worldwide Christian Church:

- It was planned by God before the world began.
- It brings all people of faith in Yahweh God together as Abraham's promised extended family.
- It blesses all believers then and now whose faith is in Christ alone.
- It shows the world God's glory through the wisdom and power of believers, even under persecution and suffering.

"God has shown it to us through His Spirit. The Spirit understands [searches, KJV] all things...even the deep things of God" (2:10). Remember that the Holy Spirit is one of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity of Almighty God. The Holy Spirit works in people's hearts to reveal God the Father's will and bring salvation through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus comes to live in every believer through the Holy Spirit. This is our message of salvation to the world for whoever will receive it. Jesus suffered and died on our behalf that we may receive God's forgiveness, Holy Spirit power and eternal salvation, in this world and the next. Believe it, repent and be saved!

Extracted from "CHURCH UNITY AND DISCIPLINE" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2021.

### **Weekend of 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**

#### **Ephesians Chapter 6: *Paul's final words.***

Paul makes a special request. It is not for his comfort, or for his health. He asks for the right words to say and boldness to speak for Jesus (6:19). He reminds everyone who receives a copy of his letter that he is in prison held by chains. "Pray that I will be bold as I preach the Good News." He knew that was what he should do even at risk of death (6:20).

Paul planned to send Tychicus to the Ephesian church to let them know how he was and what he was doing (6:21). He wanted them to know how God had answered their prayers for him and his friends. Paul wanted Tychicus to encourage the Christians at Ephesus (6:22). He sent his own prayers to them for peace, love and faith (6:23). He ended with asking God to give His grace "to everyone who loves our Lord Jesus Christ with a love that will never die" (6:24).

Paul wrote this letter to the Christians at Ephesus to remind them that they all have a totally new life because they know Jesus as their Saviour. Paul reminds them about all the good things that God has given them. Paul tells the church members to encourage and support one another.

Today, we often think of the church as a building but in fact the people inside the building are the real church. Paul tells the Ephesians to be honest with each other, helping when things get difficult, being gentle in the things they do and say, encouraging each other, correcting at the right time, and always giving thanks to God. Finally, in Chapter 6 he tells us to make sure we protect ourselves in Christ by putting on our spiritual armour each morning.

Extracted from "PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2018.

### **Weekend of 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**

#### **Hebrews Chapter 12: *God trains us through suffering***

The writer of Hebrews encourages believers who are suffering because of their faith. "You struggle [and fight] against sin. But you have not yet fought to the point of spilling your blood" (12:4). You have not suffered as Jesus did.

The writer then quotes words of hope from Proverbs 3:11-12. "Think of the Lord's training as important. Do not lose faith and hope when He corrects you. The Lord trains those He loves" (Hebrews 12:5-6). God disciplines and corrects everyone He accepts as His child.

He loves us and waits for us to trust Him and obey Him. Therefore, learn from the hard times. God allows them to happen. He will use them to train you. He trains you as His children (12:7). If He does not train you then you are not truly His children (12:8).

God trains us better than our own parents. They did what they thought was best. God, however, wants us to share in His holiness (12:9-10).

All discipline and training seems painful. The training of God, however, produces holiness and also inner peace (12:11).

So lift up your weary arms and make your weak knees strong! Clear a pathway ahead for yourself. Be a good example and encourage other Christians. Then they will not stumble and hurt themselves. They will be strengthened by your example of preparing the way ahead. They will grow strong in their faith (12:12-13).

Extracted from "A LETTER TO THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2005, 2016.

### **Weekend of 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> March 2023.**

#### **James Chapter 5: *A warning to rich people as we wait for the Lord***

James warned rich people they must show mercy to the poor. They will soon be weeping and suffering (5:1) because their riches will rot away and be worthless (5:2). He knew that if believers put their trust in these things, and not in God, they cannot be part of God's Kingdom.

James was angry because rich men often cheated to get more money. He accused them of "storing up riches in these last days" (5:3). "The cries of the [poor] harvest workers have reached the ears of the Lord" (5:4). "You have lived an easy life on earth. You have given yourselves everything you wanted. You have made yourselves fat like cattle that will soon be butchered. [Some] have judged and murdered people who are not guilty. And they were not even opposing you." (5:5-6). We must not be like them.

"Brothers and sisters, be patient, until the Lord comes. See how the faithful farmer waits... and how patient he is... You, too, must be patient and stand firm... the Lord will soon come back" (5:7-8). It is clear that James and the other leaders believed Jesus would soon come again. An angel told them, "He will come back in the same way you saw Him go" (Acts 1:11).

No-one knows when Jesus will return, but at that time all wrongs will be put right. Jesus Christ will bring justice on Earth.

Extracted from "THE LETTER OF JAMES" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2020.

**Weekend of 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> March 2023.**

**Revelation Chapters 1 to 3: *The message to the church in Thyatira***

At Thyatira, dyeing cloth red or purple was a major industry. Each business had its own special god that the workers worshipped to try to gain success. The Christians in Thyatira were expected to do this or risk losing their jobs or business opportunities.

The chief god in Thyatira was Apollo. There were others. They were not just pictures or statues or idols but actual demonic powers. By those same powers, they revealed themselves to the various peoples of the day (1 Corinthians 10:20).

People disobeyed the first commandment given to Moses. They opposed Yahweh, the one true Almighty God, instead of worshipping Him. Satan also deceives people about God in nature, so that they worship rivers, trees, hills, stars and the sun and moon – treating them as gods. These people failed to worship God the Creator but instead worshipped what He created (Romans 1:25).

However, many people's hearts inquire and search for answers and for something or someone greater to worship. Because God has not stopped working, He keeps seeking and drawing men and women to worship Him. It is God's purpose to make us holy and it is Satan's purpose to stop us from being holy (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

This church in Thyatira did not yield to the threat from idol worship or the cult of Emperor worship. They refused to worship anyone or anything but God alone. They received much praise from Jesus but there was a problem of sin from within...

Extracted from "MESSAGES TO SEVEN CHURCHES" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2010, 2013.

**Weekend of 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> March 2023.**

**Genesis Chapter 8: *The changes in the world after Noah's Flood***

The old world before the Flood was destroyed by God, had changed forever because of man's sin and God's punishment through the Flood. Now there were:

- deep layers of hardened mud containing mixed fossils of creatures which died in the Flood; also buried layers of vegetation to form coal and oil;
- no layers of water above to protect Earth causing areas of much heat by day and much cold by night; many areas of land which became unsuitable to live in, such as deserts and frozen wastelands;
- daily changes in weather with rain and storms followed by sunshine with rainbows (Genesis 9:14);
- annual changes in weather and seasons with fixed times for harvest (Genesis 8:22) caused by an estimated 18° change in the Earth's axis;
- harder living conditions which meant people and creatures did not live so long and many animal species did not survive. (Source: H. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, Baker Books)

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and sacrificed some of the 'clean' animals as burnt offerings (8:20). God accepted Noah's sacrifice. God had already told men how to walk by faith and how to worship Him. The word 'altar' means 'a place of sacrifice'. The sacrificed blood of innocent animals had a special meaning to God. We understand now that this was a sign of innocent blood sacrificed for our salvation through Jesus Christ, the perfect, sinless, Son of God.

Extracted from "BEGINNINGS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2001, 2003, 2006, 2021.

**Weekend of 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> March 2023.**

**Genesis Chapter 24. *Finding a wife for Isaac***

Abraham and his family lived in Canaan. All the people living around them worshipped idols. The Canaanites did not know the one true God, Yahweh, and they were very wicked. Because Abraham loved the one true God Almighty, he wanted his son, Isaac, to marry a girl who also loved God.

The Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. Now God would bless Abraham with the right wife for Isaac. All parents need to be concerned about life partners for their sons and daughters. Isaac was special! Abraham knew that he could not marry a heathen Canaanite girl.

Abraham had eight sons but he knew that God's promises would be fulfilled through Sarah's only son, Isaac, the 'miracle boy'. Ishmael married an Egyptian girl and the other sons, born to Abraham's second wife, married local girls. Abraham knew that Isaac must marry within his father's relatives.

Abraham trusted his servant to go on the long journey to visit his father's relatives. He would visit them to bring home a wife for Isaac who believed in the LORD God Almighty. The servant probably knew the area and Abraham's brother Nahor.

Before the servant left, he asked Abraham, "What if the woman will not come back with me?" (24:5). This reminds us that it is the Holy Spirit who prompts us to do the Father's will. Abraham believed that God's Spirit would guide his servant (24:7). So Abraham reminded his servant that God brought him out of the city of Ur, spoke to him and promised to be with him. He assured his servant that the same God would "send His angel before you" (24:7).

Extracted from "ISAAC AND JACOB" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2002, 2018, 2021.

### **Weekend of 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023**

#### **Genesis Chapter 21. Sarah realises that Ishmael is a threat to Isaac**

Ishmael was 13 years old when Isaac was born. One day Sarah saw Ishmael mocking or teasing young Isaac. Ishmael was the son of Abraham born to Sarah's maid. (This was a common custom in those days.) She was angry and spoke to Abraham about Ishmael (21:10).

"Get rid of that slave woman and her son!" Sarah screamed. She knew that Ishmael would become a threat to Isaac if they live together. But Abraham did not want to do this. Then God said to him, "Do not be so upset about the boy... But listen to the request of Sarah" (21:12). God promised that Abraham's Hebrew descendants would come through Isaac's line (21:12; Romans 9:7) Isaac had 12 sons. But God promised also to make Ishmael's family into a great nation as well as Isaac's family (17:19,20; 21:13,18). Next morning, Abraham got up and obeyed God. He gave Hagar and Ishmael food and water, then he sent them away (21:14). God loved Hagar and Ishmael too. Later, Ishmael married an Egyptian (21:21). He also had 12 sons whose grandfather was Abraham. Their families were later know as Arabs.

Abraham grew in wealth and was at peace with his neighbours. He lived in God's promised land of the Canaanites and the Philistines. He worshipped Yahweh, the LORD God Almighty "who lives forever" (21:33). Abraham remembered God and God remembered Abraham.

Extracted from "ABRAHAM" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2001, 2003, 2006, 2012.

### **Weekend of 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

#### **Genesis Chapter 48. Jacob blesses Joseph's sons**

Jacob told Joseph, "Bring your two sons to me so that I can bless them" (48:9).

Joseph wanted his father to bless Manasseh, his firstborn son. So he stood Manasseh near his father's right hand and Ephraim near his father's left hand. But Jacob crossed his arms so that his right hand was on Ephraim's head and his left hand on Manasseh's head (48:13-14). Then he asked God to bless the two boys (48:15-16). He prophesied that the children of Israel in future would say these words: "May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh" (48:20). Later they became part of the nation of Israel (Joshua 14:4) and settled in the best part of the Promised Land.

Jacob now showed the same great faith in God as Abraham and Isaac. God promised to make a great nation from the family of Abraham and Sarah and Jacob believed this.

Now Joseph understood how and why God had used him to unite his family. God also used Joseph to save them from dying in the great famine by arranging for them to live in Egypt. Through Joseph, God brought a big change in Jacob and in all Joseph's brothers. Jacob learned to love all his sons equally. All his sons learned to love each other.

God loves all His sons and daughters equally. He does not have favourites. He gives us different work to do in the Kingdom of God. Jesus also taught His followers to love each other (John 15:17).

Extracted from "JOSEPH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2002, 2018.

## **Weekend of 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

### **Exodus 16. *Manna from Heaven***

One month after leaving Egypt, they came to a very hot part of the desert.

Day after day they marched through the desert, near Mount Sinai. They soon forgot to trust God. The people were angry with Moses and Aaron: "You brought us out into the desert to starve us to death", they said (16:3). They wanted meat to eat. They needed much food every day.

God spoke to Moses and promised to send food that very evening (16:12). Large numbers of birds came (16:13). This provided fresh meat for everybody. They dried some of the meat to eat later.

God also promised food from Heaven in the night (16:4). The next morning, God sent this special food from Heaven (16:13). We call it 'manna'. It was like coriander seed (Numbers 11:7). Every morning for six days each week the people gathered it into their pots. Then they ground the grains, boiled them in a pot and made them into cakes (11:8).

God told Moses, "Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any." God wanted His people to rest on the seventh day so on the sixth day He gave them enough food for two days (Exodus 16:28-29).

1500 years later, Jesus spoke about the 'bread of Moses' and called Himself the 'Bread of Heaven' who came to give us everlasting life (John 6:32-35,48-54,57-58). "Those who feed on this bread will live forever."

Extracted from "THE BIRTH OF A NATION" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2007, 2012.

## **Weekend of 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> April 2023**

### **Exodus 33. *Knowing God personally***

Moses and Aaron saw God's miracles in Egypt and how God answered their prayers for the people. God told Moses to lead these people; but who would help him now? Aaron had failed God; only Moses stood before God for the people. He was Israel's intercessor: he repeated the words of God to the people and he told God the needs of the people.

Moses was very shocked by the sins of the people and the warnings given by God. He wanted to understand God better. He needed God's encouragement. "If You are pleased with me", Moses asked God, "teach me Your ways so that I can know You and continue to please You. Remember, this nation is Your people" (33:13; Psalm 103:7). Moses wanted to know God more and more so that he could help the people more and more to become the children of God. This is the heart of a true Christian leader of today.

When we draw close to God in worship, prayer and reading or listening to His Bible truth, He is able to bless us. He does this by changing our sinful minds and bad habits and restoring hope and peace to our hearts. In this way, we are blessed by God and we become a blessing to others. This is a work of God's Holy Spirit.

Then God replied to Moses, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (33:14). This rest means peace of heart and mind. This is a very important gift from God that we should seek at all times.

Extracted from "THE GROWTH OF A NATION" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2004, 2012, 2021.

## **Weekend of 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

### **Joshua 10: *The role of Jerusalem in Israel and the World***

Early in the occupation of Canaan, Jerusalem is mentioned (10:1). Joshua defeated the ruler of the city of Jerusalem without fighting against the city to destroy it. This happened nearly 3500 years ago. Later, it became the city of the Jews and was made into the capital of Israel as the city of King David. Its name means 'place of peace'. God prepared this place of peace for His people in the future.

Jerusalem was destroyed many times when Israel sinned. Then God in His mercy and love for His people allowed it to be rebuilt. Many believe that it will never be destroyed again (Jeremiah 31:38-40).

Jerusalem is the place where God tested Abraham to be ready to sacrifice his only son Isaac on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:1-13). It is also the place where God sent His own Son to sacrifice His life so that others might believe and receive everlasting life.

This same Jesus, the promised Messiah or Christ, taught His followers in Jerusalem after being trained as a rabbi (teacher) in Nazareth (Matthew 7:28-29). He told them to preach the Good News of the salvation of God throughout the world. It is the city where Jesus ascended into Heaven (Acts 1:9-11). It is the city where the worldwide Christian faith began 2000 years ago (Acts 2). Today it is a place of worship for Jews, Christians and Muslims. It is also the city where the Messiah will return one day soon, where there is growing excitement (Acts 1:11). However, this will happen during a time of great troubles (Matthew 24:6-14). Come Lord Jesus, come! (Revelation 3:11). But remember that we must be ready for Christ's return since it will happen when we least expect it (Matthew 24:44).

Extracted from "GOD'S FIRST LEADER IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2005, 2014, 2021.

### **Weekend of 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

#### **Ruth Chapter 4: *Boaz agrees to marry Ruth***

Boaz went up to the town gate and sat there to talk with his relative. The other protector or redeemer of the Elimelech's family arrived. The two men sat down together at the gate (4:1). There, Boaz put his request before the elders and before the nearest family redeemer of Naomi and Ruth.

Boaz reminded them that closest relative of a widow could buy back or redeem the land previously owned by their dead husband. Boaz said to his relative, "Naomi has come back from Moab. She is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. I suggest that you buy the land... while the elders of my people are looking on as witnesses. If you are willing to buy it back, do it. But if you are not willing, tell me... No-one has the right to buy it back except you. And I am next in line [to buy it]" (4:3-4).

The relative said, "I will buy it." Then Boaz said, "When you buy the property from Naomi and Ruth ... you must marry Ruth... You must take her as your wife" (4:5). This would redeem the land that belonged to Elimelech. It would enable Naomi to start a new life. Then she could also start a new family for Elimelech through the children of Ruth. This custom is based on the laws given by God to Moses (Deuteronomy 25:5-6).

The closest relative did not want to do this. He asked Boaz to buy the land back (Ruth 4:6). Boaz married Ruth and a son was born to them (4:13). In this way, the family line of Elimelech was saved through which Jesus Christ was born 1300 years later.

Extracted from "RUTH AND HANNAH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2008, 2016.

### **Weekend of 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

#### **1 Samuel Chapter 8: *Israel asks for a king***

God comforted Samuel. When we see and hear wrong things, we should pray to understand how God feels. Learn to do things in love and show others the ways of God to save and bless the lost and the needy.

The Lord God Almighty told Samuel, "Listen to everything the people are saying to you. You are not the one they have turned their backs on. I am the one they do not want as their king. They are doing just as they have always done. They have deserted Me and served other gods. They have done that from the time I brought them up out of Egypt until this day. 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" (8:7-9).

Israel had to obey the form of government they chose. Samuel warned them, "You will cry out for help because of the king you have chosen. But the Lord God Almighty will not answer you at that time" (8:18).

The people refused to listen to him. "We want a king to rule over us. Then we will be like all the other nations. We will have a king to lead us. He will go out at the head of our armies and fight our battles" (8:19-20).

'Samuel heard everything the people said. He told the Lord about it' (8:21). God answered, "Listen to them. Give them a king." He knew that the people would put their faith in a king and not in God. But it was always the purpose of God to choose the right king for them at the right time (Deuteronomy 17:15). However, no king of Israel was perfect until Messiah came as King of Kings. Extracted from "SAMUEL AND SAUL" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2021.

### **Weekend of 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> May 2023**

#### **1 Samuel Chapter 26: *David spares Saul's life again***

Saul began to drive David out of the Promised Land and into the arms of his heathen neighbours. Saul and 3,000 chosen men searched for David in the Desert of Ziph (26:1-2).

At night, Saul slept in his camp with his army around him. General Abner was sleeping close to the King. David and his commander, Abishai, (his step-brother) crept into Saul's camp. They got close to Saul without anyone hearing them. 'They found Saul lying asleep inside the camp. His spear was stuck in the ground near his head' (26:5-7).

Abishai said to David, "Today God has handed your enemy over to you. So let me pin him to the ground. I can do it with one jab of my spear" (26:8).

David held his arm. "Do not destroy him," he said to Abishai. "No-one can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed king and not be guilty. You can be sure that as the LORD lives... the LORD Himself will strike Saul down. Perhaps he will die a natural death. Or perhaps he will go into battle and be killed" (26:9-10).

So David took Saul's spear and water jug and left the camp. No-one saw David and Abishai, because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep.

Next morning David stood on the top of the hill and shouted to Abner, the commander of Saul's army, "You and your men are worthy of death. You did not guard your master. He is the LORD's anointed king. Look around you. Where are the king's spear and water jug that were near his head?" (26:16).

Then Saul said, "I have sinned. My son David, come back. Today you thought my life was very special ...May the LORD bless you. You will do great things. You will also have great success." So David went on his way. And Saul returned home (26:21,25).

Extracted from "SAMUEL AND DAVID" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2022.

### **Weekend of 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

#### **Mark Chapter 7: *A foreign woman shows faith in Jesus***

Jesus walked 60 km to Tyre and Sidon on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. (7:24). The people who lived there were not Jews. But even in this place, the people knew about Him.

A woman saw Jesus and recognised Him. She knelt down at His feet. She wanted Jesus to heal her daughter. An evil spirit controlled her little girl (7:25). 'She begged Jesus to drive out the demon from her daughter' (7:26).

Jesus told her, "It is not right to take the bread from the children and throw it to dogs" (7:27). Jesus meant that he had come to teach the truth of the Kingdom of God to the Jews first. Jesus told His disciples to do this (Matthew 10:6). Their time to teach those who were not Jews would come later (Mark 16:15).

The woman knew what Jesus meant. She knew that Jesus was testing her faith. She was bold and strong in her faith. She answered, "Yes Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the crumbs that the children leave" (7:28).

Jesus was very pleased with her answer. "That was a good reply. You may go now. The demon has left your daughter" (7:29). She went home and the demon was gone (7:30).

The Kingdom of God is for all people including foreigners. Jesus accepts anyone who confesses his or her sins, repents and follows Him. He later warned those who did not repent. He said that it would be easier for the people of Tyre and Sidon on Judgement Day (Matthew 11:20-22).

Isaiah, 740 years before the ministry of Jesus, prophesied that God's Messiah would "bring the family of Jacob (Israel) back to Him ... make the people a light for other nations ... and make it possible for the whole world to be saved" (Isaiah 49:5-6).

Extracted from "THE GOOD NEWS TOLD BY MARK" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2001, 2008, 2016.

## Weekend of 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### Mark Chapter 12: *The religious leaders ask Jesus a trick question*

Soon after the parable of the tenant farmers, the religious leaders made their plans to arrest Jesus and kill Him. They did not believe that Jesus had authority to say these things (Mark 11:28). They did not know or believe that God had given Jesus authority.

Some Pharisees tried to trap Jesus by His words and answers (12:13). They knew that the people did not like the taxes they had to pay to the Romans, so they asked Jesus what He thought about the tax.

Jesus knew they wanted to trap Him. If He said "Yes, pay the tax" the people would be angry. If He said "Do not pay the tax" these leaders would report Him to King Herod. So He said to them, "Why are you trying to trap [test] Me? Bring Me a coin" (12:15).

They gave Him a silver coin. Roman coins had an image of the face of the Roman Emperor Caesar on them.

"Whose picture is this?" He asked. "Caesar's", they replied (12:16).

Then He said to them, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God" (12:17). By this, Jesus showed that there are many ways in which we can obey our leaders and government without going against God's laws. They were amazed at His answer. Even hypocrites can believe that Jesus teaches the truth from God. We too must never ignore the ungodly nor the self-righteous, as God wants to save them too.

Next the Sadducees came to Jesus. They did not believe there was life after death. They tried to trick or trap Jesus with a law from the Old Testament: "Suppose a woman's husband died and she married again. If she had seven husbands, which husband will be hers in the resurrection?" they asked (12:20-23).

Jesus showed them their mistake. "You do not know the Scriptures... The dead will rise, but they will be like angels," Jesus said. Angels do not marry (12:24-27).

Extracted from "THE DEATH, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2002, 2020.

## Weekend of 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### John Chapter 6: *Manna and the true Bread of Life*

The crowd still wanted to see more miracles of food. They said, "Long ago our people ate manna from Heaven in the desert" (6:31).

Jesus said, "It is not Moses who gave you bread from Heaven. It is My Father who gives you the true bread from Heaven (6:32). The bread of God is the One who comes down from Heaven. He gives life to the world" (6:33).

The crowd asked Jesus for this bread. He gave them a very important reply. "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" (6:35). "But... you have seen Me and you still do not believe" (6:36). They knew about the history of the Jews, and the family of Abraham they all belonged to, but rejected their own Messiah.

Then Jesus said more important things about Himself and His Father in Heaven:

- God the Father guides people to come to Jesus (6:37).
- Jesus will never send anyone away who comes to Him (6:37).
- Jesus came down from Heaven to do the will of His Father, not His own will (6:38).
- God does not want to lose anyone that He has given to Jesus (6:39).
- Jesus will raise up every believer on the last day (6:39).
- God wants all who believe in Jesus to have eternal life (6:40).

He then told them these things about Himself:

- "No-one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me brings him. Then I will raise him up on the last day" (6:44).
- "Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to Me" (6:45).
- "No-one has seen the Father except the One who has come from God. Only He has seen the Father" (6:46).
- "Everyone who believes [Me] has life for ever" (6:47).
- "I am the Bread of Life" (6:48).

Extracted from "THE GOSPEL OF JOHN Part 1" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2008, 2015, 2022.

### **Weekend of 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

#### **John Chapter 18: *The truth that Jesus told Pontius Pilate***

"What is truth?" Pilate asked Jesus (18:38). John had heard Jesus tell Pilate, "I was born and came into the world to be a witness of the truth" (18:37). Pilate did not understand the truth from God but John understood and believed the truth that Jesus taught His disciples.

John wrote these words in his book about the Good News of Jesus which are a witness to this truth:

- "God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son. Anyone who believes in Him will not die but will have eternal life" (3:16).
- "God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through Him" (3:17).
- "Anyone who lives by the truth comes into the light ... with God's help" (3:21).

Later, John wrote these words to the new fellowships of believers (1 John 1:1-3):

"This is what we announce to everyone about the Word of Life [Jesus]. He was already here from the beginning. We have heard Him. We have seen Him with our eyes. We have looked at Him. Our hands have touched Him... We give witness about Him. And we announce to you that same eternal life. He was already with the Father. He has appeared to us. We announce to you what we have seen and heard. We do it so you can share life together with us. And we share life [fellowship, KJV] with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing this to make your joy complete."

Extracted from "JOHN'S GOSPEL PART 2" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2002, 2017.

### **Weekend of 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

#### **Acts Chapter 10: *Peter visits someone who is not a Jew***

Cornelius's servants came to Simon the leather-worker's house and asked for Peter (10:17-18). Then the Holy Spirit spoke to Peter: 'Do not be afraid to go with them, for I have sent them' (10:19-20).

The next day, Peter went with them to Caesarea. The Jewish law said that Jews should not go into a non-Jewish house, but God had showed Peter that He can make anything clean (10:15,28). God wants all people to be saved. He saved Saul. Cornelius could be saved by believing and following Jesus.

God wanted Cornelius and his family to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. Peter told Cornelius, "Now I know that God treats everyone the same. He accepts people from every nation" (10:34-35). God did not want Cornelius to reject the Jewish Messiah. God wanted Cornelius to know all about Jesus. God also wanted to teach Peter new things in addition to the Old Testament covenant. So Peter preached the New Testament Good News of Jesus Christ (10:36-43). He confirmed that the Son of God came into the world as Judge and as Saviour (10:42-43). When Peter said these words, the Holy Spirit 'came down on all who heard the message' (10:44).

When Cornelius and his family all heard the Good News of Jesus Christ, they believed (10:46). The Jewish believers who were with Peter were amazed. They saw the Holy Spirit come upon believers who were not Jews.

Then Peter baptised the new believers 'in the name of Jesus Christ'. The Holy Spirit came on them as on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

On that day, Peter learnt that Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, came to save from sin all people who believe. The plan of God is to offer salvation to people of ALL nations. We are called to do the same in the name of Jesus.

Extracted from "THE EARLY CHURCH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2004, 2012, 2019.

### **Weekend of 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023**

#### **Acts Chapter 15: *The meeting of church leaders in Jerusalem***

James warned the church leaders "not to make it hard for the non-Jews who are turning to God" (Acts 15:19). He also wanted all the apostles to remember to care for the poor (Galatians 2:10).

The church leaders in Jerusalem wrote a letter to the non-Jewish believers in Antioch-in-Syria. They sent it with Judas, Silas, Paul and Barnabas (15:22-23). Two were church leaders from Jerusalem; two were church leaders from Antioch. In the letter they said that they were sorry that some of the Jewish believers had upset the non-Jewish believers.

This letter brought unity among the believers and made everyone happy (15:31). Jesus had prayed to Father God for unity among believers (John 17:26).

Their message in the letter (15:24-29):

- recognised there was a problem;
- apologised for any upset;
- confirmed their trust in the work of Paul and Barnabas;
- shared what the Holy Spirit taught in Jerusalem;
- warned against eating all food offered in Satan and idol worship;
- offered other spiritual and moral advice.

Judas and Silas stayed in Antioch until peace was restored.

Like James, we must become part of the answer to the prayers of Jesus for Christian unity today (John 17:17). That is, between young and old believers, believers of different cultures and also new and traditional believers. This must be done in love without changing the truth and purposes of God as recorded in the original Old and New Testaments written in Hebrew and Greek.

Extracted from "PAUL BRINGS GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2005, 2012, 2019.

### **Weekend of 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

#### **Romans 6: We are set free to do good**

Paul asks, "What is salvation?" The salvation of God is forgiveness from sin through repentance and believing in faith that Christ died to save us. Salvation brings us the opportunity to be free from sin in this world. Salvation also enables us to receive the promise of the Holy Spirit now and the promise of eternal life in Heaven in the future.

Paul wrote: "At one time you gave your bodies to be slaves to your unclean ways ... Now give your bodies to be slaves to doing what is right and ... good" (6:19).

Without God, it is easy for men to sin. Soon after we are born we begin to sin. It is our nature because we are born in sin. We are created in the image of God but with the sin of Adam within us, which deserves punishment and eternal death (Genesis 2:17).

Now that we are followers of Christ, Paul asks again, "Shall we sin because the grace of God has set us free?" (6:15). Of course not! Paul says that we are free to choose. We are free to be His slaves because we love Him as His loyal servants (6:16-18; Leviticus 25:39). A loyal servant promises to be true to his master, because he loves him. We happily give ourselves to serve our Lord Jesus, and by faith receive eternal life.

We can only say 'no' to sin if we have Christ to make us strong. We can only finish with our old life as slaves to sin if His Holy Spirit is living in us. Without the Holy Spirit we cannot live a holy life. His Spirit tells us how to live and we do what He tells us. The Spirit knows the truth and the truth sets us free (John 8:32).

Extracted from "IN CHRIST ALONE" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2008, 2012.

### **Weekend of 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

#### **Romans 12: *Living to please God and His people in love***

After encouraging us to use our spiritual gifts in serving others, Paul lists some very practical matters that require personal discipline. They are about serving God and His people in love (12:9-13):

- Love must be honest and true.
- Hate what is evil; do what is good.
- Love each other deeply.
- Honour and respect others more than yourself.
- Never stop serving the Lord.
- Never let the faith within you die out; keep it alive.
- Be joyful in your hope.
- Be patient in suffering.

- Be faithful in prayer for others.
- Share with God's people who are in need.
- Welcome others into your home.

By God's grace we can do the things that are not easy to do. Paul learned about these things from the other Apostles in Jerusalem. He quotes words they told him from Jesus' sermon on the mountain (Matthew 5:39-42). Both Jesus and Paul spoke to their followers who suffered for their faith. Paul continues his list of how to serve others in love, using the words of Jesus (12:14-16):

- Bless those who hurt you; bless and do not curse them.
- Comfort those who mourn; rejoice with those who rejoice and be sad with those who are sad.
- Agree with each other regarding God's truth.
- Do not be proud: have equal respect for one another. Do not think that you are better than others.
- Be willing to be a friend of people who are not considered important.

Extracted from "LIVING IN CHRIST" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2007, 2012.

### **Weekend of 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> July 2023**

#### **1 Corinthians Chapter 2: *We must obey the wisdom of God***

"The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God" (2:14, NIV). Paul knew how God's servants think differently and act differently to those who do not seek salvation through Christ alone. Jewish and Gentile believers are under God's authority and they take orders from above. Those who do not receive Jesus into their lives as the Son of God do not understand this. Our thoughts, beliefs and motives are nothing without the Holy Spirit's help.

Paul again quoted from the prophet Isaiah to confirm that only those who have the mind of Christ know the mind of God. Without this presence of the Holy Spirit within, non-believers cannot know the mind of God nor the mind of Christ. "Who has known the mind of the LORD God Almighty?" (Isaiah 40:13). This is why Paul stated confidently that Christians can know the wisdom of God on any matter because "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

By obeying and trusting in the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit within us, believers can know what is right and righteous. They learn to understand, and also feel and love as Christ loved on Earth, with His compassion. This is possible when they allow the Holy Spirit power to work in them. Jesus promised that His Father in Heaven will give the Holy Spirit now to those who ask Him (Luke 11:13).

Extracted from "CHURCH UNITY AND DISCIPLINE" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2021.

### **Weekend of 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

#### **Ephesians Chapter 3: *Paul's prayers for the Ephesians***

It was Paul's great desire that everyone will understand the love of Jesus and be filled with the fullness of God Almighty. The Holy Spirit shows us how wide and long and high and deep is God's love and power for us (3:18). Paul believed that we will receive everything God has planned for us (3:19).

Paul also said, "God is able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine. Give Him glory in the church and in Christ Jesus... through all time and forever and ever" (3:20-21).

Paul's chief prayer is for God's love and power to be at work within the church throughout all generations. It was a prayer of blessing for the Ephesian church and for all churches today. God is able to do more than Paul or the Ephesians could ever imagine, and the glory belongs to God (Isaiah 42:8). God will do this work in Christians today as they come to Him through Jesus, who prays for them (Hebrews 7:25).

We must not only preach the Good News of Jesus but respond to it and live it out in our lives. We cannot look at someone and say we do not love them when we have Christ's Spirit, the source of love, within us. We are not perfect, but we are empowered to love others. This is God's work of grace within us. It enables us to work and worship in unity but each member must play their part despite our differences.

Extracted from "PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2018.

## **Weekend of 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

### **Hebrews Chapter 5: *Who was Melchizedek?***

Melchizedek was a high priest of the Lord God Almighty (Genesis 14:18). His name means King of Righteousness. He lived at the time of Abraham. Melchizedek was high priest and king of Salem, now called Jerusalem. He lived a long time before the laws about priests were given to Moses. He lived nearly 500 years before Moses led Israel, the chosen people of God. He lived nearly 1000 years before David was king of Israel in Jerusalem. He lived nearly 2000 years before the birth of Jesus and his crucifixion in Jerusalem. The Jews believe Melchizedek lives forever with God.

The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus is in the pattern or order of Melchizedek. Jesus is not in the priestly line of Aaron. He is in the line of Judah. He is also in the line of King David. Jesus is greater than high priest Melchizedek. He is greater than King David. He is the Son of God. He is perfect and without sin. He came as a human being to suffer and die for the sins of the world. He now offers salvation for all believers in all ages. His personal sacrifice was the final sacrifice of blood for sinners.

This was the final plan of God from the beginning of time and forever. There is now no need for the regular blood offerings in the Temple or tabernacles across Israel. Jesus is our Great High Priest. He lives forever, just like Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4). One day soon, Jesus will return from Heaven to Jerusalem and rule on Earth (Acts 1:11).

Extracted from "HEBREWS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2005, 2016.

## **Weekend of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

### **Revelation Chapter 2: *Repent from all that is false and unholy***

After praising them, Jesus said to the believers at Pergamum: "I have a few things against you. You have people there who follow the teaching of Balaam who taught Balak to tempt the Israelites to sin. They ate food sacrificed to the gods. They committed sexual sins. You also have people who follow the teaching of the Nicolaitans" (2:14-15). The church had problems because sexual ungodliness was ignored within the church. Some were seduced by the 'free love' that was common in Pergamum. Others were trading with the non-believers for cheap food offered to idols.

The word of the Lord to them is "REPENT!"

A great battle was being fought for the hearts and minds of this congregation. Persecutions and martyrdom did not stop them from following Christ and His righteousness, so Satan changed his plan! He tempted them with sexual sins and false teaching. Some yielded to the attractions of sin.

The risen Lord Jesus told them: "Turn away from your sins. If you don't, I will come to you soon. I will fight against those who sin, with the sword that comes out of My mouth" (2:16; Hebrews 4:12).

It appears that the whole church was not guilty, yet the call to repent was to the whole congregation. Why? Because they had tolerated false teaching and unholy behaviour in their midst. This complaint from Jesus was against the whole church. And the Spirit of Christ would come to punish, remove and even destroy the false teachers and those who followed them.

The church in Ephesus had lost its first love for the Lord but remained holy. The church in Pergamum had not lost its love for the Lord but had lost its holiness.

Extracted from "MESSAGES TO SEVEN CHURCHES" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2010, 2013, 2022.

## **Weekend of 26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

### **Genesis Chapter 6: *Noah, a man of faith, builds God's ark***

'The LORD God Almighty was pleased with Noah' (6:8). Noah trusted God in a world that was filled with hate and murder. He had three married sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. He loved and obeyed God (6:9,22).

Noah was a man of great faith and courage. He told everyone that God would judge the Earth because of their wickedness. He warned them that God would send a great flood. He was not discouraged when his neighbours mocked him because his faith was in God alone (Hebrews 11:7). In His grace and mercy God saved Noah and his family, eight people. We call this small number a 'remnant'.

God then said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people... so make yourself an ark of pine or cypress wood... Here is how you will build it" (6:13-16).

The ark had ideal measurements given by God, nearly 150 m × 30 m × 20 m. In 1609 the Dutchman, Peter Jansen, built a ship one third the size. It was very stable in the water and carried much more goods than an ordinary ship of the same length at that time.

In Genesis 6:17, God repeats clearly His plan to destroy all life by a flood. He then introduces the word 'covenant' for the first time (6:18). This is not just a promise like the promises He made to Adam and Eve. God's covenant with Noah, and the later covenants, are more important as time goes on. They were all part of His developing salvation plan for sinful mankind.

Extracted from "BEGINNINGS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2001, 2003, 2006, 2021.

### **Weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> September 2023**

#### **Genesis Chapter 12: *God went first, Abraham followed***

After many months, Abraham and Lot arrived in Canaan with all their servants, tents and animals. When Abraham came to the great trees of Moreh near Shechem, he stopped. At that time, the Canaanites were living in the land. They were evil people who were cursed by Noah (Genesis 9:25). But God promised Abraham that this land would belong to his family (15:18-21). Shechem is 60km north of Jerusalem but Abraham knew nothing of God's special plans for that place.

Abraham believed that God would give him a land that was not his own and children that he did not yet have. So Abraham built an altar to honour and worship the Lord God. As in Noah's day, the altar was a place to sacrifice the blood of innocent animals to obey and worship God.

At this time, God did not allow Abraham to settle here, even though it was the Promised Land for his descendants.

There was no rain for a long time and everything dried up. Then Abraham did something without waiting to hear from God. He did not ask the LORD God Almighty what he should do or wait for directions. He thought that he knew what to do! Abraham was not perfect. There was a famine and he moved down to Egypt (12:10) and nearly lost his beautiful wife (12:14). Sarai was important to God because of His promise to give Abraham a family through her. We must all learn to live and walk by the guidance of God's Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:25).

Extracted from "ABRAHAM" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2001, 2003, 2006, 2012.

### **Weekend of 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

#### **Genesis Chapter 24: *Finding a wife for Isaac***

Abraham trusted his servant to go on the long journey to visit Abraham's brother to bring home a wife for Isaac who believed in the LORD God Almighty. Before the servant left, he asked Abraham, "What if the woman will not come back with me?" (24:5). Abraham believed that God's Spirit would guide his servant (24:7). So Abraham reminded his servant that God brought him out of the city of Ur, spoke to him and promised to be with him. He assured his servant that the same God would "send His angel before you" (24:7).

In the same way, Father God uses His Spirit to prompt us to obey Him. We can then choose to do what is right or we can disobey and choose to go the wrong way. However, when God calls us to do His will, we must learn not to get ahead of God's guidance. It may take years of faithful waiting on God to see His plans fulfilled. Meanwhile, we have to grow in faith and obedience as did Abraham and his servant.

The servant obeyed Abraham and loaded the camels for the journey. So the servant set out for Haran to find a wife for Isaac. He went to Abraham's own brother Nahor. The servant took with him all kinds of good things from his master. Abraham was very rich and he gave his servant gold, clothes and fine food to take with him. These were presents to give to Abraham's brother and to the members of Nahor's family. They were all descended from Noah's second son Shem.

Extracted from "ISAAC AND JACOB" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2002, 2018, 2021.

### **Weekend of 16/17<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

#### **Genesis Chapter 40: *God gives Joseph wisdom for the future***

While Joseph was in prison, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, became angry with two of his workers. He put them in prison with Joseph (40:1-3).

One night the two men had dreams. Joseph told them, "Only God knows what dreams mean. Tell me your dreams" (40:8). Joseph listened then said that the dreams correctly described what would happen to them in three days time (40:12-19).

Three days later, it was Pharaoh's birthday. He gave a special meal for his workers. Pharaoh let one prisoner go free, but he hanged the other prisoner (40:20-22). This is exactly as Joseph had told them.

Two more years passed before God used Joseph in His plans for the children of Israel (Jacob). Then Pharaoh had two dreams, one after the other. Next morning he was worried. He sent for all his magicians and wise men (41:8). Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no-one could tell him what they meant.

Then Pharaoh's wine taster remembered Joseph. He had been in prison with Joseph. He told Pharaoh about Joseph who was still in prison. He told the king how Joseph explained the meaning of his dreams. Pharaoh sent for Joseph.

He said to him, "I have heard that when you hear a dream you can explain it" (41:15). Joseph looked at Pharaoh. "I cannot do it," he replied, "but God will." This proves how much Joseph's faith in God had grown. He believed that God would give Pharaoh the right answer (41:16). Joseph did not want the praise. He wanted God to have all the praise. He put all his trust in the LORD God Almighty. God was with him and He used Joseph for His future plans for Egypt, Israel and all the world.

Extracted from "JOSEPH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2002, 2018.

### **Weekend of 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

#### **Exodus 3: *Moses tries to say "No" to God***

God told Moses why he must go to Egypt (3:7-9). God wanted Moses to take His people out of Egypt, back to the land promised to Abraham (Genesis 15:18). Moses was God's chosen man to lead them. Moses was the only Hebrew who knew and understood the king of Egypt.

"Who am I?" Moses answered. "Who am I that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11). He was not a great prince any more. He was just a poor shepherd. He was good at caring for sheep, not people. Moses was afraid. He killed an Egyptian. God knew this but He still chose Moses to speak to the Pharaoh king and to take the Hebrews out of Egypt. Moses had run away and the Hebrews suffered in Egypt for 40 more years. But now this was God's time. He would not wait any longer.

"I will be with you," God told him, "and I will give you a sign... When you bring the people out of Egypt, you will all worship Me here on this mountain." It was Horeb the mountain of Sinai near where Moses was keeping the sheep (3:1,12).

Moses tried to argue with God but God said, "I will strike the Egyptians so that they will let you go to your own land" (3:20). But Moses was afraid of Pharaoh and did not want to go back to Egypt.

"I AM who I AM," God told Moses. "Yahweh, the Almighty God, is My name forever" (3:14-15). Before Moses could serve Yahweh, the Great I AM, he had to know Him as the One who is always there. He was there in creation, in history with Noah and Abraham, and in Egypt with Joseph and Jacob. He has all power in Heaven and on Earth, now and in the future for all time.

Extracted from "THE BIRTH OF A NATION" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2004, 2012, 2021.

### **Weekend of 30th September/1<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

#### **Exodus 34: *Moses pleads to God for the people***

God warned Moses that the sins of the people would affect their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren (34:7b). It is again clear from the Old Testament writings how much we all deserve punishment for our sins. But when we ask God to forgive our sins through Jesus, we are set free from the curse of our sins and the sins of others, including the sins of previous generations.

Moses bowed down with his face to the ground and worshipped God. Again, Moses asked God to go with His people. "Forgive our sin," Moses pleaded, "and accept us as Your people" (34:8-9).

God answered Moses and offered the same covenant that He had given before (24:8). "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonderful things that I have never done before in any nation in all the world. Obey what I command you today" (34:10,11). What a wonderful promise from a holy God who hates sin!

Then God named all the tribes of Canaan. He promised to drive them from the Promised Land. He warned Moses that the Israelites must not make a peace treaty with any of them, nor give

their sons and daughters in marriage to them (34:12-16). There are several other warnings and in the next verses (34:17-26), some of God's commandments are repeated.

When Moses returned with the two new stone tablets, his face shone 'because he had spoken with the Almighty God' (34:29). Aaron and the people saw the glory of God on the face of Moses and they were afraid. Moses told them not to be afraid of him.

Moses told Aaron and the people all the commands God had given him. When he finished speaking, he put a veil, or cover, over his face. He took the veil off each time he went into God's presence in the meeting place in the tent.

Extracted from "THE GROWTH OF GOD'S NATION" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2007, 2012, 2021.

### **Weekend of 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

#### **Joshua Chapter 5: *Joshua meets the captain of the Lord's army***

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

The stranger told Joshua that he was not one of his soldiers nor on the side of the enemy soldiers. "I have come as commander of the army of Almighty God" (5:14). God supports those who obey Him. Then Joshua knew this man was sent by God and bowed down with his face to the ground. He asked the man, "What message does my Lord have for me?"

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

God spoke to Joshua in this way to show that he was in the right place for what would happen next. God was there at Jericho with Joshua and with his men. God showed Joshua that He, the Almighty God of Israel, was in charge. Joshua should trust and obey His voice and not trust in himself.

Many people today who say they are Christians do not humble themselves to listen when God tells them to obey His word. To win the battle over sin and over the evil around us, we must take orders from our Commander, Jesus Christ. Then the enemies of God will see that we have His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, with us and within us (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 4:1).

So Joshua humbled himself before Almighty God by taking his sandals off and bowing down. He was in a new and strange place ready to start the battle of Jericho.

Extracted from "JOSHUA" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2005, 2014, 2021.

### **Weekend of 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

#### **Ruth Chapter 2. *Boaz was a family protector***

Ruth took home to Naomi much grain and some food. God was good to them by encouraging Boaz to be kind. Boaz had helped the two women whom God wanted to bless.

Ruth emptied out her grain and Naomi was surprised. She asked Ruth, "Where did you pick up grain today? Where did you work? May the man who noticed you be blessed." (2:19)

"The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz." As soon as Ruth mentioned the name of Boaz, Naomi knew where Ruth had been. She said, "May the LORD God Almighty bless him" (2:20). Naomi saw how God provided much food. She also saw how God opened the way for the future needs of herself and Ruth. It was a very special moment for her. Naomi was amazed how God had answered her prayers through Ruth and Boaz. Boaz was a relative of her dead husband. She believed that Boaz would provide for her and Ruth and protect them.

Naomi told Ruth "That man is a close relative of ours. He is one of our family protectors" (2:20). This meant that Boaz had a duty to help Naomi and her daughter-in-law. On that day, God led Ruth to the man who was a relative of Naomi. She found a relative who was a family protector and redeemer. In this way, Boaz became a protector, provider and redeemer for Naomi and Ruth. Naomi told Ruth to continue to work in the field of Boaz. She said, "That will be good for you my daughter" (2:22).

So Ruth stayed close to the women who worked for Boaz until the end of the harvest (2:23). The other men and women in the field owned by Boaz kept her safe. They respected her.

Extracted from "RUTH AND HANNAH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2016.

## **Weekend of 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> October 2023**

### **1 Samuel Chapter 16: *David serves King Saul***

The shepherd boy who became King David was born in the town of Bethlehem and was from the tribe of Judah. One of his descendants would be Joseph, whose wife Mary gave birth in Bethlehem to Jesus the Christ, Israel's Messiah, their King of Kings (Matthew 1:6-16). That is why Jesus is sometimes called the Son of David in the Bible. Jesus was born to Mary by the Holy Spirit as the Son of God, not the son of Joseph.

Samuel anointed David as king, but only David's family knew this. Saul still reigned as king over Israel for several more years.

From that time, 'the Spirit of the Lord left Saul. And an evil spirit was sent by the Lord. It terrified him' (16:14).

Servants in Saul's court were quick to see he was troubled. They said to him, "Give us an order to look for someone who can play the harp. He will play it when the evil spirit sent by God comes upon you. Then you will feel better" (16:15-16).

One of the servants said that a son of Jesse of Bethlehem played the harp. "He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well ... and the Lord God Almighty is with him" (16:18).

Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse. He said, "Send me your son David, the one who takes care of your sheep" (16:19).

So, Jesse gave David a gift for the king and sent him to Saul. At the palace, David played the harp and Saul felt quiet in his spirit. The evil spirit left Saul when David did this (16:23). David praised the Lord in music and song. No evil spirit can stand in the presence of God, or in the presence of those who praise Him.

Extracted from "SAMUEL AND SAUL" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2021.

## **Weekend of 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

### **2 Samuel Chapter 18: *Saul tries to control David***

Saul then thought of a way to have more control over David. He said to David, "Here is my elder daughter Merab, I will give her to you to be your wife. Just serve me bravely and fight the battles of the LORD."

David was surprised by the King's offer. He told the King he was a humble servant not a prince. He could not be the king's son-in-law. So Saul gave Merab to someone else.

Saul did not stop trying to gain control over David. His second daughter, Michal, loved David (18:20). So he said to David, "Now you have a second chance to become my son-in-law!" He sent word to David to say he wanted him to kill 100 Philistines. This would earn David the right to marry his daughter.

David took up the King's challenge. He loved Michal and he also wanted to kill the LORD's enemies. So David and his men killed not 100 but 200 Philistines without harm to themselves. Michal became his wife (18:28) and Saul realised that the LORD was with David. He also realised how much Michal loved him. However, he continued to be an enemy of David because of his fear that David would become more popular than him (18:29). But David remained successful in battle against the Philistines. 'So his name became well known' (18:30).

These things happened because of the eternal purpose of God for David. He did not stop the evil plans of Satan at work in Saul. Instead, God used evil for good. From David's family line, Jesus was born as Israel's Messiah. Jesus the Messiah or Christ lived and died for our sins on the cross so that we all might be saved eternally if we believe in Him.

Extracted from "SAMUEL AND DAVID" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2022.

## **Weekend of 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

### **1 Samuel Chapter 1: *Hannah gives her son back to God***

When Samuel was about three years old, Hannah and Elkanah took the boy to the House of God at Shiloh (1:24). They took with them the sacrifices and offerings commanded in the Law of Moses. They took a young bull and some flour and some wine.

'After the bull was sacrificed, Elkanah and Hannah brought the boy to Eli' (1:25). They told him that they wanted Samuel to grow up serving God at Shiloh. He was a very special sacrifice and offering to God.

Hannah said to Eli, "I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD God Almighty" (1:26). Hannah gave Samuel to Eli and reminded him of her prayer for a son. She praised God for His goodness.

She told Eli, "I prayed for this child. The LORD God Almighty has given me what I asked Him for. So now I give him to God. As long as he lives he will be given to the LORD" (1:27-28).

This was the time to fulfil her promise to dedicate her baby to God. It began a great work of good for Israel and the world. It was the result of her faith, her love for God and her prayers. God allowed the shame of not having children. He gave her the faith to believe. He encouraged her love. He heard and answered her prayers. She was 'heard by God'. Samuel came into this world through the love and mercy of God for Hannah. This is called the grace of God. And because she gave up her son Samuel, God changed the world through his plans for Samuel and the nation of Israel.

Many hundreds of years later, God gave up His Son Jesus for the salvation of the world. His name means Saviour or Salvation.

Extracted from "RUTH AND HANNAH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2016.

### **Weekend of 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

#### **Mark Chapter 8: *The way of the cross for the followers of Jesus***

Jesus said, "If you want to be my disciple, you must put yourself last. You must pick up your cross and follow me" (8:34). He warned that every follower had to take up their own cross. The way of the cross is a way of suffering. Each person must be ready to give up their own way of life to do the will of God for the sake of others.

For followers of Jesus, His cross is not just a thing of gold or silver on a chain. The cross means death to our old life. We live to serve God. We do only the things that please Him. The cross means dying to our old selves, and then allowing the Holy Spirit to make our lives new. Jesus gave up His glory and power and came to Earth to seek and to save those who are lost (Luke 19:10).

Jesus wants His followers to put God first in their lives and to spread the Good News of His salvation plan in the sacrifice of His Son. "Whoever wants to save their life will lose it. But whoever loses their life for Me and for the Good News will save it" (8:35). For many people who have followed Jesus, it has cost them their lives. For some people today, it might also cost them their lives. Are we ready to give everything we have for Jesus, if necessary, then live with Him forever? (1 John 5:11-12.)

After His death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to live in His followers. The Holy Spirit gives peace, joy and hope and also the power to overcome evil within us and around us. This is why Christians believe that our God is three-in-one: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Extracted from "THE GOOD NEWS TOLD BY MARK" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2001, 2008, 2016, 2022.

### **Weekend of 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

#### **Mark Chapter 10. *Jesus heals a man who has much faith***

A large crowd followed Jesus. Near Jericho they heard a blind man shouting. "Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me" (10:47). Beggars were a common sight at the entrance to cities. God, however, often gives blind and deaf people greater understanding. Blind Bartimaeus called Jesus "Son of David". He understood that Jesus was the promised Messiah from the family line of King David. When the crowds told him to be quiet, he shouted the same words even louder (10:48)!

Jesus stopped and sent a message to the blind man to come to Him. 'He threw his coat to one side. Then he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus' (10:50).

Jesus asked, "What do you want Me to do for you?" (10:51).

The man answered, "I want to see."

"Go," Jesus said. "Your faith has healed [saved, KJV] you" (10:52).

Jesus knew that blind Bartimaeus had faith. Even in a large crowd, Jesus could hear the cries or prayers of faithful people. Faith in Jesus means putting all our trust in Him. He knows when we are truly sorry for our sins. He knows when we have understanding and faith (Hebrews 4:13). Then when we receive an answer to prayer, we know that it has come from God.

Once again, the teaching of Jesus is made very clear by Mark. Faith in Jesus (10:47) and faith in action (10:50) bring answers to prayer (10:52). Bartimaeus understood these things. He

shouted out and his sight was restored. Then, instead of going his own way, he followed and went the way of Jesus (10:52). He asked to see so he could follow Jesus!

Extracted from "THE DEATH, RESURRECION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2002, 2020.

### **Weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023**

#### **John Chapter 1: *The Four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John***

There are three other books or gospels about Jesus. They are written by Matthew, Mark and Luke. They tell about the birth, teachings and works of Jesus. They also tell us about the death of Jesus as punishment for our sins, and how God brought Him back to life.

**Matthew** begins his book with Mary and Joseph. They knew that the baby carried by Mary was Jesus, God's Son. It tells how Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus escaped to Egypt from the wicked King Herod. Matthew also tells about the baptism of Jesus and His temptation by Satan and includes the Sermon on the Mount.

**Mark** begins his book with the preaching ministry of John the Baptist. John prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus. This is recorded in great detail along with the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

**Luke** begins his book with the miracle births of Jesus and John the Baptist. It tells what happened in the Temple when Jesus was eight days old. In addition, what happened when He was twelve years old (Luke 1:26 to 2:52). It includes many teachings of Jesus.

**John** the Apostle does not mention the early life of Jesus. Matthew and Luke wrote their books several years earlier for believers to read. John wrote down mainly new teachings of Jesus.

Extracted from "THE GOSPEL OF JOHN" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2008, 2015, 2022.

### **Weekend of 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

#### **John Chapter 18: *The trial of Jesus by Pontius Pilate***

Pilate ordered Jesus to be brought to him. He asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" (18:33).

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not part of this world. If it were, those who serve me would fight [for Me]... My kingdom is from another place" (18:36).

"So you are a king, then!" said Pilate (18:37).

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 be a witness to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of truth listens to Me" (18:37).

"What is truth?" Pilate responded (18:38). Many people ask this same question and so should we. We believe that Jesus Himself is the Truth of God (1:14; 14:6). Pilate did not know or understand this. Instead, he asked Herod for his opinion. Herod was the governor for the region where Jesus used to live (Luke 23:7-9). Neither Pilate nor Herod believed He deserved death (23:14-15).

Pilate stopped talking to Jesus and went outside again to the Jewish leaders. By this time a large crowd had gathered. They quickly turned against Jesus. Pilate said, "I find no basis [reason] for any charge against Him. But it is your practice for me to set one prisoner free for you at Passover time. Do you want me to set 'the King of the Jews' free?" (John 18:38-39).

They shouted back, "No! Not Him! Give us Barabbas!" Barabbas was a prisoner who had taken part in a rebellion against the Roman rulers of Israel (18:40). The crowds rejected Jesus the man and Jesus the Messiah, Son of God.

Extracted from "JOHN'S GOSPEL PART 2" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2002, 2017.

### **Weekend of 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

#### **Acts 4: *Praying to God in times of trouble***

God blessed the early church fellowships. It grew very strong. But there was trouble for the believers (4:16-18). The Jewish leaders told the apostles not to teach in the name of Jesus. They treated (persecuted) them badly. Church growth and persecution often happen at the same time. Study these 6 ways in which the believers prayed when these troubles began.

*They praised God, the Creator* (4:24) and put their trust in Him. They spoke words of faith and knowledge to show that they believed in God: He made the world and everything in it.

*They read from the Old Testament* (4:25-26). For example, God said (in Psalm 2) that rulers and

leaders would make trouble for Jesus and His followers.

*They knew the Old Testament prophecies had come true (4:27-28).* Things had happened because God planned them. They were certain that God was in control. The prophecies had been fulfilled in and by Jesus.

*They told God about their troubles (4:29).* They believed that God already knew about them. They reminded Him of their problems but did not blame Him for them.

*They asked God to enable them to do the work that Jesus called them to do (4:29)* and they believed God answers prayer. They knew they were praying for what God wanted. They were praying 'in His will'.

*They asked God to do even more miracles as they preached (4:29-30)* They trusted in the power of the name of Jesus. They knew the religious leaders and rulers would be angry, but they knew they had to preach boldly. It was a work of God and He had called them to do it.

Extracted from "THE EARLY CHURCH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2004, 2012, 2019.

### **Weekend of 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

#### **Acts Chapter 22: *Paul speaks the truth from God to the crowds***

When Paul was arrested, he was allowed to speak to the crowds in Jerusalem. He spoke in the local Aramaic language so that they could fully understand him. (Jesus often used the Aramaic language.) Paul told them:

- He was a Jew who knew the Law of Moses very well (22:3)
- He had permission to put followers of Jesus into prison and send them to die (22:4-5).
- He was met by Jesus on the road to Damascus (22:6-11).
- God sent a Jewish believer to speak to him. He told Paul to witness about Jesus (22:12-16).
- In Jerusalem, Jesus told Paul to witness about Him in other countries and to people who were not Jews (22:17-21).

When the crowds heard this they wanted to kill Paul (22:22). The Roman commander gave orders for Paul to be flogged (22:24). When the commander found out that Paul was a Roman citizen as well as a Jew, they stopped flogging him (22:29). Then the Roman commander took Paul to the Jewish Court, the Sanhedrin, to have a fair trial (22:30).

**Think about this:** Do you have a personal testimony? Can you speak boldly to angry or disbelieving people in the same way as Paul did, whatever the cost? Think about how God saved Paul from injury when he boldly testified about what God had done in his life, as a follower of Jesus.

Extracted from "PAUL BRINGS GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2005, 2012, 2021.