



The Obedience of Faith

STUDY GUIDE



APPROACH COURSES
COLLECTION

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH, E-BOOK

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SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

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No translation of Scripture is perfect and without slight pollutions of the interpretations of man. The ESV has been selected based upon the fact that it is a word-for-word translation of the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts of Scripture using current English language. We value other translations such as the King James (KJV) and New King James (NKJV) versions of Scripture for their accuracy and also New International (NIV) and New Living (NLT) translations for their readability.

All Biblical definitions in this book are from Strong's Hebrew and Greek Lexicon, Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, and Thayer's Greek Lexicon.

The Obedience of Faith

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COURSE DESCRIPTION & INTRODUCTION: 8 UNITS

This course will give you insight into how heroes of the faith received commendation from God. You will learn how obedience impacts your life, the role of suffering, and how you can prove to be genuine disciple of Jesus so that you can receive your eternal rewards.

PRAY FOR REVELATION:

Before taking this course, pray and ask the Lord to give you wisdom and revelation as you grow in your knowledge of Him. We are believing with you that the Lord will illuminate His word for you.

MANIFEST APPROACH COURSES: FORM OF WORSHIP

The purpose of courses designated as "Approach Courses" is to express the beliefs and way of life God has given to us at Manifest International. As such, this course is an expanded Biblical explanation of our form of worship: offering our lives in sacrificial service to God.

Our Form of Worship is summed up in these three Scriptures: "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship (Romans 12:1) and "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (John 14:15) and "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23.) We believe that worship is a way of life. We take Jesus at His word and devote ourselves to living out His commands every day. We are willing to embrace sacrifice for His glory.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Unit #	Name	Page
Unit One:	Bringing About the Obedience of Faith	1
Unit Two:	Willing Obedience: God's Intent for Mankind	20
Unit Three:	Commendation from God Part One: Kings	47
Unit Four:	Commendation from God Part Two: Hall of Faith	94
Unit Five:	Faith that the Gospel is the Power of God	102
Unit Six:	The Fight of Faith: Presenting Yourself for Obedience	121
Unit Seven:	Learning Obedience through Suffering	136
Unit Eight:	Faith that God is Judge	149

Unit One: Bringing About the Obedience of Faith

Through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations.

Romans 1:5

A. Apostleship to Bring About the Obedience of Faith

1. Romans 1:1-6 - 1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, **called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God**, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, **Jesus Christ our Lord**, 5 **through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations**, 6 including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,
 - a. Paul's purpose from Jesus Christ was to bring about the obedience of faith.
 - i. It was not just to proclaim the Gospel and get people to "convert" to Christianity or "accept" Jesus or say a salvation prayer.
 - ii. It was to bring people into willing submission to Jesus as Lord of all, including their life.

Obedience: Greek-G5218: *hypakoe*: 1. Compliance, submission. 2. Obedience to one's counsels. 3. The obedience of one who conforms his conduct to the commands of God, absolutely, as did Christ.

Root Word: 1. To listen, harken to one. 2. Of the duty of a porter who hears a knock and listens for who it is. 3. To harken to a command through obedience and submission.

Faith: Greek-G3982: *pistis*: 1. Conviction of the truth of anything, belief. 2. Fidelity, faithfulness; the character of one who can be relied upon.

- b. The obedience of all nations was the purpose of the Gospel and the fulfillment of the redemptive plan of God for mankind.
2. Romans 15:15-18 - 15 But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God 16 to be **a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles** in the **priestly service of the gospel of God**, so that the **offering of the Gentiles** may be acceptable, **sanctified by the Holy Spirit**. 17 In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. 18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me **to bring the Gentiles to obedience**--by word and deed,
 - a. A minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.
 - i. A *minister* in this case a servant of the state, the king, or the temple.
 01. Paul was doing the work of Jesus Christ, the King, among the Gentiles.

- ii. Gentiles can mean all non-Jewish "nations."
 - 01. To Jews, Gentile also indicates pagan, heathen, ignorant, godless, etc.
- b. "Priestly service" is a compound word of the words "worker" and "temple."
 - i. A priest is a person who stands in the place where heaven and earth meet, where God meets with His people.
 - 01. The priest offers service and sacrifices to God.
 - 02. The priest serves the people on God's behalf.
 - ii. The priest teaches people the ways of God. i.e. how to distinguish good from evil, holy from common, etc.
 - 01. Ezekiel 44:23 - 23 **They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common, and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.**
 - 02. Leviticus 10:10-11 - 10 You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, 11 and **you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the LORD has spoken to them** by Moses."
 - 03. Malachi 2:7 - 7 For **the lips of a priest should guard knowledge**, and people should **seek instruction from his mouth**, for he is the **messenger of the LORD** of hosts.
- c. Serving in the Gospel.
 - i. Isaiah 52:7 - 7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings **good news**, who **publishes peace**, who brings **good news of happiness**, who **publishes salvation**, who **says to Zion, "Your God reigns."**
 - ii. The Gospel is GOOD NEWS that the God of Israel reigns supreme over all nations.
 - 01. God has vindicated His people, Israel, and extended salvation to the rest of the world.
 - iii. The Gospel is GOOD NEWS that through the sacrifice, shed blood, and resurrection of Jesus Christ those who were God's enemies can be at peace with Him. God has shown mercy and made a way for salvation!
 - 01. The whole world must acknowledge His reign through their submission to Jesus as King.
- d. So that the offering of the Gentiles is acceptable and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
 - i. A priest could only bring sacrifices before God that were unblemished.
 - ii. The Gospel makes us acceptable to God through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus.
 - 01. Ephesians 1:6 NKJV - 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us **accepted in the Beloved.**
 - iii. Paul's purpose was to bring the Gentiles (heathens) into a condition acceptable to God in righteousness and purity - unblemished by sin and wickedness.
 - 01. The purification would come through faith in the Gospel and through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.
- e. Resulting in and evidenced by their obedience. Giving up their lives to the will of God.
 - i. Paul's purpose and success would be evidenced by the obedience of the Gentiles to the voice and teachings of Jesus.

B. The Purpose of the Gospel: The Obedience of Faith

1. Romans 16:25-27 - 25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to **my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ**, according to the **revelation of the mystery** that was kept secret for long ages 26 but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the **command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith**-- 27 to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.
 - a. The whole purpose of the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ...
 - i. The message of the Gospel is: "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand!"
 01. Mark 1:14-15 - 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming **the gospel of God**, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.**"
 - ii. The right response to the Gospel is repentance.
 01. Acts 2:37-40 - 37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, **what shall we do?**" 38 And Peter said to them, "**Repent** and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." 40 And with many other words he bore witness and **continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."**
 02. Acts 3:26 - 26 God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, **to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.**"
 - b. The whole purpose of the mystery that has now been revealed...
 - i. The mystery is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
 01. Colossians 1:27 - 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the **riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you**, the hope of glory.
 - ii. The mystery is the fulfillment of God's promise of the New Covenant, writing the Law upon our hearts and giving us a new heart and a new spirit to obey Him.
 01. Jeremiah 31:33-34 - 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.** And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for **they shall all know me**, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."
 02. Ezekiel 11:19-20 - 19 And **I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh**, 20 that they may **walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them.** And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.
 - c. The whole purpose of the command of God...
 - i. Receiving the Gospel as the word and command of God.
 01. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 - 13 And we also thank God constantly for this, that **when you received the word of God**, which you heard from us, **you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God**, which is at work in you believers.
 - ii. The command of God is the great commission.

- 01. Matthew 28:19-20 - 19 Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you**. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
 - 001. Make disciples. Not converts, not a salvation prayer.
- d. Is to bring about the obedience of faith for the glory of God.
 - i. Those who do not obey the Gospel will suffer the wrath of God.
 - 01. 2 Thessalonians 1:8 - 8 in flaming fire, **inflicting vengeance** on those who do not know God and **on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus**.

C. Repent for the Kingdom of God is at Hand

- 1. When John the Baptist proclaimed repentance, he gave a clear picture of what that looks like.
 - a. Luke 3:3-6 - 3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, **proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins**. 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: '**Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight**'. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, 6 and **all flesh shall see the salvation of God**.'"
 - i. John's message commanded repentance and a ritual cleansing (mikveh/baptism) of sin to prepare oneself for the arrival of the Messiah.
 - ii. Messiah would bring the day of the Lord, vengeance upon all God's adversaries and salvation to those who were ready and waiting for Him.
 - iii. John commanded repentance and to be cleansed from sin and be in a condition which would be acceptable to the Messiah upon His return.
 - b. Luke 3:7-9 - 7 He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "**You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits in keeping with repentance**. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 9 Even now **the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire**."
 - i. Brood of vipers. Since Genesis 3, it has been known that the serpent would have "seed" or "offspring" and the woman would have "seed" or "offspring" which would crush the head of the serpent. (Genesis 3:15.)
 - 01. God chose Abraham to bless all the nations through His seed. Abraham's seed/offspring would bring forth the One who would crush the head of the serpent. (Genesis 12:1-3, 22:16-17.)
 - 02. The Jews prided themselves as being the offspring/descendants of Abraham and considered this their free pass to salvation as a nation.
 - 03. Descent from Abraham would not be sufficient when their actions proved them to be sons of the serpent. (See also John 8:39-44.)
 - ii. Wrath to come. Ax at the root.
 - 01. The wrath of God is the day of the Lord's vengeance against His enemies and all persecutors of His people.
 - 02. God was ready to judge the world. The time was fulfilled.
 - iii. Fruits in keeping with repentance.

- 01. Actions, character, and conduct must match the claim of faith in God and the hope of His salvation.
- iv. Every tree not bearing fruit will be chopped and thrown into the fire.
 - 01. Everyone, Jew and Gentile, will face judgment for the "fruit" produced in their own lives and whether their conduct is righteous or not.
 - 02. Note: Fruit is much more about character than activity. (Galatians 5:22-23.) Activity without right character or motives is not good "fruit" no matter how "godly" or "good" it may appear to be.
- c. Luke 3:10-11 - 10 And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" 11 And he answered them, "**Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.**"
 - i. For all the crowds, repentance would be evidenced by sharing food and clothing with those who were in need.
- d. Luke 3:12-13 - 12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" 13 And he said to them, "**Collect no more than you are authorized to do.**"
 - i. For tax collectors (or business people), repentance would be evidenced by integrity in dealings/transactions.
- e. Luke 3:14 - 14 Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "**Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.**"
 - i. For those with delegated authority over people, repentance would be evidenced by not abusing that authority with threats of violence for self-advancement and profit.
- f. Luke 3:15-17 - 15 As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, 16 John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.**"
 - i. The Messiah was coming and would baptize people with the Holy Spirit and fire.
 - ii. The fire John is referring to is the fire of God's judgment. Winnowing fork and threshing floor are clear indications of the judgment of God.
 - 01. Malachi 3:2 - 2 But **who can endure the day of his coming**, and who can stand when he appears? **For he is like a refiner's fire** and like fullers' soap.
 - 001. Messiah's coming is like a refiner's fire, purifying out all dross.
 - 02. Isaiah 27:12 - 12 In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt **the LORD will thresh out the grain**, and you will be **gleaned one by one**, O people of Israel.
 - 001. The Messiah will thresh out grain from chaff, wheat from tare and will judge one by one on the final day of judgment.
 - 03. Jeremiah 4:11-12 - 11 At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, "A hot wind from the bare heights in the desert toward the daughter of my people, **not to winnow or cleanse**, 12 **a wind too full for this comes for me. Now it is I who speak in judgment upon them.**"
 - 001. Jerusalem will face judgment, worse than winnowing.
 - 04. Jeremiah 51:1-2 - 1 Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will stir up the spirit of **a destroyer against Babylon**, against the inhabitants of Leb-kamai, 2 and **I will send to Babylon winnowers, and they shall winnow her**, and they shall

empty her land, when they come against her from every side on the day of trouble.

001. The nations of the world (here represented by Bablyon) will be winnowed/destroyed.

- g. Luke 3:18 - 18 So with many other exhortations he **preached good news to the people.**
 - i. This is GOOD NEWS! A way has been made to be saved from God's wrath!
 - ii. The way is faith in Jesus and the Obedience of Faith!

D. You Must Be Born Again

1. The obedience of faith will bring us into a total life transformation.
 - a. John 3:3-10 - 3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.** 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, '**You must be born again.**' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with **everyone who is born of the Spirit.**" 9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?"
 - i. Flesh produces flesh through the union of a man and a woman. Spirit produces spirit through God placing His Spirit in one who believes.
 - ii. Those who believe Jesus can become children of God, to be born again.
 - 01. John 1:12-13 - 12 But to all who did **receive him, who believed in his name,** he gave **the right to become children of God,** 13 who were **born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**
 - iii. A new heart and a new spirit working obedient submission to God into the heart of a person is what the prophets foretold. A teacher of Israel should have understood this.
2. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Like John the Baptist's water baptism, the Holy Spirit's work in our lives cleanses us of the filth of sin from the inside out.
 - i. Acts 1:5 - 5 for John baptized with water, but **you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now."
 - b. We are cleansed and changed by the Holy Spirit. Not by mental ascent or personal effort.
 - i. When we believe Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us.
 - 01. Ephesians 1:13 - 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and **believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**
 - ii. The Holy Spirit guides us into the will of God and away from our carnal desires.
 - 01. Galatians 5:16 - 16 But I say, **walk by the Spirit,** and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

- 02. Romans 8:5 - 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but **those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.**
- iii. Being led by the Holy Spirit proves us to be children of God.
 - 01. Romans 8:14 - 14 For all who are **led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.**
- c. Titus 3:3-7 - 3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, **not because of works done by us in righteousness**, but according to his own mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit**, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that **being justified by his grace** we might **become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**
 - i. All people in the flesh are enemies of God.
 - ii. We cannot earn righteousness through our own works in the flesh or our own concept of doing or being good.
 - iii. God had mercy on us all by sending Jesus. He did not give us what we deserve.
 - iv. Faith in the sacrifice of Jesus cleanses us from sin and makes us right in God's sight.
 - v. Through our new actions, we prove ourselves worthy as heirs of eternal life.

Washing: Literally means bathing, the act of taking a bath.

Regeneration: Greek-G3824: *palingenesia*: 1. New birth, reproduction, renewal, recreation. 2. The production of new life consecrated to God, a radical change of mind for the better. The word is often used to denote the restoration of a thing to its pristine state, its renovation or restoration of life after death.

Root Words: 1. Born. 2. Again.

- d. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, God literally creates a clean heart in us.
 - i. Human hearts without the Holy Spirit are wicked and deceitful.
 - 01. Jeremiah 17:9 - 9 The **heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick**; who can understand it?
 - ii. Those who love God long for a clean heart and to be willing to do God's will.
 - 01. Psalm 51:10-12 - 10 **Create in me a clean heart**, O God, and **renew a right spirit within me.** 11 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and **uphold me with a willing spirit.**
 - iii. Those walking by the Holy Spirit do not continue in sin. This is what reveals that we have been born again, and have become children of God.
 - 01. 1 John 3:9-10 - 9 **No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him**; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been **born of God.** 10 **By this it is evident who are the children of God**, and who are the **children of the devil**: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

E. Sanctified FOR Obedience and THROUGH Obedience

- 1. Sanctified FOR Obedience.

- a. 1 Peter 1:2 - 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, **in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ** and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.
 - i. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to write the laws and ways of God upon our hearts, to bring us into willing obedience to God from the heart, fulfilling the teachings of Jesus. (See Jeremiah 31:31-34.)
- b. Hebrews 10:14 - 14 For by a single offering **he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.**
 - i. Through faith in Jesus' sacrifice, we have perfect righteousness before God, as if we had never sinned. He wipes out the record of our sins so that we are in a condition acceptable to Him and He can dwell within us.
 - ii. We continue to be cleansed in heart, mind, soul as we continue to follow and obey Jesus. He writes His laws on our hearts to change us into a condition acceptable to Him in our literal thoughts and actions.

2. Sanctified THROUGH Obedience.

- a. 1 Peter 1:22-25 - 22 Having **purified your souls by your obedience** to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, 23 since you **have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God**; 24 for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord remains forever." And **this word is the good news that was preached to you.**
 - i. The proclamation of the Gospel (good news) is the Word of God planted in our hearts. (See Parable of the Sower.)
 - 01. In the parable, the seed can land on various soils which fail to produce fruit or on good soil which produces a great harvest.
 - ii. Obedience turns us from our own way of doing things to God's way of doing things, with the right heart and motives, in fulfillment of Jesus' commands. It changes and purifies us from the inside out.
 - iii. Evidence of obedience's effectiveness is demonstrated by Christlike character and sincere love in obedience to Jesus' commands.
 - 01. Galatians 5:22-23 - 22 But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- b. We retain free will to choose to obey or to choose to go our own way.
 - i. Example: the Galatians followed the teachings of false teachers who wanted to put them back under the Law through circumcision.
 - 01. Galatians 4:19 - 19 my little children, **for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!**
 - ii. The Hebrews were weary after decades of persecution and were considering returning to Judaism and their natural/earthly inheritances.
 - 01. Hebrews 3:15 - 15 As it is said, "**Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts** as in the rebellion."

3. Genuine faith is proven by what we do. The obedience of faith is demonstrated in our actions.

- a. James 1:22 - 22 But **be doers** of the word, and **not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**

- i. James 1:22 NLT - 22 But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, **you are only fooling yourselves.**
 - ii. Those who hear the word and talk about the word but do not do the word are self-deceived. They have convinced themselves mentally that they believe something but their actions prove that they do not.
 - iii. James 2:17-18 - 17 So also **faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.** 18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and **I will show you my faith by my works.**
 - b. Luke 6:46 - 46 "**Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"**
 - i. Our faith is demonstrated by what we do, not only by what we say.
 - c. Matthew 7:21-23 - 21 "**Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven,** but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, '**I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.**'
 - i. Not everyone who calls Jesus Lord is actually obeying Him.
 - ii. Working lawlessness or iniquity means acting as if without the Law, without submission to the commands and direction of Jesus.
 - iii. Even things that appear to be "good" or "the will of God" can be iniquity if we are operating in our own presumption about God's will in any given situation.
4. Genuine faith is demonstrated by our turning from evil and wickedness.
- a. In the obedience of faith, we will reject everything that exalts itself against God.
 - i. 2 Corinthians 10:5 - 5 We destroy arguments and **every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God,** and take every thought captive to obey Christ,
 - 01. Any objection contrary to the truth of the Gospel.
 - 02. Any reliance on anything other than Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
 - b. In the obedience of faith, we will not be ensnared by the philosophies of men.
 - i. Colossians 2:8 - 8 See to it that no one takes you captive by **philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world,** and not according to Christ.
 - c. In the obedience of faith, we will not be blown about by schemes and doctrines of man.
 - i. Ephesians 4:14 - 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by **every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.**
 - d. In the obedience of faith, we will reject underhanded methods and manipulation.
 - i. 2 Corinthians 4:2 - 2 But we have **renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways.** We **refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word,** but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.
 - e. In the obedience of faith, we will turn from evil.
 - i. 2 Timothy 2:19 NLT - 19 But God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: "The LORD knows those who are his," and "**All who belong to the LORD must turn away from evil.**"

- ii. Revelation 18:4-5 - 4 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "**Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins**, lest you share in her plagues; 5 **for her sins are heaped high as heaven**, and God has remembered her iniquities.
 - 01. Isaiah 52:11 - 11 Depart, depart, **go out from there; touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her; purify yourselves**, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.
- iii. The fear of the Lord is to turn from evil.
 - 01. Proverbs 3:7 - 7 Be not wise in your own eyes; **fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.**
 - 02. Job 28:28 - 28 And he said to man, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and **to turn away from evil is understanding.**'"

F. Jesus is Lord, Messiah, & King to be Obeyed

1. God so LOVED the world that He gave His only Son, Jesus. Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures pertaining to the Messiah, lived the perfect life and laid down His life to save us from sin and the tyranny of the ancient serpent. God raised Him from the dead and He ascended to heaven and has now been given the name above every name, with all authority in all creation.
 - a. John 3:16-17 - 16 "**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son**, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but **in order that the world might be saved through him.**
 - b. Philippians 2:9-11 - 9 Therefore **God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name**, 10 so that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth**, 11 and **every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.
2. The work of God is to believe in Jesus.
 - a. John 6:28-29 - 28 Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, "**This is the work of God, that you believe** in him whom he has sent."

Believe: Greek-G4100: *pisteuo*: 1. To think to be true, to be persuaded of, to place confidence in.
3. If we believe that Jesus is Lord, and if we love Him, we keep His commandments.
 - a. Our love for God is demonstrated by our obedience to the teachings of Jesus. If we do not hold to the teachings of Jesus, we show that we do not love God.
 - i. John 14:15, 21, 24 - 15 "**If you love me, you will keep my commandments.** ... 21 **Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.** And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." ... 24 **Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.** And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.
 - b. Friendship with Jesus is limited to those who obey Him. To His friends, Jesus reveals all He knows of the Father.

- 03. Contextual Cultural Perspective: If a woman has not already committed sexual immorality or adultery, her husband divorcing her would force her to marry another man for her provision and protection.
 - iv. Matthew 5:33-34 - 33 "Again **you have heard that it was said** to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' 34 **But I say to you**, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,
 - 01. Jesus commands no taking of vows.
 - 02. We must be people of such honesty and integrity that no vows are required to back up the commitments we make with our mouths.
 - v. Matthew 5:38-42 - 38 "**You have heard that it was said**, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 **But I say to you**, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.
 - 01. Jesus commands no retaliation or personal vengeance against those who attack us.
 - 02. Jesus commands concession and generosity if being sued (and not suing others.)
 - 03. Jesus commands compliance and extra service to governing authorities that may force subjugation.
 - 04. Jesus commands giving to all who beg and not refusing to loan money to those in need.
 - vi. Matthew 5:43-45 - 43 "**You have heard that it was said**, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 **But I say to you**, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
 - 01. Jesus commands love for our enemies.
- b. Jesus commands secret service for a heavenly reward. (Matthew 6.)
- i. Giving in secret without receiving recognition or doing it to be seen by men.
 - ii. Praying in secret without putting it on display to be seen by men.
 - iii. Fasting in secret without making a display to be seen by men.
 - iv. Laying up treasures in heaven through simple obedience without earthly reward.
- c. Jesus commands love for others as for yourself.
- i. Matthew 7:12 - 12 "So **whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them**, for this is the Law and the Prophets.
 - 01. Leviticus 19:17-18 - 17 "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself**: I am the LORD.
- d. Hear and do the teachings of Jesus.
- i. Matthew 7:24-27 - 24 "Everyone then who **hears these words of mine and does them** will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And **everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them** will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

01. The storm is coming upon all people.
02. Our wisdom/foolishness, success/failure will reveal if we obey Jesus.

e. Other commands of Jesus' teaching.

Commands of Jesus Evaluation

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6. Obedience to the voice of Jesus.

a. John 10:3b-5, 27 - 3b The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and **the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.** 5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ... 27 **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.**

i. Hebrews 3:7-9 - 7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "**Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts** as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years.

b. New Covenant obedience is to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, who leads us into doing and fulfilling the commands of Jesus.

i. 2 Corinthians 3:6 - 6 who has made us sufficient to be **ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit.** For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

01. The Law/letter reveals sin and how incapable every human being is of obeying God's commandments.
02. The Holy Spirit gives strength, moral fortitude, and life-power to obey God and walk in His ways.

7. Obedience to the Apostles' guidelines for believers in the New Covenant.

a. There are only three New Covenant rules/guidelines put in place by the apostles.

i. Acts 15:19-21 - 19 Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, 20 but should write to them to **abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.** 21 For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues."

01. Obedience to these rules is not for the sake of earning righteousness.
02. These guidelines were put in place for holy conduct as a set apart people.
03. They were also given so as not to bring offense to Jewish people who knew that these things are particularly revolting to God and forbidden for His people. They would not believe a Messiah who permitted these things.

b. All sin has been forgiven, but not all behaviors are pleasing to God or beneficial for His holy people and His purpose of revealing Himself to the world through His people.

i. 1 Corinthians 10:23-24 - 23 "**All things are lawful,**" but not all things are helpful. "**All things are lawful,**" but not all things build up. 24 Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.

01. Not obeying the parameters for holiness is unloving towards others.

- ii. Romans 14:14-17 - 14 I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that **nothing is unclean in itself**, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. 15 For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, **you are no longer walking in love**. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. 16 So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. 17 **For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**
 - 01. Jesus freed us from the Law and its regulations and requirements.
 - 02. However, it is unloving to indulge in behavior that grieves another's conscience or weakens their resolve of obedience to the Lord.

G. Who Will and Will Not Enter the Kingdom of God

1. Those for whom it is easy to enter the Kingdom of God.

a. Children.

- i. Matthew 19:14 - 14 but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for **to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.**"

b. Those who become like children.

- i. Matthew 18:1-4 - 1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them 3 and said, "Truly, I say to you, **unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.** 4 **Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.**

2. Those for whom it is difficult to enter the Kingdom of God.

a. The rich.

- i. Mark 10:23-27 - 23 And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "**How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!**" 24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.**" 26 And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "**With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.**"

b. Everyone.

- i. Acts 14:22 - 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that **through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.**
 - 01. We must continue in the faith to the end.
- ii. Matthew 24:21-22 - 21 For then there will be **great tribulation**, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And **if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved.** But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

3. Who will **NOT** enter the Kingdom of God.

- a. Religious people who burden others with rules and regulations. (Matthew 22:13.)

- b. Wrongdoers, the immoral, impure, vile. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:5-6; Revelation 21:7-8.)
 - c. The sexually immoral, adulterers, men who have sex with men, the impure, debauchers, those who participate in orgies. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:7-8.)
 - d. The greedy, thieves, swindlers, those who envy. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:5-6.)
 - e. Drunkards. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21.)
 - f. Haters. Murderers. (Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:7-8.)
 - g. Slanderers. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11.)
 - h. Liars. (Revelation 21:7-8.)
 - i. Flesh and blood, those who sow to the flesh. (1 Corinthians 15:49-50; Galatians 6:7-8.)
 - j. Idolaters, those who practice witchcraft, magic arts. (Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:7-8.)
 - k. The selfishly ambitious, those who sow discord, dissent, create factions. (Galatians 5:19-21.)
 - l. Those who turn away from the One who warns from heaven. (Hebrews 12:25-29.)
 - m. The cowardly, those who cause believers to stumble. (Revelation 21:7-8; Matthew 18:6.)
 - n. Those who lose their saltiness. (Matthew 5:13.)
 - o. Unbelievers, those who try to enter without faith in Jesus Christ. (Revelation 21:7-8; John 14:6.)
 - p. Those who do not forgive others as Christ has forgiven them. (Matthew 6:14-15, 18:34-35.)
 - q. Those whose names are not found in the book of life. (Revelation 21:7-8.)
4. Who **WILL** enter the Kingdom of God.
- a. The poor in spirit, the poor. (Matthew 5:3; Luke 6:20; James 2:5.)
 - b. Those who are persecuted for Jesus. (Matthew 5:10.)
 - c. Those who practice and teach others the commands of God. (Matthew 5:18-20.)
 - d. Those who have repented of sin and wickedness. (Mark 9:43-48.)
 - e. Those who do the will of the Father, not just call Him Lord. (Matthew 7:21.)
 - f. Those who are born again. (John 3:3-8.)
 - g. Those who are led by the Spirit, those who sow to the Spirit. (Romans 8:14; Galatians 6:7-8.)
 - h. Those who have gone through hardships for the Kingdom. (Acts 14:22)
 - i. Those who forgive others the way God has forgiven them. (Matthew 18:23-35.)
 - j. Those who are called, chosen, and have put on the wedding garment. (Matthew 22:1-14.)
 - k. Those who keep the lamp of the Holy Spirit burning in their hearts. (Matthew 25:1-13.)
 - l. Those who have done the work of God. (Matthew 25:14-30.)
 - m. Those who have extended kindness and mercy to the least of these. (Matthew 25:31-46.)
 - n. Those who put their hand to the plow and don't look back. (Luke 9:57-62.)
 - o. Those who love God more than they love their father and mother. (Matthew 10:37.)
 - p. Those who take up their cross to follow Jesus. (Matthew 10:38.)
 - q. Those who persevere in the faith. (2 Thessalonians 1:4-5.)
 - r. Those who do not turn away from the One who warns from heaven. (Hebrews 12:25-29.)

- s. Those who grow in faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. (2 Peter 1:10-11.)
- t. Those who enter through Jesus Christ, the only way. (John 14:6.)
- u. Those whose names are found in the book of life. (Revelation 21:7-8.)
- v. Those who wash their robes. (Revelation 22:12-15.)

H. The Obedient Presented as a Mature Bride

1. Ephesians 5:25-27, 32 - 25 Husbands, love your wives, **as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27** so that he might **present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.** ... 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to **Christ and the church.**
 - a. Jesus' mission and purpose is to purify a Bride for Himself who attains eternal life with Him.
 - i. Washed with the water of the word.
 01. Washed is to take a bath. (Same as covered previously.)
 02. Word is the *rhema* word, the proclamation of the Gospel and spoken word of God.
 03. We are washed by hearing, believing, and obeying the Gospel.
 - ii. Presented as an offering without spot or wrinkle or blemish.
 01. Cleansed from sin through faith in the blood of Jesus.
 02. Cleansed from sinfulness through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.
 - iii. Note: God created the world through the spoken word, by His Spirit, the breath of life. (Genesis 1.) Jesus cleanses His Bride through the spoken word, by His Spirit, the breath of life making all things new.
 01. God's Spirit created order out of chaos when He created the world.
 02. God's Spirit makes order out of chaos in our hearts, minds, and lives.
 - b. Paul's mission and purpose was to bring people into obedience leading to sanctification so that all believers attain eternal life with Jesus. It is the same as Jesus' mission.
 - i. Colossians 1:28 - 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, **that we may present everyone mature in Christ.**
 01. Maturity is demonstrated by Christlikeness. Christ's character and love being poured out from a sincere and transformed heart.
 - ii. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 - 13 But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, **through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.** 14 To this he called you through our gospel, **so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
 01. We are called to sanctification so that we might become ready as the Bride of Christ.
 02. Those who have not allowed the Holy Spirit to work sanctification in their hearts will not obtain the fullness of our salvation when Jesus returns.
 - iii. 2 Corinthians 11:2-3 - 2 For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since **I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.** 3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

01. We must maintain a pure devotion to Christ and not be deceived by false teachings and worldly ambitions along the way as we walk with Jesus.
2. The pattern of a Jewish wedding.
 - a. A Jewish wedding had several parts:
 - i. The parents would arrange the match.
 - ii. The Groom would come to be betrothed (get engaged to the Bride.)
 01. Being betrothed was the same as marriage but without consummation.
 02. To separate from betrothal required a certificate of divorce.
 - iii. The Groom would go away to prepare a place in his father's house/inheritance for the Bride to come to him upon their marriage.
 01. This could take time.
 02. The Bride prepared herself for marriage.
 03. The Bride had to wait and remain faithful to her betrothed while he prepared a place for them to be together. If she was found unfaithful during this time, he would have grounds for divorce. (Consider Joseph wanting to divorce Mary. Matthew 1:19-20.)
 - iv. The Groom would come to collect his faithful Bride and take her to the place he had prepared for her.
 - v. There would be a marvelous wedding feast, going on for days, and the marriage would be consummated.
 - b. This is the pattern of the life and work of Jesus. As believers, we are betrothed to Jesus and await the wedding feast.
 - i. He came the first time to offer salvation. He "proposed marriage" and became engaged to those who believe in Him.
 01. John 12:47-48 - 47 If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for **I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.** 48 The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.
 02. We have freedom to accept or decline His proposal.
 - ii. He ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us to be with Him forever.
 01. John 14:2-3 - 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that **I go to prepare a place for you?** 3 And if **I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.**
 02. While He is preparing a place for us, we wait faithfully for His return.
 - iii. He will return to bring those who have remained faithful to the place He prepared.
 01. Hebrews 9:28 - 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, **will appear a second time**, not to deal with sin but **to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**
 02. Bridesmaids who have kept their lamps burning with oil will go with Him to the place He has prepared.
3. The Wedding Feast.
 - a. The wedding feast is not a New Testament concept. It is rooted in God's promises to Israel. Israel has waited for centuries for the salvation of God and for the Messiah to usher in the world to come with its total shalom peace.

- i. Isaiah 25:6-9 - 6 On this mountain **the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.** 7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. 8 He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. 9 It will be said on that day, "**Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.**"
 - 01. God will be worth the wait. The Wedding Feast will not disappoint.

- b. The wedding feast will be fulfilled upon the return of Jesus.
 - i. Revelation 21:1-4 - 1 **Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,** and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, **prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.** 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 **He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.**"
 - 01. God will dwell with us forever. It will be Eden restored, but better.

- c. Jesus is the Bridegroom, the Messiah, who invites us to the wedding feast.
 - i. Matthew 22:2-14 - 2 "**The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son,** 3 and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, '**Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast."**' 5 But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. 7 The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 **Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.'** 10 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there **a man who had no wedding garment.** 12 And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 **For many are called, but few are chosen.**"
 - 01. All people, good and bad, are invited to the wedding feast.
 - 02. We all have the right to reject or accept the invitation.
 - 03. We must be wearing the proper wedding garment in order to be allowed to participate in the wedding feast. Otherwise, we will be cast out with unbelievers.

- d. Only those who have demonstrated the obedience of faith will be the Bride of Jesus and participate in the wedding feast.
 - i. Revelation 19:6-9 - 6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for **the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made**

herself ready; 8 it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"--
for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. 9 And the angel said to me,
"Write this: **Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.**"
And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

01. We must submit ourselves to the obedience of faith and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit in order to have righteous deeds - the wedding garment of the Bride of Christ.

Unit Two: Willing Obedience: God's Intent for Mankind

But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,

Romans 6:17

A. Willing Obedience to the Creator

1. God is the Creator of the Universe

a. God created everything that exists.

- i. Genesis 1:1 - 1 In the beginning, **God created the heavens and the earth.**
- ii. Psalm 33:6-9 - 6 **By the word of the LORD the heavens were made**, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. 7 He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! 9 **For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.**
- iii. Isaiah 45:18 - 18 For thus says **the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it** (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): **"I am the LORD, and there is no other."**
- iv. Isaiah 40:25-26 - 25 **To whom then will you compare me**, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high and see: **who created these?** He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing.
- v. John 1:3 - 3 **All things were made through him**, and **without him was not any thing made that was made.**

b. God continues to sustain all things that He created. (Psalm 104.)

- i. Psalm 104:5 - 5 He **set the earth on its foundations**, so that it should never be moved.
 01. This is a past tense reflection on original creation.
- ii. Psalm 104:10-11, 13-15 - 10 **You make springs gush forth** in the valleys; they flow between the hills; 11 they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst... 13 **From your lofty abode you water the mountains**; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. 14 **You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate**, that he may bring forth food from the earth 15 and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart.
 01. This is present tense, ongoing action of causing water to come for the sustenance of the animals and people that He created.
- iii. Psalm 104:19-20 - 19 He **made the moon to mark the seasons**; the sun knows its time for setting. 20 **You make darkness**, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep about.
 01. God made the moon (Past tense.)
 02. God can make it dark any time He wants. (Ongoing present tense.)

001. Exodus 10:21-23 - 21 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, **that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.**" 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and **there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.** 23 They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, **but all the people of Israel had light where they lived.**
002. Mark 15:33-34 - 33 And when the sixth hour had come, **there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.** 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
- iv. Psalm 104:24, 27-30 - 24 O LORD, how manifold are your works! **In wisdom have you made them all;** the earth is full of your creatures. ... 27 **These all look to you, to give them their food in due season.** 28 **When you give it** to them, they gather it up; **when you open your hand,** they are filled with good things. 29 **When you hide your face,** they are dismayed; **when you take away** their breath, they die and return to their dust. 30 **When you send forth your Spirit,** they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.
01. God made everything. (Past tense.)
 02. All of creation continues to be dependent on God for and provision. (Ongoing present tense.)
 03. God remains Sovereign over blessing and curse, abundance and lack, death and life.
- v. Psalm 104:34-35 - 34 **May my meditation be pleasing to him,** for I rejoice in the LORD. 35 **Let sinners be consumed from the earth,** and let the wicked be no more! **Bless the LORD, O my soul!** Praise the LORD!
01. Because of who God is and what He does, we should desire to be pleasing to Him.
 02. Those who rebel against Him (i.e. sinners) will perish for not acknowledging God for who He is.
- c. Job's response to God's sovereignty and power.
- i. Job 40:1-5 - 1 And the LORD said to Job: 2 "Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it." 3 Then Job answered the LORD and said: 4 "**Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth.** 5 I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further."
01. After God spoke of the creation of the world and His ongoing care for all of creation. (Job 38-39.)
 02. Job decided not to find fault with God or question Him any further.
- ii. Job 42:1-6 - 1 Then Job answered the LORD and said: 2 "**I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.** 3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore **I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.** 4 'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.' 5 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; 6 therefore **I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**"
01. After God spoke of His power over even the greatest beasts of land and sea: Behemoth and Leviathan. (Job 40-41.)
 02. Job repented and recognized God's absolute sovereignty and his own lack of understanding.

- d. As Creator and Sustainer, God is worthy of our worship and praise.
 - i. Revelation 4:11 - 11 "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, **for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.**"
2. Eden, Adam & Eve.
- a. Adam and Eve existed in God's creation and were given authority to rule over it.
 - i. Their job was to tend and keep the earth.
 - ii. Their job was to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with people who would enjoy all that God created.
 - iii. Their job was to subjugate anything that raised itself against God's prescribed order.
 - b. There was no Law yet. There were no rules.
 - i. It was God's design and intent that mankind should obey His voice.
 - c. There was only one requirement.
 - i. Genesis 2:16-17 - 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 **but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat**, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."
 - d. Adam and Eve did not have the faith to believe that God's way was best.
 - i. They disobeyed the Creator and obeyed something God created, the serpent.
 - e. If Adam and Eve had obeyed, they would still be alive today in fellowship with God.
 - i. Because they disobeyed, they lost direct access to God, and were banished from the Garden that God had made for them.
 - ii. Because they disobeyed, they lost the opportunity for eternal life and would die.
 - iii. Because they disobeyed, all of their descendants are enslaved to the serpent and enslaved to the fear of death and will ultimately die. (Hebrews 2:15.)
 - f. God did not annihilate Adam and Eve. God turned them over to the consequences of their own choice.
 - i. Their firstborn son killed their second-born son.
 - ii. Their descendants filled the world with violence, wickedness, and rebellion against God until God sent a flood to destroy all living except for a remnant. (Genesis 4-6.)
 - iii. After the flood and humanity's God-given second chance, all peoples gathered together to make a name for themselves in rebellion against God. (Genesis 9-11.)
 - iv. The consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience and being turned over to their own desire was a world of chaos in rebellion against God.

B. The Wrath of God: Being Turned Over to Your Own Desires.

- 1. God's normal state is LOVE.
 - a. 1 John 4:8 - 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because **God is love**.
 - i. Agape: outpoured benevolence and good will, charity, affection, etc.
 - ii. Agape is patient, kind, not irritable, enduring, etc. (1 Corinthians 13.)

- b. Exodus 34:6-7 - 6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a **God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin**, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."
 - i. God's primary characteristic is mercy and grace.
 - ii. God is not angry all the time. He must be provoked to anger and even then, He is patient, merciful, and not quick to punish.
 - iii. God is abounding in steadfast love, enduring, forgiving, and merciful.
 - iv. Yet, God is just and will not let the guilty go unpunished.

2. Wrath is anger and punishment.

Wrath: Greek-G3709: orge: 1. Anger. 2. Agitation of the soul. Violent emotion. Indignation. 3. Anger exhibited in punishment.

The Hebrew word for wrath is the same as the word for nose or nostrils. It is used to describe hard breathing associated with anger.

- a. God's wrath is in response to human behavior and choice.
 - i. God's wrath can kindle against those who do not believe or acknowledge Him.
 - 01. Psalm 95:11 - 11 Therefore **I swore in my wrath**, "They shall not enter my rest."
 - 001. Israelites who did not believe that God could give them the Promised Land were penalized to not enter.
 - 02. Psalm 2:12 - 12 Kiss the Son, **lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled**. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.
 - 001. Nations are encouraged not to rebel or rage against God.
 - ii. If pushed too hard, God's wrath can indicate His will to completely destroy.
 - 01. Exodus 32:10 - 10 Now therefore let me alone, **that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them**, in order that I may make a great nation of you."
 - 001. After the Golden Calf incident, God was ready to destroy Israel and start over with Moses. But Moses interceded and God had mercy on them.
- b. Ultimately, the day of God's wrath will bring punishment on all those who persist in not believing or acknowledging God.
 - i. Isaiah 13:9, 13 - 9 Behold, **the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger**, to make the land a desolation and **to destroy its sinners from it**. ... 13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at **the wrath of the LORD of hosts in the day of his fierce anger**.
 - ii. Isaiah 63:3 - 3 "I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; **I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath**; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel.
 - iii. Revelation 6:15-17 - 15 Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, 16 calling to the mountains and rocks, "**Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb**, 17 **for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?**"

3. But until the final day of God's wrath comes, God's wrath is turning humans over to their own evil desires and allowing them to suffer the consequences of it.

a. Romans 1:18-23 - 18 For **the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men**, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth**. 19 For **what can be known about God is plain to them**, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, **ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made**. So they are without excuse.

i. The wrath of God is revealed in contrast to the bountiful mercy He offers through the Gospel (which Paul had just explained in Romans 1:1-17.)

01. God does not immediately destroy people for their rebellion against Him.

ii. God's power to create and His good nature of creating order, abundance, and beauty are displayed through all He has made.

01. Creation leaves people without excuse if they do not acknowledge God as an intelligent and loving Creator.

iii. The wrath of God is revealed through humanity's warped behavior in contrast to the beauty and order of God's creation.

01. Man was made in God's image to be like Him. Godly and righteous.

02. What humans have done to themselves and the world stands in sharp contrast to God's original design for all things.

03. Instead of revealing His glory, human ungodliness and unrighteousness prevents God's purity and goodness from being known.

Suppress: Greek G2722: *katecho*: 1. Hold back, detain, restrain, hinder the course of progress. Example: a ship's headway, to hold the head of a ship.

Suppress: 1. To forcibly put an end to. 2. To prevent or restrain the development, action, or expression of. 3. To prevent the dissemination of. 4. To prevent or consciously inhibit. (Dictionary.com)

iv. Note: God's wrath is not an immediate outpouring of His anger and destruction. His wrath/punishment is to let them have their own way, to their own hurt.

b. Romans 1:21-23 - 21 For **although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him**, but they **became futile in their thinking**, and their **foolish hearts were darkened**. 22 Claiming to be wise, they **became fools**, 23 and **exchanged the glory** of the immortal God **for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things**.

i. Humans knew God but chose not to submit to Him.

ii. Their own ideas and questions about things caused them to become foolish.

01. Their thinking: *deliberations of man, inward reasonings, questioning of what is true*.

02. Became futile: *vain, empty, foolish*.

001. From the root word meaning *devoid of force, truth, use, purpose*.

03. Foolish hearts: *unintelligent, without understanding, stupid*.

04. Darkened: *deprived of light*.

iii. The wiser they became in their own sight, the more foolish they became in reality.

01. Psalm 53:1-3 - 1 **The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."** They are **corrupt, doing abominable iniquity**; there is none who does good. 2 God looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. 3 They have all **fallen away**; together they have **become corrupt**; there is none who does good, not even one.

- 02. Psalm 7:14-15 - 14 Behold, the **wicked man conceives evil** and is pregnant with mischief and **gives birth to lies**. 15 He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made.
 - iv. Stage One: The first stage of corruption and self-destruction is human reasoning in contrast to faith God's wisdom and instruction. This causes rejection of God as sovereign ruler and leads to replacing God with things that God created.
 - 01. That's like shifting worship from the Chief to a deputy, to a dog, or to a pineapple. These gods cannot help or save and have no power.
 - v. God does not destroy them. He allows them to become foolish.
- c. Romans 1:24-25 - 24 **Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts** to impurity, to the **dishonoring of their bodies** among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and **served the creature rather than the Creator**, who is blessed forever! Amen.
- i. Turned from God, the driving force in life becomes carnal lusts and evil desires.
 - 01. Romans 8:7 - 7 For the **mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God**, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.
 - 02. James 1:14-15 - 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and **enticed by his own desire**. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown **brings forth death**.
 - ii. Stage Two: The second stage of corruption is impurity and self-destructive behaviors, even against the bodies that God had given them.
 - 01. Many pagan religions require or encourage piercings, tattoos, or mutilation of the body to be pleasing to the gods.
 - 02. Some gods require sexual acts or abuse of the body (whipping, cutting, drawing blood, etc.) as acts of worship.
 - 03. This can include abuse of the body through gorging or starving (over or under eating), drunkenness, substance abuse, mind-altering experiences, high-risk endeavors, etc.
 - 04. Humans began to become very warped, no longer reflecting the purity, righteousness, and image of God.
 - 05. Powerless created things as "gods" had no ability to help them.
 - 06. Their own choices perpetuated more curse upon them.
 - iii. God does not destroy them. He allows them to be carnal and beastly.
- d. Romans 1:26-27 - 26 **For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions**. For their women **exchanged natural relations** for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise **gave up natural relations** with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men **committing shameless acts** with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.
- i. Note: God did not pour out His anger through immediate destruction.
 - ii. His wrath/punishment was to allow them to have it their own way, to their own hurt.
 - iii. Stage Three: The third stage of corruption and self-destruction is sexual immorality, particularly homosexuality.
 - 01. Self-pleasure and sexual abuse of the body outside of God's created order which is between a man and a woman. (Genesis 1:26-27.)
 - 001. Promiscuity including homosexuality was fairly common in Greek culture, but some Romans considered it contrary to nature.
 - 002. Some pagan gods required homosexual acts as worship.
 - 02. Humans became more warped and even less of a reflection of God.
 - 03. Their own choices perpetuated more curse upon them.

- iv. God does not destroy them. He allows them to shamelessly harm themselves.
- e. Romans 1:28-32 - 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, **God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.** 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 **Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.**
 - i. Note: God did not pour out His anger through immediate destruction.
 - ii. His wrath/punishment was to allow them to have it their own way, to their own hurt.
 - iii. Stage Four: The fourth stage of self-destruction is a debased/depraved mind, resulting in a whole variety of behaviors, attitudes, and the approval of those who engage in God-rejecting activities.
 - 01. Debased: *depraved, reprobate, worthless, castaway, rejected, that which does not prove itself as it ought.*
 - 02. Humans were beyond recognition of the image of God.
 - 03. Their own choices have led them into a cesspool existence of moral filth, chaos, and disorder.
 - iv. God does not destroy them. He allows them to become totally lawless, warped, and worthless.
- 4. God's patience and slowness-to-anger will ultimately come to an end in the day of His wrath and judgment against those who do not acknowledge Him. He will ultimately destroy all those who have turned away from Him and do not obey Him.
 - a. God is looking for those who believe, honor, and draw near to Him through faith.
 - i. Hebrews 11:3, 6 - 3 **By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God**, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible... 6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for **whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists** and that he rewards those who seek him.
 - 01. Though we did not see God create the world, we believe that He did and we worship Him.
 - b. The message of the eternal Gospel is to believe God as Creator and give Him glory.
 - i. Revelation 14:6-7 - 6 Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, **with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth**, to every nation and tribe and language and people. 7 And he said with a loud voice, "**Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.**"
 - c. If you have been turned over to your own desires and are reaping the consequences of your own choices, there is still time to repent and believe God.

C. Abraham: The Father of the Faithful/Obedient

- 1. Abraham lived in the generations following the flood and the Tower of Babel. All of humanity had been turned over to lawlessness in rebellion against God. No one on earth believed and obeyed God.

- a. Mankind had filled the earth with violence and wickedness. The whole world was in rebellious disobedience against God. So, God had destroyed the earth with a flood.
 - i. Honorable Mention of Obedience: Noah had stood out in his generation. He believed God and his faith was evidenced by obedience. Noah had built the Ark to the exact design and specifications given by God.
 - 01. Genesis 6:22 - 22 Noah did this; **he did all that God commanded him.**
 - ii. Nevertheless, within a few generations, mankind was back to disobeying Him.
 - b. Mankind had tried to ascend to heaven's power on their own strength without God. So, God scattered them to the ends of the earth and changed their languages.
 - i. Nevertheless, within a few generations, there was no one left in the world who honored and worshipped the Most High God, Maker of Heaven and Earth. They had all been given over to depravity and false worship of lesser things.
 - ii. As a Chaldean [Babylonian], even Abraham worshipped the sun, moon, and stars. (Joshua 24:2.)
 - c. God's plan was to bring all people back into acknowledgment of Him and obedience to Him through Abraham's family.
2. God revealed Himself to Abraham and called Abraham to obedience by speaking to him. God was giving Abraham the opportunity to be restored to relationship with Him, redeeming him from the corruption that the rest of the world had fallen into.
- a. Genesis 12:1-3 - 1 Now **the LORD said to Abram**, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And **I will make of you a great nation**, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**"
 - i. God would bless Abraham and make him great.
 - ii. God would reveal Himself by rewarding or disciplining others based on how they treated Abraham.
 - iii. Through Abraham and his descendant, the whole world would be restored to God and blessed by Him.
 - b. Acts 7:2-4 - 2 And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. **The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia**, before he lived in Haran, 3 and said to him, '**Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.**' 4 Then **he went** out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, **God removed him** from there into this land in which you are now living.
 - i. Abraham obeyed God's voice, not knowing where he was going. (Hebrews 11:8.)
3. Abraham believed God.
- a. Genesis 15:6 - 6 And **he believed the LORD**, and he counted it to him as righteousness.
 - b. Abraham remained faithful to God and God spoke to him again years later, assuring him of His promises and His ability to fulfill them. God was ready to enter into covenant with him.
 - i. Genesis 17:1-2, 7 - 1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "**I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,** 2

that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly."
... 7 And **I will establish my covenant between me and you** and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, **to be God to you and to your offspring after you.**

- ii. The all-powerful, self-sufficient God would be Abraham's God.
 - 01. Abraham and his descendants would be the only people in the world in covenant relationship with the Most High God.
 - 02. God commanded Abraham to walk blamelessly before Him and teach his household to do the same.
 - 03. He was God to no other nation. The peoples had all been turned over to their own depravity.
 - c. There was no Law yet. There were no rules. Only God's voice to be obeyed.
 - i. Romans 4:13 - 13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be **heir of the world** did not come through the law but **through the righteousness of faith.**
 - ii. Abraham knew God but sometimes had his own reasonings about things.
 - 01. This is the stage one of foolishness. (Romans 1:21-23.)
 - iii. Abraham was not perfect. He made mistakes. He was human.
 - 01. He went only as far as Haran when God had told him to go to Canaan.
 - 02. He brought his nephew with him when God had told him to leave his father's house and his kindred (kin/relatives.)
 - 03. He lied to Pharaoh about his wife being his sister. Also with Abimelech.
 - 04. He took the counsel of his wife and slept with Hagar to produce Ishmael.
 - iv. Nevertheless, Abraham had been restored to knowing and believing God when the rest of the world did not.
4. Abraham obeyed God, even when tested.
- a. When tested, Abraham obeyed God. He believed that God could even raise the dead. He offered Isaac on the altar of sacrifice.
 - i. Genesis 22:1 - 1 After these things **God tested Abraham** and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."
 - b. Abraham's actions revealed the faith in his heart was genuine.
 - i. James 2:21-24 - 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that **faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works;** 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "**Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness**"--and he was called a friend of God. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.
 - c. Because of Abraham's faith, demonstrated by his obedience, all of the promises of God would be fulfilled for him. The world would be blessed through Abraham's seed.
 - i. Genesis 22:16-18 - 16 and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And **your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies,** 18 and **in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.**"
 - 01. The world was waiting for the One who would crush the head of the serpent and restore Eden fellowship with God.
 - 02. Abraham's seed would crush the head of the serpent.

03. In Abraham's seed, all nations would be restored to fellowship with God.
5. Abraham's seed/offspring is Jesus.
 - a. Galatians 3:16 - 16 Now **the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring**. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And **to your offspring, who is Christ**."
 - b. In Christ, the seed of Abraham, all people from all nations could be restored to relationship with the God who created the heavens and the earth.
 6. In Christ, WE are Abraham's seed if we remain faithful/obedient to Jesus through the Holy Spirit, like Abraham believed and remained faithful. This is the Gospel.
 - a. Galatians 3:5-9, 29 - 5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or **by hearing with faith**-- 6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"? 7 Know then that **it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham**. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."** 9 So then, **those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith**. ... 29 And **if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring**, heirs according to promise.
 - i. We do not and cannot earn righteousness before God.
 - ii. We attain righteousness through faith in Christ.
 - iii. We maintain our connection to Christ through ongoing obedience.
 - b. We can now hear God through the Holy Spirit prompting us by His voice and in our inner man, guiding us into what is pleasing to God so that we can show our faith by obeying Him.
 - i. Philippians 2:13 - 13 for it is **God who works in you, both to will and to work** for his good pleasure.

D. Judah and the Obedience of the People

1. The blessing of Abraham passed to his son, Isaac. Then from Isaac to his son, Jacob.
 - a. While Jacob was alive, he was the covenant carrier with God out of all people in the world. No one else on earth had a relationship with the Most High God, Creator of the Universe.
 - b. Note: There was no Law yet. There were no rules. Only God's expectation of obedience to His voice. This obedience would be especially required of Jacob as the covenant carrier.
2. Jacob blessed his twelve sons before he passed away. Judah prevailed over his brothers.
 - a. Judah was not the firstborn but was blessed above those before him. (1 Chronicles 5:2.)
 - i. Reuben, Simeon, and Levi were all ahead of him in natural birth order.
 - ii. They had disqualified themselves through sexual misconduct and murderous rage.
 - b. Judah was not a perfect person.
 - i. Judah had married a Canaanite, slept with prostitutes, and did not honor his word to continue the lineage of his son. (This was considered evil in God's sight.) (Genesis 38.)
 - c. Judah displayed godly and righteous character in other ways.

- i. At first, when his brothers wanted to kill Joseph, Judah suggested they preserve his life but sell him into slavery. He did not want to murder.
 - ii. Later, when Joseph required Benjamin to come to Egypt, Judah offered his own life in Benjamin's place.
 - 01. Genesis 43:8-9 - 8 And Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. **9 I will be a pledge of his safety.** From my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. (See also Genesis 44:32-33.)
 - iii. Note: Reuben offered his sons as guarantee, not himself. (Genesis 42:37.)
 - d. Judah revealed his heart of willing self-sacrifice and laying down his life for his brother.
 - i. This is the heart of God. This is how God wants Himself represented to all peoples.
3. Judah received the blessing of the scepter of authority and the obedience of the nations.
 - a. Genesis 49:10 NIV - **10 The scepter will not depart from Judah,** nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, **until he to whom it belongs shall come** and **the obedience of the nations shall be his.**
 - i. The scepter of authority would pass through Judah to his descendants.
 - ii. This did not make Judah king over his brothers or the tribes of Israel.
 - iii. There was One who was coming through Judah's lineage who would command the obedience of all nations.
 - b. Psalm 60:6-8 - 6 God has spoken in his holiness: "With exultation I will divide up Shechem and portion out the Vale of Succoth. 7 Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim is my helmet; **Judah is my scepter.** 8 Moab is my washbasin; upon Edom I cast my shoe; over Philistia I shout in triumph."
 - i. God apportions justice (reward or punishment) among His people and among the nations based on how they respond to Judah's authority.
 - 01. In the greater Messianic context, all nations and peoples will be judged by how they respond to the Messiah - to Jesus' authority in all the earth.
 - ii. Note: This fulfills God's promise to Abraham to bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him.
 - c. Psalm 45:2-6 - 2 You are the most handsome of the sons of men; grace is poured upon your lips; therefore **God has blessed you forever.** 3 Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty! 4 In your majesty **ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness;** let your right hand teach you awesome deeds! 5 **Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; the peoples fall under you.** 6 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. **The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;**
 - i. Jesus, the seed of Judah, reflected the image of God's righteousness, truth, and meekness. He holds the scepter of God's Kingdom.
4. Psalm 110 reveals the priestly kingship of Messiah, descended of David, of the tribe of Judah. This is the seed of Abraham seated at the right hand of the throne of God, appointed to God's throne as ruler of all the nations.
 - a. Psalm 110:1-3, 5-6 - 1 A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." 2 The **LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!** 3 **Your people will offer themselves freely** on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be

yours.... 5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will **shatter kings on the day of his wrath**. 6 He will **execute judgment among the nations**, filling them with corpses; he will **shatter chiefs over the wide earth**.

- i. David is a descendant of Judah. The Messiah is his descendant but is also his Lord.
 - ii. The scepter of God's Kingdom remains with Judah for eternity from Zion.
 - iii. "Rule in the midst of your enemies" and shattering kings/chiefs is the fulfillment of "possessing the gates of your enemies."
 - iv. Those who belong to God will offer themselves willingly in service to the Messiah King.
 01. NKJV: "Your people will be volunteers..."
 02. NIV: "Your troops will be willing..."
 03. NASB: "Your people will volunteer freely..."
- b. Psalm 110 is quoted or alluded to more than any other Psalm in the New Testament. It affirms the Messiahship of Jesus as the seed of David, the descendant of Judah who is appointed by God to rule all nations.
- i. Quoted by Jesus: Matthew 22:41-44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:41-42; 22:69
 - ii. Quoted by Peter: Acts 2:34-35; 1 Peter 3:22
 - iii. Quoted and alluded to by Paul: 1 Corinthians 15:25; Ephesians 1:20-22; Colossians 3:1
 - iv. Quoted in Hebrews: Hebrews 1:13, 2:8, 5:6, 6:17-20, 7:17-24, 8:1, 10:12-13, 12:2
 - v. Alluded to by John: Revelation 4:2, 6:15-17
5. Willing obedience is always what God has always desired from all people. It is what He deserves.
- a. Revelation 5:13 - 13 And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "**To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!**"
 - b. There is still time to willingly subject ourselves to God through faith in Jesus.

E. The Nation of Israel Called to Obedience

1. Jacob's sons moved down to Egypt due to famine in the land of Canaan. God had made provision for them there and instructed them to go. (Genesis 46.)
 - a. Jacob's descendants multiplied and became the twelve tribes of Israel. They grew in number to over six hundred thousand men over twenty years old, not including women and children. (Numbers 2:32.)
2. When Israel went out of Egypt, they left by the obedience of faith.
 - a. There was no Law yet. Only continued faith in God and His promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and God's instruction spoken to and through Moses.
 - b. In obedience to God's command, they slaughtered the Passover lambs and painted the blood on their doorposts.
 - i. Exodus 12:28 - 28 Then the people of **Israel went and did so; as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.**
3. Israel acknowledged God as King of all the earth.

- a. Israel's victory over Pharaoh/Egypt assured them that God was King over all creation.
 - i. They had seen the plagues God poured out on Egypt and how God made a distinction between them and the Egyptians.
 - ii. They had seen God part the waters of the Red Sea so that they walked through on dry ground. They also saw the Egyptians drown in the sea.
 - iii. Their victory song proclaimed that all nations would fear the Lord because He had shown Himself mighty against the most powerful ruler and army in the world.
 - b. The first reference to God as King is immediately after the Exodus from Egypt.
 - i. Exodus 15:18 - 18 **The LORD will reign** forever and ever."
 - 01. *Reign: to become king, hold royal office, possess or exercise sovereign power, exercise authority as monarch, etc.*
4. In the wilderness, God called Israel to obey His voice.
- a. Exodus 15:26 - 26 saying, "**If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes**, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer."
 - b. The Law was never God's will or intention for mankind or for Israel.
 - i. Jeremiah 7:22-23 - 22 For **in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt**, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. 23 But **this command I gave them: 'Obey my voice**, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And **walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.'**
 - c. God tested their obedience to His voice with manna and Sabbath. They failed the test.
 - i. Exodus 16:4-5 - 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, **that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.** 5 On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily."
 - 01. This was the first wilderness test of obedience to His voice.
 - ii. Exodus 16:19-20 - 19 And Moses said to them, "**Let no one leave any of it over till the morning.**" 20 **But they did not listen** to Moses. **Some left part of it till the morning**, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.
 - 01. They disobeyed by leaving leftovers.
 - iii. Exodus 16:25-28 - 25 Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. 26 **Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none.**" 27 **On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather**, but they found none. 28 And the LORD said to Moses, "**How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws?**"
 - 01. They disobeyed by going out to gather on the day of rest.
 - iv. NOTE: Remember that the whole of humanity was under the curse of sweat and toil for bread due to Adam's disobedience.
 - 01. Daily labor for food was the way of the whole world.
 - 001. Plus, Israel had been in slavery for 400 years, subjected to hard labor. They were used to working hard every day.
 - 02. The Sabbath (rest) was God's gift to them because He was able to provide abundantly for them even without their sweat and toil.
 - 001. God redeemed them from the curse and the way of the world.

03. The question of obedience to the Sabbath was, would Israel trust God enough to REST?

001. The answer was, "No."

5. If Israel obeyed God's voice, they would become a Kingdom of Priests.
 - a. Exodus 19:5-6 - 5 Now therefore, **if you will indeed obey my voice** and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and **you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."
 - i. Priests are mediators between God and man, between heaven and earth. (Previously covered in Paul's description of his work.)
 - ii. If they obeyed God, they would be the nation on earth that would mediate the blessings of God to the rest of the world, as His priests.
 - iii. Israel agreed unanimously and committed to obey God.
6. ALL of Israel heard God's voice and commandments directly. He desired for all of them to come up the mountain to Him as His people.
 - a. Exodus 19:9-13 - 9 And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, **that the people may hear when I speak with you**, and may also believe you forever." When Moses told the words of the people to the LORD, 10 the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments 11 and be ready for the third day. **For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.** 12 And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. 13 No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' **When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.**"
 - i. They people had to wash themselves in consecration.
 - ii. The Lord would come down and Israel had to wait for the sound of the trumpet blast.
 - iii. When the trumpet sounded long, all Israel would go up the mountain to God.
 01. They were not allowed to go up until God said so.
 - b. All Israel saw the glory of God descend to the top of Mount Sinai in a cloud and they all heard God's voice giving the Ten Commandments.
 - i. Exodus 20:22 - 22 And the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the people of Israel: '**You have seen for yourselves that I have talked with you from heaven.**'"
 - c. But the people were too afraid to go up the mountain to God's presence to see and hear God for themselves.
 - i. Exodus 20:18-19 - 18 Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, **the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off 19 and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die."**
7. When Israel disobeyed, God did not reject them as His people and did not destroy them. He made modifications in response to their unwillingness and unbelief.
 - a. Modification: A mediator between God and His people rather than everyone hearing God's voice to obey Him. (See Exodus 20:18-21; Deuteronomy 5:24-29.)

- i. Moses was appointed as a mediator/prophet between God and the people of Israel.
 - ii. A prophet like Moses would come to mediate between God and the people. Anyone who did not listen to and obey that mediator would give account to God. (See Deuteronomy 18:15-19.)
 - 01. Jesus is this Prophet like Moses to whom we will all give account if we do not heed His words and obey Him.
 - iii. This is second-best to everyone hearing God for themselves.
- b. Modification: Written code of Law rather than obedience to God's voice.
- i. Moses went up the mountain as the people's mediator to receive the commands, statutes, and ordinances of God. (Exodus 20:22-23:19.)
 - ii. Israel retained free will to obey or not obey God. The Law disclosed what the reward or consequences of obedience or disobedience would be. (See Exodus 23:25-27; Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, etc.)
 - iii. Contrast to those who were not under Law but had righteousness through faith and obedience to God's voice.
 - 01. Romans 5:13 - 13 for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, **but sin is not counted where there is no law.**
 - iv. This was a second-best option for Israel compared to direct hearing and obedience, but it was a just and fair approach to obedience.
 - 01. No other nation had the laws of the Creator God. (Psalm 147:20.)
 - 02. No other nation at that time had a written code of Law with laws pre-disclosed in advance. Kings of pagan nations would make up their rulings as they went.
 - v. The Law was a new type of covenant between God and Israel. This covenant was based on obedience to the rules and regulations.
 - 01. Exodus 24:7 - 7 Then he took the **Book of the Covenant** and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "**All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.**"
 - 001. Moses shared with the people all the rules God had given so far.
 - 002. They agreed to obey.
 - vi. Note: The Book of Deuteronomy was written immediately before the Israelites went into the Promised Land. Moses repeatedly exhorts them to OBEY the Lord by keeping His commandments so that it will go well with them.
 - 01. Too many scriptures to list. They are prominent throughout the entire book.
- c. Modification: Tabernacle and Priests rather than direct approach to God's presence for all people and a kingdom of everyone being a priest.
- i. Moses went up the mountain again and received the pattern for the Tabernacle and the consecration of the priests. (Exodus 25:1-31:11.)
 - ii. This was second-best to everyone seeing and hearing God, but God made a way to dwell among His people. (Exodus 29:43-46.)
 - iii. Honorable Mention of Obedience: The Israelites built the Tabernacle to the exact specifications God gave to Moses. Exodus 35-40 (building) matches 25-31 (design.)
 - 01. Exodus 39:42-43 - 42 **According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the people of Israel had done all the work.** 43 And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it; **as the LORD had commanded, so had they done it.** Then Moses blessed them.
 - iv. Honorable Mention of Obedience: Once the Tabernacle was set up, the Lord was over the Tabernacle in a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. The

Israelites moved only when the cloud moved. They followed and obeyed the Lord. (See Numbers 9:15-23.)

- d. Modification: Levites instead of firstborn as God's servants.
 - i. While Moses was receiving the Tabernacle pattern, Israel quickly proved to be unable to stay faithful to God. They worshipped a Golden Calf. (Exodus 32:1-8.)
 - 01. They turned from worshipping God to a worshipping an image of a created thing.
 - 001. Stage one corruption/depravity.
 - 02. They played, mocked, laughed, and made sport of worship in the name of the Lord. The people of Israel ran wild like pagans.
 - 001. Exodus 32:25 KJV - 25 And when **Moses saw that the people [were] naked**; (for Aaron had made them naked unto [their] shame among their enemies:)
 - 002. Exodus 32:25 NIV - 25 **Moses saw that the people were running wild** and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies.
 - 03. The people were undoubtedly celebrating and worshipping accompanied with misconduct towards their bodies and sex acts.
 - 001. Stage two and three of corruption/depravity.
 - ii. Moses called for anyone who would be loyal to God. The tribe of Levi came forward. (See Exodus 32:26-29.)
 - iii. The Levites were chosen to serve God at the Tabernacle instead of all the firstborn.
 - 01. Numbers 8:14-19 - 14 **"Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the people of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine.** 15 And after that the Levites shall go in to serve at the tent of meeting, when you have cleansed them and offered them as a wave offering. 16 For they are wholly given to me from among the people of Israel. **Instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn of all the people of Israel, I have taken them for myself.** 17 For all the firstborn among the people of Israel are mine, both of man and of beast. On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I consecrated them for myself, 18 and **I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel.** 19 And I **have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron** and his sons from among the people of Israel, **to do the service for the people of Israel at the tent of meeting** and to make atonement for the people of Israel, that there may be no plague among the people of Israel when the people of Israel come near the sanctuary."
 - iv. This was second-best to every family in Israel having their firstborn son in service to God at His dwelling place.
- e. Modification: Blood sacrifices for atonement rather than righteousness through believing demonstrated by the obedience of faith.
 - i. When the Tabernacle was erected, Moses was not permitted to enter until the sin of the people was atoned for. (See Exodus 40:17, 34-35.)
 - 01. If Moses entered without the people's sin being atoned for with blood sacrifices, Moses would have died.
 - ii. As Moses stood outside the Tabernacle, God spoke to him from inside the Tabernacle to give His instructions for blood sacrifices and offerings. (See Leviticus 1:1.)

01. Leviticus includes burnt offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings or bulls, rams, goats, birds, etc. for the shedding of blood for atonement for sin.
 02. Leviticus 17:11 - 11 For the **life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls**, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.
 001. Only blood can atone for sin.
 - iii. Once the regulations for blood sacrifices for atonement were given and the priests were consecrated, Aaron and Moses were permitted to enter the Tabernacle. (See Leviticus 9:23-24; Numbers 1:1.)
 - iv. God does not need sacrifices for His own appetite. What God always wanted was the obedience of faith, evidenced by righteous behavior in faithfulness to Him.
 01. Psalm 50:12-15 - 12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. 13 **Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? 14 Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, 15 and call upon me in the day of trouble;** I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."
 02. Hosea 6:6 NIV - 6 **For I desire mercy, not sacrifice**, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.
 001. God was looking for those who would reflect His heart and His image as His representatives.
 03. Isaiah 1:11-20 - 11 "**What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?** says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; **I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.** 12 "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? 13 Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations-- I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. 15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; **your hands are full of blood.** 16 **Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, 17 learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.** 18 "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. 19 **If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;** 20 but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
 001. This passage does not excuse for the need for blood sacrifices at the Temple to atone for sin.
 002. Nevertheless, sacrifices are not what God wanted. He wanted righteousness through faith, demonstrated by godly conduct.
 - v. This is second best to righteousness by faith with obedience demonstrating faith.
- f. NOTE: It cannot be said that God is unmerciful or unwilling to accommodate human frailty in order to keep His word for the good of His people.
8. God never wanted the Law. It is second best. He has always been after a heart of obedience. The obedience of FAITH. Faithfulness and obedience is what He desires from all people.

- a. Deuteronomy 10:12-15 - 12 "And now, Israel, **what does the LORD your God require of you**, but to **fear the LORD** your God, to **walk in all his ways**, to **love him**, to **serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul**, 13 and to **keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD**, which I am commanding you today for your good? 14 Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. 15 **Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers** and chose their offspring after them, **you above all peoples**, as you are this day.
 - i. Notice that keeping God's commandments is LAST on the list.
 - ii. What is more important to God is genuine reverence of Him for who He is, walking in a manner that is pleasing to Him, loving Him, and serving Him with all our heart.
 - iii. What God wants is thankfulness and reciprocated love for the love that He has shown to His people.

- b. Deuteronomy 10:16 - 16 **Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart**, and be no longer stubborn.
 - i. What God wants is a heart that is tender to Him in FAITH and obedience.
 - ii. Not doing what is right in our own sight.
 - iii. Not relying on ourselves and our own strength.
 - iv. Not turning us over to our own evil desire.
 - v. Not turning us over to increased depravity and wickedness.
 - vi. Not being pushed to the point of pouring out the wrath of judgment.

F. Whoredom: The Opposite of a Bride

1. By Law, turning from God (Stage One of corruption) is an offense punishable by death. God regards unfaithfulness to Him as whoredom and prostitution with other gods.
 - a. The lust of their own hearts and eyes was what caused Adam and Eve's downfall. The same is true for the corruption and degradation of all their descendants after them. God wanted to prevent this among His people.
 - b. God instructed a part of the Jewish wardrobe to serve as a reminder not to turn to other gods or whore after them.
 - i. Numbers 15:38-40 - 38 "Speak to the people of Israel, and tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a cord of blue on the tassel of each corner. 39 And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and **remember all the commandments of the LORD**, to do them, **not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to whore after**. 40 So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and be holy to your God.

2. Pagans prostitute themselves to other gods. Israel was not to mix with them or join them in their false worship. It is whoredom.
 - a. Exodus 34:15-16 NIV - 15 "Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for **when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices**. 16 And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and **those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same**.

- i. Israel was not to mingle with pagans, share in the worship of their gods, or eat their sacrificial feasts. Israel was not to intermarry with them.
- 3. Turning to other gods, presenting offerings to other gods, and practicing any form of false spirituality, is whoredom. Those who do so will be cut off from God's people.
 - a. Leviticus 17:7-9 - 7 So they shall no more sacrifice their **sacrifices to goat demons, after whom they whore**. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations. 8 "And you shall say to them, Any one of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice 9 and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer it to the LORD, that man shall be **cut off from his people**.
 - b. Leviticus 20:6 - 6 "If a person **turns to mediums and necromancers, whoring after them**, I will set my face against that person and will **cut him off from among his people**.
- 4. Anyone (false prophet, individual person, or city) leading other people to worship other gods and teaching rebellion against God must be put to death. They have become worthless.
 - a. Deuteronomy 13:5 - 5 **But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death**, because he has **taught rebellion against the LORD your God**, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall **purge the evil from your midst**.
 - i. This passage pertains to false prophets. The signs and wonders, dreams and prophecies they give might come to pass. But if they point to idolizing or worshipping any other god, they must be put to death.
 - b. Deuteronomy 13:6-10 - 6 "If **your brother**, the son of your mother, or **your son or your daughter or the wife you embrace or your friend who is as your own soul entices you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,'** which neither you nor your fathers have known, 7 some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, 8 **you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him. 9 But you shall kill him. Your hand shall be first against him to put him to death**, and afterward the hand of all the people. 10 You shall stone him to death with stones, because he sought to draw you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
 - i. No mercy for your brother, son, daughter, wife, or best friend who tries to persuade you away from God.
 - ii. Your hand must be the first to throw the stone to kill him.
 - c. Deuteronomy 13:12-16 - 12 "If you hear **in one of your cities**, which the LORD your God is giving you to dwell there, 13 that certain **worthless fellows** have gone out among you and **have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,'** which you have not known, 14 then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently. And behold, if it be true and certain that **such an abomination** has been done among you, 15 **you shall surely put the inhabitants of that city to the sword, devoting it to destruction, all who are in it and its cattle, with the edge of the sword. 16 You shall gather all its spoil into the midst of its open square and burn the city and all its spoil with fire, as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God.** It shall be a heap forever. It shall not be built again.
 - i. If an entire city has been led astray, the whole city and everyone and everything in it must be destroyed by fire.
 - ii. Worthless Fellows instigate this.

5. Worthless fellows. Sons of Belial. (KJV, Young's Literal Translation.) Sons of the devil. Those who through their actions prove to be enemies of God.
 - a. Their ability to be beneficial has worn out.
 - i. Proverbs 6:12-15 - 12 A worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with **crooked speech**, 13 winks with his eyes, signals with his feet, **points with his finger**, 14 with **perverted heart devises evil, continually sowing discord**; 15 therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly; in a moment he will be broken beyond healing.
 - b. People turning away from God have proven themselves to be sons of the evil one. (Remember Genesis 3:15; 1 John 3:10.)
 - i. 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 - 14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 **What accord has Christ with Belial?** Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

Worthless Fellows: Hebrew H1100: *belyaal*: 1. Good for nothing, unprofitable, without profit, unworthy. 2. Evil, naughty, ungodly, base, wicked. 3. Ruined, destruction. Root words 1. wearing out and 2. gain, profit, benefit, or being valuable.

Belial: A name for Satan or one of his fallen angels.

Unworthy Thought/Evil Eye: Another use of the word *belial* shows that selfishness and stinginess towards others is the turning from God to self-interest. This is the same sin Adam and Eve committed with the forbidden fruit. "You will be like God."

Deuteronomy 15:9 NKJV - 9 "Beware lest there be **a wicked [belial] thought in your heart**, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and **your eye be evil [hostile, grudging, ill will] against your poor brother** and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you.

Matthew 6:23-24 KJV - 23 But **if thine eye be evil**, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [is] that darkness! 24 **No man can serve two masters**: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

- c. Note: Deuteronomy 14 (after what we just covered from Deuteronomy 13) opens with "you are sons of God." This infers "you are not sons of Belial but sons of God." God wants His people to be devoted to Him and understand how precious they are to Him.
6. When the whole world has proven itself to be whores to other gods and sons of Belial, God will judge the whole world with fire. (See Unit Eight.)

G. Israel's Failure to be Faithful

1. Over the course of many centuries of mixed faithfulness and whoredom, Israel proved incapable of remaining faithful to God and His ways. Israel did not keep the requirements of the Law and failed to walk in the obedience of faith.

- a. After Israel entered the promised land and possessed it, they declined into the days of Judges. Israel drifted away from obedience to God to worship other gods. Then, God would allow a foreign nation to invade and oppress them. Then, they would cry out to God for help and God would raise up a deliverer to save them from their oppressors. This became a repeated cycle of decline and deliverance. Ultimately, the behavior of the people of Israel strikingly resembled the conduct of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - i. Judges 19:22 - 22 As they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, **worthless fellows [sons of Belial]**, surrounded the house, beating on the door. And they said to the old man, the master of the house, "**Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know [have sex] him.**"
 01. The men of Gibeah had become worthless, sons of Belial.
 - ii. Judges 21:25 - 25 In those days **there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**

- b. God raised up Samuel as Judge and Prophet of Israel. But Samuel's sons were not as faithful as him and the people did not want his sons as their rulers. They begged for a king so that they could be like all the other nations.
 - i. 1 Samuel 8:4-6 - 4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah 5 and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. **Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.**" 6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "**Give us a king to judge us.**" And Samuel prayed to the LORD.

- c. Modification: A human King rather than God as King. God gave the people over to their own desire. They had rejected Him as their King.
 - i. 1 Samuel 8:7 - 7 And the LORD said to Samuel, "**Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.**"

- d. This was second best to God being King. God warned them what a human King would do to them. (1 Samuel 8:11-18.)
 - i. Israel was willingly turning themselves over to slavery to a human king rather than having God as their King. God let them.

- e. In essence, Israel did not want to be God's special possession and holy nation. They wanted to be just like all the other nations of the world.
 - i. 1 Samuel 8:19-20 - 19 But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "**No! But there shall be a king over us, 20 that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.**"
 - ii. They wanted a King to appear like the other nations and to bring them victory in earthly battles against their enemies. (i.e. trusting in military strength rather than in God.)

2. In the years that followed, under various kings of the northern and southern kingdom, the people wandered from God whored after other gods. (Covered more in Unit Three.)
 - a. Read the Book of Hosea. The people had become whores against God. Corrupted and depraved through the worship of false gods.
 - i. Hosea 1:2 - 2 When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, **take to yourself a wife of whoredom** and have children of whoredom, **for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD.**"

- b. Read Ezekiel Chapter 16. The people had whored themselves out in alliances with other nations instead of obeying God and trusting Him as their defender.
 - i. Ezekiel 16:15-17 - 15 "But you trusted in your beauty and **played the whore** because of your renown and **lavished your whorings on any passerby**; your beauty became his. 16 You took some of your garments and made for yourself colorful shrines, and on them **played the whore**. The like has never been, nor ever shall be. 17 You also took your beautiful jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself images of men, and with them **played the whore**. [Continued...]
- c. Israel refused to listen to God and obey Him. God gave Israel over to their own desires.
 - i. Psalm 81:11-12 - 11 "But **my people did not listen to my voice**; Israel would not submit to me. 12 **So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels**.
- d. Eventually, it was impossible for God to continue to show mercy to them. Their behavior warranted judgement, destruction, and exile from the land.
 - i. The northern kingdom went from bad to worse in rebellion against God. They were exiled from the land in 722 BC.
 - ii. The southern kingdom had waves of faithfulness and rebellion depending on who their human king was. Ultimately, they were exiled from the land in 586 BC.
- e. After seventy years in exile, the Lord allowed the people to return to the land. God remained faithful to Israel in spite of their inability to demonstrate the obedience of faith.
 - i. See Psalm 78. Israel testing God through unbelief. God's faithfulness to them.
 - ii. Read Psalm 105 & 106 together. God's faithfulness in spite of Israel's unfaithfulness.

H. The New Covenant, Obedience from the Heart

- 1. Israel's failure and disobedience did NOT cause God to reject His people. Instead, He promised a New Covenant with Israel in which He would help them to obey Him from the heart.
 - a. Jeremiah 31:31-34 - 31 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when **I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah**, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. 33 For **this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel** after those days, declares the LORD: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people**. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for **they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest**, declares the LORD. For **I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**"
 - i. The New Covenant is with all Israel (i.e. Israel and Judah, both Kingdoms.)
 - ii. In the New Covenant, God writes His Law upon individual hearts so that they can obey Him from the heart.
 - iii. In the New Covenant, everyone has access to God individually to learn from Him directly rather than through human teachers, elders, or rulers.
 - 01. 1 John 2:27 - 27 But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and **you have no need that anyone should teach you**. But as **his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true**, and is no lie--just as it has taught you, abide in him.

- iv. In the New Covenant, sins are forgiven so that people can remain in right standing with God and stay in relationship with Him even when they mess up.
- b. Jeremiah 32:40 - 40 **I will make with them an everlasting covenant**, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And **I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.**
 - i. In the New Covenant, God puts the fear of Him in people's hearts so that they do not turn from Him to corrupt themselves.
 - c. Isaiah 55:3 NKJV - 3 Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; **And I will make an everlasting covenant with you--The sure mercies of David.**
 - i. Just as David was an imperfect person who made egregious missteps against God's ways, but his heart always turned quickly back to God.
 - 01. The New Covenant would bring people into a relationship with God which resembles David's because all people would know God and fear Him.
 - ii. God had continual mercy on David and promised him an everlasting dynasty.
 - 01. David's descendant would be the Messiah who would usher in the New Covenant of peace with God and mercy from Him.
2. In the New Covenant, God would give His people a new heart and a new spirit - His own heart and Spirit to replace their heart of wickedness and corruption that refuses to obey Him.
- a. Ezekiel 11:19-20 - 19 **And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone** from their flesh and **give them a heart of flesh**, 20 **that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them.** And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.
 - i. God gives a new heart, a tender heart so that people can obey Him.
 - b. Ezekiel 36:25-27 - 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.** And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 **And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**
 - i. In the New Covenant, God cleanses His people of the sins.
 - ii. God gives us a new heart that causes us to obey Him rather than walk in rebellion.
 - iii. God puts His own Spirit in us. He dwells within us.
3. The New Covenant is between God and Israel but extends to include Gentiles, people from all the nations of the world.
- a. All people (Jews and Gentiles) have proven to be corrupt, wicked, and fallen from God. All people need God's redemption.
 - i. Romans 3:9-18 NIV - 9 What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that **Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin.** 10 As it is written: "**There is no one righteous, not even one;** 11 there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. 12 **All have turned away, they have together become worthless;** there is no one who does good, not even one." 13 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The **poison of vipers is on their lips.**" 14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 ruin and misery mark their ways, 17 and the way of peace they do not know." 18 "**There is no fear of God before their eyes.**"

01. No one in the world in the history of mankind has ever attained God's perfect standard of righteousness and obedience. Except Jesus.
 02. All mankind have become worthless to God and through their conduct have proven themselves to be sons of the devil.
 001. Worthless means corrupted, unusable, spoiled like bad fruit.
 002. See above description for Old Testament insight. (See Unit Two.)
 03. All people who have denied and forsaken God show no fear of Him.
- b. The Messiah would become the New Covenant between God and Israel to restore Israel to Him and make salvation available to the Gentiles.
- i. Isaiah 49:5-6 - 5 And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, **to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him--** for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength-- 6 he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; **I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.**"
- c. Foreigners who believed and demonstrated faith through obedience would be included in among God's people.
- i. Isaiah 56:3-8 - 3 **Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from his people";** and let not the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree." 4 For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, **who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant,** 5 I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than **sons and daughters;** I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. 6 **"And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant--** 7 these I will bring to my holy mountain, and **make them joyful in my house of prayer;** their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for **my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."** 8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, **"I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered."**
 01. Foreigners who obey the Lord will be welcomed in His House.
 02. God's House is for all nations to come and seek His face and worship Him.
 - ii. John 10:16 - 16 And **I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.** So there will be one flock, one shepherd.
 01. Jesus was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. But He knew God's purpose to gather in the Gentiles by faith.
4. The New Covenant and its blessings are available to anyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God and that God raised Him from the dead. Relationship with God is attained through faith.
- a. Romans 10:9-13 NIV - 9 **If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. 11 As Scripture says, **"Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."** 12 For there is **no difference between Jew and Gentile--**the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, **"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."**

- b. Romans 10:16-17 - 16 **But they have not all obeyed the gospel.** For Isaiah says, "Lord, **who has believed what he has heard from us?**" 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
 - i. The promises of the New Covenant are only available to those who believe and obey the Gospel. Genuine faith is demonstrated through obedience.
 - ii. Isaiah 53:1 - 1 **Who has believed** what he has heard from us? And **to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?**
 - 01. Faith comes through revelation of Jesus and the Gospel. It cannot be taught or learned. It must be revealed.
 - iii. Matthew 16:17 - 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For **flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.**
 - 01. Only God can reveal Jesus.
 - 02. Flesh and blood (human reasoning and those who are wise in their own sight) will find the Gospel to be foolishness. (See 1 Corinthians 1:18.)
 - iv. John 6:44-45 - 44 **No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.** And I will raise him up on the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' **Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.**
 - 01. Jesus quotes the Jeremiah passage about the New Covenant. All people will have direct access to God and will be taught by Him.
 - 02. Everyone who has connected with God will be pointed to Jesus.
 - 001. Anyone else claiming to have access to the Creator is deceived.
5. Remember: God's promise to Abraham was that all nations would be blessed through His seed. This was all by FAITH, accompanied by obedience. The New Covenant fulfills this promise.
- a. Romans 4:13-18-25 - 13 For **the promise to Abraham** and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but **through the righteousness of faith.** 14 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. 15 For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. 16 **That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring--**not only to the adherent of the law but also **to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ...** 20 **No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God,** but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 **fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.** 22 That is why his faith was "**counted to him as righteousness.**" 23 But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also. **It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,** 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.
 - i. Abraham believed the impossible. God brought it to pass.
 - ii. We receive the benefits of being Abraham's offspring, whether or not we are biological descendants of Abraham, by having faith in God like Abraham did.
 - iii. Faith in Jesus makes us right in God's sight. Not the Law.

I. In View of God's Mercies, Offer Yourself in Willing Obedience

- 1. We remain in the New Covenant by faith in Jesus. We can fall away from the New Covenant through unbelief and rejecting Jesus.
 - a. Romans 11:17-24 - 17 But if **some of the branches were broken off,** and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive

tree, 18 **do not be arrogant toward the branches.** If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. 19 Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 20 That is true. **They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear.** 21 **For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.** 22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, **provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.** 23 And even they, **if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in,** for God has the power to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

- i. Paul uses an analogy of an olive tree having branches cut off or grafted in.
 01. Grafting is a process of attaching a branch to a tree from another tree and binding it together until the original tree grows around and adopts the foreign branch as one of its own. The tree and branch connect so that the tree supplies the branch the life it needs to thrive and produce fruit.
 - ii. Most Jews were cut off because they failed to believe Jesus as their Messiah.
 01. Jews who repent and believe will be grafted back into the tree.
 - iii. Gentiles were grafted in because they believed the Gospel message about Jesus and the God of Israel.
 - iv. Believers (Jew or Gentile) who turn from faith in Jesus will be cut off.
 01. Note: This is a very strong case for why "once saved always saved" is unbiblical. The continued obedience of faith is required.
2. Romans 12:1-2 NIV - 1 **Therefore**, I urge you, brothers and sisters, **in view of God's mercy**, to **offer your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and pleasing to God--this is your true and proper worship. 2 **Do not conform to the pattern of this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to **test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.**
- a. Whenever we see a "therefore," we are wise to look back to investigate what it is *there for*.
 - i. This passage immediately follows what we just studied about unfaithful branches being cut off. Paul's letter was not written with chapter demarcations.
 - ii. In view of the fact that God will cut off those who are unfaithful to Him, even among His own covenant people, we should fear God.
 - iii. In view of the mercies that God has extended to us by grafting us into His people, we should worship Him and obey Him.
 - b. Instead of offering our bodies to idol worship, sexual misconduct, abuse, mutilation, etc. like those who forsake God, we must offer our bodies, every part of our being, to God like a sacrifice being laid on the altar at God's Temple. (To be covered more in Unit Six.)
 - c. Instead of behaving like the pagan world who show no reverence or fear of God and have been given over to their own foolish reasonings and depraved conduct, we must allow the Holy Spirit to regenerate us and renew our mind so that we can understand what God wants and do what is pleasing to Him. (To be covered more in Unit Six.)
3. Through faith in Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to those who believe Him, God has restored people to His design, reversing the modifications He made to accommodate the sin and unwillingness of His people, and granting direct access to Him for everyone who believes. Hallelujah!!

- a. Jesus is the perfect human Mediator between God and man. Jesus is also God, granting direct access to God for everyone who believes.
 - i. Hebrews 9:15, 12:24; 1 Timothy 2:5, etc.
 - b. Jesus fulfilled the Law so that we can walk by the Spirit in the obedience of faith.
 - i. Matthew 5:17; Romans 3:31, 6:14, 8:1-2, etc.
 - c. As believers, we have become the Tabernacle of God, His dwelling place.
 - i. 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:16, 19; Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:5, etc.
 - d. Believers are all God's priests, servants, and ministers. We are the assembly of the firstborn.
 - i. 1 Peter 2:9; Hebrews 12:23, etc.
 - e. Jesus is the perfect blood sacrifice of atonement, fulfilling God's righteous requirement.
 - i. Hebrews 10:1-14; Romans 3:24-25, 1 John 2:2, 4:10, etc.
 - f. Through the Holy Spirit, we do not need human judges to teach us the ways of God.
 - i. 1 John 2:27; John 14:26, etc.
 - g. Jesus is the perfect human King. Jesus is also God, granting direct obedience to God for everyone who believes.
 - i. Philippians 2:9-11; Ephesians 1:20-21; Revelation 1:5-6, 17:14; 1 Timothy 6:15, etc.
4. THEREFORE, we should offer ourselves in willing obedience to our King, Jesus, through living our lives in the obedience of faith.

Unit Three: Commendation from God, Part One: Kings

For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.
2 Chronicles 16:9a NIV

A. Kingdom of Priests & Rules for Kings

1. Reminder: God's purpose for Israel was for them to be a holy nation, a Kingdom of Priests, mediators of His blessings to the rest of the world, in fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. (See Exodus 19:5-6.)
 - a. In God's design, every Israelite was a priest of God, mediating between God and man and sharing God's blessings with the world.
 - b. In God's design, God was King over Israel, and they were members of the Kingdom.
2. Rules for Kings. God foresaw that Israel would demand a human king and gave instructions.
 - a. Deuteronomy 17:14-20 - 14 "When you come to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it **and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,'** 15 you may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose. **One from among your brothers** you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. 16 Only he must **not acquire many horses** for himself or **cause the people to return to Egypt** in order to acquire many horses, since the LORD has said to you, **'You shall never return that way again.'** 17 And he shall **not acquire many wives** for himself, lest his heart turn away, **nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.** 18 "And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall **write for himself in a book a copy of this law**, approved by the Levitical priests. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall **read in it all the days of his life**, that he may learn to **fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them,** 20 that his **heart may not be lifted up above his brothers**, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, **so that he may continue long in his kingdom**, he and his children, in Israel.
 - i. Must be from among your brothers. Cannot be a foreigner.
 - ii. Not too many horses. Horses are a war animal representing military strength. God wanted His people to depend on Him as their military power.
 - iii. No returning to Egypt. Foreign alliances are for military strength. Egypt was the most powerful nation and army in the world in that day, breeding the best war horses.
 - iv. Not too many women. Women could turn the king's heart away from the Lord.
 - v. Not too much money. Money could turn the king's heart away from the Lord and seeing God as the provider for His people. Too much money could also cause the king to lose touch with the reality of the common people and the cry of the poor.
 - vi. Meditate on the Law/Word of God day and night. (That meant everything that Moses had written, particularly Deuteronomy which is a recap.) So that:

01. He fears the Lord, keeps God's commands, and does them. Living and ruling according to God's Law is how God's people will be blessed.
 02. His heart is not lifted above his brothers in superiority.
3. Joshua's example, leading the people to take possession of the Promised Land.
- a. When Joshua succeeded Moses as the leader (not king) of God's people, God's instructions to Joshua for how to be a successful leader were very clear.
 - i. Joshua 1:7-8 - 7 Only be strong and very courageous, **being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you**. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, **that you may have good success** wherever you go. 8 **This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it**. For then you will make your way prosperous, and **then you will have good success**.
 01. Meditate on the Law/Word day and night so that you DO it and lead the people in DOING it. Then, God will grant success.
 - b. The Ark of the Covenant was absolutely central in Joshua's leadership of the people. They revered the presence of God with them and followed behind God's leading.
 - i. Joshua 3:1-6 - 1 Then Joshua rose early in the morning and they set out from Shittim. And they came to the Jordan, he and all the people of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. 2 At the end of three days the officers went through the camp 3 and **commanded the people, "As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it**. 4 Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about 2,000 cubits in length. **Do not come near it, in order that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before.**" 5 Then Joshua said to the people, **"Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you."** 6 And Joshua said to the priests, **"Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on before the people."** So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.
 - c. Before Joshua led the people into their first battle in the Promised Land at Jericho, he had an encounter with the Commander of the Lord's Army.
 - i. Joshua 5:13-15 - 13 When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, **"Are you for us, or for our adversaries?"** 14 And he said, **"No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD**. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" 15 And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.
 01. The Commander of the army of the Lord is not for or against anyone except the Lord. He is neutral except towards the Lord.
 02. He is for those who are for the Lord and aligned with Him through obedience, and against those who are against the Lord through sin, rebellion, and disobedience.
 - d. Jericho Victory: The people obeyed God's instructions and God gave them victory in a supernatural way. It was God's command that Jericho be destroyed completely.
 - i. Joshua 6:17-18 - 17 **And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction**. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall

- live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. 18 But you, **keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it.**
- ii. Joshua 6:20-21 - 20 So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. **As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat**, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. 21 **Then they devoted all in the city to destruction**, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.
 - iii. Joshua 7:1 - 1 But **the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things**, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, **took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel.**
- e. Ai - Take 1. Ai was a much smaller city than Jericho, so Joshua sent only 3,000 men into battle. They did not have a command from God, only the counsel of spies.
- i. Joshua 7:4-5 - 4 So about three thousand men went up there from the people. And **they fled before the men of Ai**, 5 and the men of Ai killed about thirty-six of their men and **chased them before the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them at the descent.** And the hearts of the people melted and became as water.
 01. Israel was defeated by a relatively small enemy.
 - ii. Joshua 7:6-8 - 6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and **fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, he and the elders of Israel.** And they put dust on their heads. 7 And Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord GOD, why have you brought this people over the Jordan at all, to give us into the hands of the Amorites, **to destroy us?** Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan! 8 O Lord, what can I say, **when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies!**
 01. Joshua and the elders of Israel sought the Lord.
 - iii. Joshua 7:10-13 - 10 The LORD said to Joshua, "Get up! Why have you fallen on your face? 11 **Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things;** they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. 12 **Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies.** They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction. **I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you.** 13 Get up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the LORD, God of Israel, "There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. **You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you.**"
 01. When Israel disobeyed God, they were unable to stand before their enemies.
- f. Ai - Take 2. After removing the devoted things from Israel and killing Achan and his family for bringing trouble on Israel, God gave the command to take the city of Ai.
- i. Joshua 8:1-2 - 1 And the LORD said to Joshua, "**Do not fear and do not be dismayed.** Take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, **I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city, and his land.** 2 And you shall **do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho** and its king. Only its spoil and its livestock you shall take as plunder for yourselves. Lay an ambush against the city, behind it."
- g. The battles of Jericho and Ai are representations of how Israel will succeed or fail in attaining victory over their enemies and inheriting the promises of God.
- i. Victories and defeats are based on their obedience and faith.

B. Demanding a Human King

1. Reminder: God giving Israel a human king was a modification from His original design. It was a demand made by the people who hoped that a king would give them greater victory over their enemies in battle.
 - a. After Joshua's generation, Israel was under the care of elders and judges. They fell away from the Lord and His Word.
 - i. Judges 2:11-15 - 11 And **the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD** and served the Baals. 12 And **they abandoned the LORD**, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the LORD to anger. 13 They abandoned the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. 14 **So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them.** And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that **they could no longer withstand their enemies.** 15 Whenever they marched out, **the hand of the LORD was against them for harm, as the LORD had warned, and as the LORD had sworn to them.** And they were in terrible distress.
 - ii. Because the people abandoned God through sin and rebellion against His Law and His ways, God abandoned them to their enemies. They could not stand in battle because God was not fighting for them but against them.
 - b. Out of pity for His people, God raised up judges to deliver them from their enemies. When the judge died, the people went back to their rebellion.
 - i. Judges 2:16-19 - 16 Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. **They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the LORD, and they did not do so.** 18 Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For **the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them.** 19 **But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them.** They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways.
 - c. Everyone did what was right in their own sight. Israel declined in behavior and became as corrupt as Sodom and Gomorrah. (See Judges 19-21.) (Covered in Unit Two.)
 - i. Because of this corruption, the tribe of Benjamin was almost eliminated from Israel.
 - d. Israel demanded a human King so that they could be like all the other nations. God gave them their request. (Covered in Unit Two.)
2. Before he died, Samuel appointed Saul as Israel's first king and gave a farewell address to Israel.
 - a. Samuel gave a recap of Israel's history and its leaders from the time they came out of Egypt all the way through the possession of the Promised Land and the victories of the judges God had appointed to deliver them and rule over them. Samuel highlighted how faithful God had been to Israel and how rebellious Israel had been against God. God had proved mighty

on Israel's behalf whenever they cried out to Him for deliverance. God had delivered them repeatedly from many powerful enemies. (See 1 Samuel 12:1-11.)

- b. The people wanted a human king because they were afraid of an enemy nation/king.
 - i. 1 Samuel 12:12-15 - 12 And **when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites** came against you, you said to me, '**No, but a king shall reign over us,**' when the LORD your God was your king. 13 And now **behold the king whom you have chosen,** for whom you have asked; behold, the LORD has set a king over you. 14 If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and **if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well.** 15 **But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king.**
 - 01. God gave them what they asked for and Samuel appointed Saul.
 - 02. If Israel and the king obeyed, God would bless them.
 - 03. If Israel and the king disobeyed, God would be against them.
 - c. Samuel wrote down and fully disclosed God's expectations of the king.
 - i. 1 Samuel 10:25 - 25 Then **Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the LORD.** Then Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his home.
3. Israel's focus for victory had shifted to human leadership rather than obedience to God and repentance from sin. God granted their request, but the principle of victory in battle remained the same.
- a. The only hope for Israel was that their king would lead them in the ways of God by enforcing His Law and purging evil from the land so that God could bless and prosper them.

C. Saul: Reigned 40 Years

- 1. Saul was Israel's first king, chosen by God, anointed by Samuel. Saul fit the human demand and expectation of a king. He was what the people wanted.
 - a. He was young, handsome, and tall. (See 1 Samuel 9:2.)
 - b. Saul was an Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin. (See 1 Samuel 9:21.)
 - i. Note the irony: Israel rebelliously demanded a king, so God appointed a king from the tribe that had almost been destroyed for its sinfulness only a generation prior. Saul acknowledged that he was from the smallest tribe in Israel, but it was small because it had been almost completely eliminated.
 - c. The Holy Spirit came upon Saul, anointing him to lead God's people. (See 1 Samuel 10:6-11.)
 - i. Saul was transformed by the spirit of the Lord coming upon him. People were surprised by the change they saw in him.
- 2. Saul lifted himself up and lorded over the people, his brothers. He did everything God warned them a king would do.

- a. At the first enemy attack after he became king, he threatened the people with the slaughter of their oxen if they did not come to fight alongside him for Israel. (See 1 Samuel 11:7.)
 - b. He won victories in battle for Israel. But he gained military strength by recruiting all the brave, strong, young men in Israel for his army. (See 1 Samuel 14:47-52.)
3. Saul made no effort to restore the people to obedience to the Lord or to restore the Tabernacle of God to its proper functionality.
- a. He never called for national repentance or turning to the Lord. There is no evidence of him leading the people in prayer or worship.
 - b. He did not reunite the Ark of God with the Tabernacle and altar of sacrifice.
 - i. Before Saul's time as king, the Tabernacle at Shiloh had been destroyed. It was set up with priests residing at Nob. After Saul killed all the priests at Nob and only Abiathar escaped, the Tabernacle is next seen in Gibeon. (2 Chronicles 1:3-6.)
 - ii. Before Saul's time as king, the Ark had been captured by Philistines and returned to Israel. It was kept in Gibeah or Kiriath-Jearim in the house of Abinadab. (2 Samuel 6:4; 2 Chronicles 1:4.)
 - iii. Because the Ark and the Tabernacle were not together, the Law of God concerning atonement for the people's sins could not be fully obeyed.
4. Saul did not meditate on God's Word or seek God's counsel consistently.
- a. There is no mention of Saul meditating on Law of God.
 - b. He received instruction from Samuel the prophet. Plus, on certain occasions, he consulted Urim & Thummim and the priests for an answer from the Lord.
 - c. He did not consult the Ark of God. When the battle was pressing, Saul decided not to "waste time" seeking God.
 - i. 1 Samuel 14:18-19 NLT - 18 Then Saul shouted to Ahijah, "**Bring the ephod here!**" For at that time Ahijah was wearing the ephod in front of the Israelites. 19 But while Saul was talking to the priest, the confusion in the Philistine camp grew louder and louder. So Saul said to the priest, "**Never mind; let's get going!**"
 - ii. 1 Chronicles 13:3 - 3 Then let us bring again the ark of our God to us, **for we did not seek it in the days of Saul.**"
 - d. He had some knowledge of God's displeasure of people eating blood and built an altar. (1 Samuel 14:32-35.)
 - i. After Saul had ordered a fast for his battle-weary men, they were starving. When they were finally allowed to eat the plunder, they ate blood with it. This is against the Law and ways of God. (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:10-11; Deuteronomy 12:23.)
 - ii. People advised Saul that this was being done and that it was wrong, so Saul built an altar to kill the animals and drain the blood properly.
 - iii. This was the first time he built an altar to the Lord.
5. Even when Saul was given instructions through God's messengers, he did not heed it but took matters into his own hands.

- a. When the Philistines were pressing so hard against Israel that the people were hiding in caves and escaping for their lives, Saul caved to pressure and broke the Law of God and the command of Samuel.
- i. 1 Samuel 13:8-14 - 8 He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. 9 **So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering.** 10 As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. 11 Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, 12 **I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the LORD.' So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering.**" 13 And Samuel said to Saul, "**You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you.** For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 **But now your kingdom shall not continue.** The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because **you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.**"
 01. Acceptable sacrifices can be offered by a priest at the place appointed by God.
 02. What Saul thought was "seeking the favor of God" was actually an act of disobedience.
 03. Saul knew this. He had to "force himself" to offer the sacrifice.
 04. But if Saul had been meditating on the Law/Word of God and taking it seriously, he would not have done this.
- b. When God's instructions to Saul to were to devote the Amalekites to total destruction, Saul did not obey.
- i. 1 Samuel 15:9 - 9 But **Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves and the lambs, and all that was good,** and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.
 01. Saul kept the good stuff but destroyed only the worthless stuff.
 001. Reminder: Jericho.
 - ii. 1 Samuel 15:10-11 - 10 The word of the LORD came to Samuel: 11 "**I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.**" And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the LORD all night.
 01. This is the same word used to describe that God *regretted* he had made mankind before the flood in the days of Noah.
 02. This was not working. It was time to go a different direction.
 - iii. 1 Samuel 15:12-23 - 12 And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, **he set up a monument for himself** and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal." 13 And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed be you to the LORD. **I have performed the commandment of the LORD.**"
 01. Rather than any hint of remorse, Saul is so proud of himself that he made a monument to mark his victory.
 - iv. 1 Samuel 15:14-21 - 14 And Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?" 15 Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people **spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God,** and the rest we have devoted to destruction." 16 Then

Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! I will tell you what the LORD said to me this night." And he said to him, "Speak." 17 And Samuel said, "Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. 18 **And the LORD sent you on a mission and said, 'Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.'** 19 **Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD?** Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?" 20 **And Saul said to Samuel, "I have obeyed the voice of the LORD.** I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, **the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God** in Gilgal."

01. Saul was fully convinced that he had obeyed the Lord when he had not. His stated intent was to offer the best of the spoil to the Lord when the Lord desired for it to be destroyed.

v. 1 Samuel 15:22-23 - 22 And Samuel said, "**Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.** 23 **For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry.** Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king."

01. The Lord does not want or need sacrifices, whether valuable or worthless in man's sight.

02. Obedience is better than sacrifice. Listening to God and doing what He says is what God has always wanted from mankind.

03. Rebellion = divination/witchcraft. Rebelling against God is the same as seeking counsel or power from another spiritual source.

04. Presumption/stubbornness/arrogance/insubordination = iniquity and idolatry. Not obeying God is the same as idolizing something else. This idol can be a person and it can be SELF.

6. Saul was unable to genuinely repent, even when confronted with losing the Kingdom.

a. Saul was more concerned about his public image than the fear of the Lord.

i. 1 Samuel 15:24-35 - 24 Saul said to Samuel, "**I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.** 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the LORD." 26 And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you. **For you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.**" 27 As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. 28 And Samuel said to him, "**The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.** 29 And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret." 30 Then he said, "**I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the LORD your God.**" 31 So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the LORD. 32 Then Samuel said, "Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." 33 And Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And **Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.** 34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeath of Saul. 35 And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. **And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.**

01. Saul disobeyed because he had a fear of man. He obeyed the counsel of the people over the command of God.
 02. Saul wanted Samuel to preserve his image in the sight of the elders and before the people Israel.
 03. Samuel obeyed what Saul had not done to fulfill God's command.
7. Saul lost the Spirit of the Lord and declined morally and spiritually.
- a. The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and God sent a tormenting spirit. God would choose someone else. (See 1 Samuel 16:14.)
 - b. Saul's moral and ethical decline into depravity.
 - i. Afraid of Goliath and enemy armies. No faith in God's deliverance.
 - ii. Jealous that David's battlefield accolades were greater than his.
 - iii. Broke his vows. Did not keep his promises and commitments.
 - iv. Abused his authority for evil scheming and ordering murder.
 - v. Plotted David's downfall. Attempted to murder David.
 - vi. Shed innocent blood of God's priests and their families because they had shown kindness and mercy to David.
 - c. Saul's spiritual apostasy by consulting a medium/psychic when God did not answer him.
 - i. 1 Samuel 28:5-8 - 5 When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. 6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets. 7 Then Saul said to his servants, "**Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.**" And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a medium at En-dor." 8 So Saul disguised himself and put on other garments and went, he and two men with him. And they came to the woman by night. And he said, "**Divine for me by a spirit and bring up for me whomever I shall name to you.**"
 - ii. Saul asked the medium to conjure up Samuel.
 - iii. 1 Samuel 28:15-20 - 15 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Saul answered, "**I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams.** Therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do." 16 And Samuel said, "**Why then do you ask me, since the LORD has turned from you and become your enemy?** 17 The LORD has done to you as he spoke by me, for the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 18 **Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day.** 19 Moreover, the LORD will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and **tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me.** The LORD will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines." 20 Then Saul fell at once full length on the ground, filled with fear because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night.
 01. Divination, mediums, fortune tellers, and necromancy are forbidden by the Law of God. (See Leviticus 19:31, 20:6; Deuteronomy 18:10-12.)
 02. Saul knew this was wrong because he had himself forbidden it and banished diviners, mediums, and necromancers.
 03. God had not answered Saul so he sought out Samuel's counsel even though Samuel was dead. Samuel rebuked him because God was clearly treating Saul as an enemy.

- 04. Samuel told Saul he would die the next day.
 - 05. Saul was broken with distress and sorrow. But not with repentance.
8. Saul did not trust God in death. He died a dishonorable death.
- a. Saul was unwilling to suffer the humiliation of defeat. He did not want to be tortured or killed by the enemy. He fell on his sword rather than trust God with his life - or death. He cheated justice of his rightful punishment and did not cry out for or depend on the mercy of God.
 - i. 1 Samuel 31:3-4 - 3 The battle pressed hard against Saul, and the archers found him, and he was badly wounded by the archers. 4 Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, **"Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and mistreat me."** But his armor-bearer would not, for he feared greatly. **Therefore Saul took his own sword and fell upon it.**
 - b. 1 Chronicles 10:13-14 - 13 So Saul **died for his breach of faith**. He **broke faith with the LORD in that he did not keep the command of the LORD, and also consulted a medium**, seeking guidance. 14 He **did not seek guidance from the LORD**. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

D. David: Reigned 40 Years

- 1. David was externally not what one might expect when he was chosen by God as a man after God's own heart.
 - a. He was the youngest of eight brothers. He was a teenager, out tending sheep in the field.
 - i. 1 Samuel 16:7 - 7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: **man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.**"
 - ii. 1 Samuel 16:12-13 - 12 And he sent and brought him in. **Now he [David] was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome.** And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. **And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward.** And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.
 - 01. The Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul and now rested upon David.
 - b. David was a man after God's heart whom God found to do His will.
 - i. 1 Samuel 13:14 - 14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. **The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart**, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."
 - 01. Saul's kingdom was ended because of Saul's disobedience. God sought a man who would obey Him.
 - ii. Acts 13:21-22 - 21 Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, **he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.'**
 - 01. God found in David a man who would obey Him.
 - iii. Acts 13:36 - 36 For **David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation**, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption,
 - 01. David served God's purpose in his generation.

2. David was a worshipper. He gave glory to God for everything he did. The Ark of the Covenant, the presence of God, was central to everything David did.
 - a. Psalms of David's specific praises to God:
 - i. Psalm 18: When God gave him victory over Saul.
 - ii. Psalm 65: Thanking God for His abundant provision.
 - iii. Psalm 103: Remembering all of God's benefits and blessings.
 - b. He centered his life and the life of all Israel on worshipping the Lord. David's top priority was the Ark of the Covenant. The first thing he did after being made king of all Israel was to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.
 - i. 1 Chronicles 13:3 - 3 Then let us **bring again the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul.** 4 All the assembly agreed to do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.
 - c. He was willing to look foolish for publicly worshipping God with all his heart and soul. He was determined to celebrate the goodness of God.
 - i. 2 Samuel 6:14-22 - 14 **And David danced before the LORD with all his might.** And David was wearing a linen ephod. 15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD **with shouting and with the sound of the horn.** 16 As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and **saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD,** and she despised him in her heart. 17 And they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 18 And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts 19 and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed, each to his house. 20 And David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" 21 And David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the LORD--and **I will celebrate before the LORD. 22 I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes.** But by the female servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor."
 - d. He set the Ark up in a tent for the Lord to receive continual worship. He appointed musicians to offer songs of praise. It was the first time instruments were used in praising God.
 - i. He appointed musicians to worship and praise God day and night before the Ark. (See 1 Chronicles 16:1-7.)
 - ii. He appointed Zadok the priest at the Tabernacle in Gibeon to fulfill the requirements of the Law for sacrifices. (See 1 Chronicles 16:37-42.)
 - iii. David did not neglect the Tabernacle or the Law of Moses, even though the Ark was in Jerusalem and the Tabernacle was in Gibeon.
 - e. At the tent with the Ark, David led the people and all creation in praise to God.
 - i. 1 Chronicles 16:8-36 - 8 Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples! 9 **Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!** 10 Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD

rejoice! 11 **Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!** 12 Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles and the judgments he uttered, 13 O offspring of Israel his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones! 14 **He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth.** 15 **Remember his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,** 16 the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, 17 which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, 18 saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan, as your portion for an inheritance." 19 When you were few in number, of little account, and sojourners in it, 20 wandering from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people, 21 he allowed no one to oppress them; he rebuked kings on their account, 22 saying, "Touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm!" 23 **Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day.** 24 **Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!** 25 For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and **he is to be feared above all gods.** 26 **For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens.** 27 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his place. 28 Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength! 29 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! **Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; 30 tremble before him, all the earth;** yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. 31 **Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"** 32 Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! 33 Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. 34 **Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!** 35 Say also: "**Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather and deliver us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.**" 36 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!" Then all the people said, "Amen!" and praised the LORD.

- f. He wanted to build a Temple to honor God. But he obeyed God in NOT building one.
- i. 2 Samuel 7:1-3 - 1 Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, 2 the king said to Nathan the prophet, "**See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.**" 3 And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you."
 01. David did not think it was right to have a nice house when God's Ark was in a tent.
 - ii. 2 Samuel 7:4-7 - 4 But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, 5 "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: **Would you build me a house to dwell in?** 6 I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but **I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling.** 7 In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, **"Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"**"
 01. God was content with a tent. He had never requested a majestic Temple.
 - iii. God did not permit David to build a Temple but promised to build a lasting dynasty for David. The Messiah and redeemer of all mankind would come through David's descendants. He would be God's Son. (Covered later.)
 - iv. 1 Chronicles 22:7-8 - 7 David said to Solomon, "My son, I had it in my heart to build a house to the name of the LORD my God. 8 But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, '**You have shed much blood and have waged great wars. You shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood before me on the earth.**'"

01. David obeyed God by NOT building a Temple. He appointed Solomon to carry out the work.
3. David had great faith, more than any man in Israel, that God could conquer Israel's enemies. David trusted God as His Shepherd, deliverer, fortress, rock, and defender.
 - a. He did not see things in terms of an earthly battle. He believed in the power of God to give victory to His people. The battle was the Lord's, in spite of impossible circumstances.
 - i. 1 Samuel 17:26 - 26 And David said to the men who stood by him, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For **who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?**"
 01. Goliath was about thirteen feet tall. David was a teenager, possibly not even fully grown.
 02. Remember Joshua with the Commander of the Lord's Army. David believed God would grant him victory against those who were defying God.
 - b. He did not trust in his own strength or abilities but in the name of God, for God's glory.
 - i. 1 Samuel 17:45-47 - 45 Then David said to the Philistine, "**You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel**, whom you have defied. 46 **This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand**, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, **that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel**, 47 **and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand.**"
 - c. Throughout his life and no matter what hardship faced him, David trusted God.
 - i. Psalms of David trusting God: 16, 22, 23, 27, 28, 31, 37, 62, 131, 144, etc.
 - ii. Psalm 23:1 - 1 A Psalm of David. **The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.**
 - iii. Psalm 27:1 - 1 Of David. The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? **The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?**
 - iv. Psalm 28:7 - 7 **The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped;** my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.
 - v. Psalm 31:1-2 - 1 A Psalm of David. **In you, O LORD, do I take refuge;** let me never be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me! 2 Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily! **Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me!**
 - vi. Psalm 37:3-6 - 3 **Trust in the LORD**, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. 4 **Delight yourself in the LORD**, and he will give you the desires of your heart. 5 **Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him**, and he will act. 6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.
4. David loved God's word.
 - a. He submitted himself under God's Word as the authority in his life and knew that there was great reward in keeping God's commands.
 - i. Psalm 19:7-11 - 7 **The law of the LORD is perfect**, reviving the soul; **the testimony of the LORD is sure**, making wise the simple; 8 **the precepts of the LORD are right**, rejoicing the heart; **the commandment of the LORD is pure**, enlightening the eyes; 9 **the fear of the LORD is clean**, enduring forever; **the rules of the LORD are true**, and righteous altogether. 10 **More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter**

also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; **in keeping them there is great reward.**

01. He desired God's rules, precepts, and commands more than gold, riches, and luxury.

5. David sought the counsel of the Lord consistently and obeyed God's instructions. He took the counsel of God's prophets. He poured his heart out to the Lord when he was in trouble and he encouraged himself in the Lord when all else was failing.
 - a. He continually sought the Lord's wisdom, counsel, and guidance. He trusted in God.
 - i. Psalms of David asking for help: Psalms 4, 5, 17, 25, 40, 41, 55, 61, 139, 141, 143, etc.
 - ii. Psalm 4:1 - 1 **Answer me when I call**, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and **hear my prayer!**
 - iii. Psalm 5:1-2 - 1 **Give ear to my words**, O LORD; consider my groaning. 2 **Give attention to the sound of my cry**, my King and my God, for to you do I pray.
 - iv. Psalm 25:4-5 - 4 **Make me to know your ways**, O LORD; **teach me your paths**. 5 **Lead me in your truth and teach me**, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.
 - v. Psalm 40:8 - 8 **I delight to do your will**, O my God; **your law is within my heart.**"
 - vi. Psalm 55:1-3 - 1 **Give ear to my prayer**, O God, and **hide not yourself from my plea for mercy!** 2 **Attend to me, and answer me**; I am restless in my complaint and I moan, 3 because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me.
 - vii. Psalm 141:2-4 - 2 **Let my prayer be counted as incense before you**, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice! 3 Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips! 4 **Do not let my heart incline to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds** in company with men who work iniquity, and let me not eat of their delicacies!
 - b. Situation specific psalms by David:
 - i. When he fled from Absalom: Psalm 3
 - ii. When he was slandered: Psalm 7
 - iii. When he was delivered from Saul: Psalm 18
 - iv. When he pretended to be crazy to escape Saul: Psalm 34
 - v. As a memorial in thankfulness for God's deliverance: Psalm 38 & 70
 - vi. When he repented for the incident with Bathsheba: Psalm 51
 - vii. When he was betrayed: Psalm 52, 54
 - viii. When enemies seized: Psalm 56
 - ix. When he fled Saul and Saul chased him: Psalm 57 & 59
 - x. When he was in the wilderness and the cave: 63 & 142
 - c. David sought the Lord and relied on Him in faith for his military battles against his enemies:
 - i. Psalms of David fighting against enemies: 9, 13, 14, 20, 21, 26, 35, 36, 41, 53, 60, 64, 68, 69, 108, 109, 124, 140
 - ii. Psalm 35:1-3 - 1 **Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me!** 2 Take hold of shield and buckler and rise for my help! 3 Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers! Say to my soul, "I am your salvation!"
 - iii. Psalm 60:11-12 - 11 Oh, **grant us help against the foe, for vain is the salvation of man!** 12 With God we shall do valiantly; **it is he who will tread down our foes.** (Also Psalm 108.)
 - iv. Psalm 68:1-3 - 1 **God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered**; and those who hate him shall flee before him! 2 As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away; **as**

- wax melts before fire, so the wicked shall perish before God!** 3 But the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!
- v. Psalm 124:8 - 8 **Our help is in the name of the LORD**, who made heaven and earth.
 - vi. Psalm 140:1-2 - 1 **Deliver me, O LORD, from evil men; preserve me from violent men**, 2 who plan evil things in their heart and stir up wars continually.
 - vii. Example: When all of David's men at Ziklag were battle-weary and had been looted by the Amalekites, David trusted the Lord entirely.
 - 01. 1 Samuel 30:6 - 6 And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But **David strengthened himself in the LORD his God**.
 - viii. Note: David did not trust in military strength or foreign alliances. He trusted in God.
- d. God was with David and gave him success in battle and as King of Israel. His fame spread all over the world.
- i. 1 Chronicles 14:17 - 17 And **the fame of David went out into all lands**, and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations.
6. David was humble towards his fellow man. He did not rebel against God's authorities. He did not lift himself up over other Israelites and did not lord over people when he was in authority. David knew that it pleased God when people lived in harmony with one another.
- a. He did not attempt to harm Saul or usurp his authority. He trusted God. (Even though Saul sought to kill David and David was forced to flee to the wilderness to live as a fugitive.)
 - i. 1 Samuel 24:6-7 - 6 He said to his men, "**The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed.**" 7 So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.
 - ii. 1 Samuel 26:9-11 - 9 But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for **who can put out his hand against the LORD's anointed and be guiltless?**" 10 And David said, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish. 11 **The LORD forbid that I should put out my hand against the LORD's anointed.** But take now the spear that is at his head and the jar of water, and let us go."
 - b. He received those who might have been his enemies without suspicion. He trusted God to judge fairly between them. He appointed the men to his troops.
 - i. 1 Chronicles 12:17-18 - 17 David went out to meet them and said to them, "**If you have come to me in friendship to help me, my heart will be joined to you**; but if to betray me to my adversaries, although there is no wrong in my hands, then **may the God of our fathers see and rebuke you.**" 18 Then the Spirit clothed Amasai, chief of the thirty, and he said, "We are yours, O David, and with you, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to your helpers! For your God helps you." **Then David received them and made them officers of his troops.**
 - c. He refused to drink water that his mighty men acquired at the risk of their own lives. Their lives were more valuable to him than his thirst. He poured it out to the Lord.
 - i. 2 Samuel 23:15-17 - 15 And David said longingly, "**Oh, that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem** that is by the gate!" 16 Then the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate and carried and brought it to David. **But he would not drink of it. He poured it out to the LORD** 17 and said, "**Far be it from me, O LORD,**

that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went at the risk of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did.

01. The men risked their lives for David. He saw the water as their own blood and life which God had spared for David's benefit.
 02. David poured it out as a drink offering unto the Lord.
- d. He was a good leader and a good delegator of labor to experts. He trusted people to serve God's purposes with the skills God had given them.
- i. In his early years, David led his mighty men in their troops against enemies. (See 1 Samuel 22:31 & 1 Chronicles 12:1-22.)
 - ii. As king of Judah and all Israel, David led the experts of Israel and Israel's army against their enemies and the experts of Israel in guiding the country to victory over their enemies and possessing the Promised Land. (2 Samuel 1-10; 1 Chronicles 11, 12:23-40, 13-20.)
 - iii. In his later years, David organized divisions for the work of maintaining the Kingdom and preparing for the building of the Temple. (See 2 Samuel 20-24; 1 Chronicles 21-29.)
- e. He was a faithful friend and kept covenant, even with their descendants, and even after he became famous as a mighty warrior and king of all Israel.
- i. David was a loyal friend to Jonathan. (1 Samuel 20:14-17.)
 - ii. David swore to preserve Jonathan's lineage. They knew that God would avenge David against Saul (Jonathan's father) for trying to kill him. (See 1 Samuel 20:41-42.)
 01. Jonathan was the rightful heir to Saul's throne but willingly gave his loyalty to David over his own self-interest.
 02. David was not demanding, forceful, or entitled but was deeply moved by Jonathan's devotion.
 - iii. David kept his promise to Jonathan to preserve his family line. Jonathan died in battle with Saul but David blessed Jonathan's son. (See 2 Samuel 9:1-10.)
- f. He did not avenge himself. He showed mercy to those who cursed him. He allowed himself to suffer public humiliation and trusted God for justice. He was wise with opponents.
- i. When Abigail's husband Nabal foolishly cursed David and his men even though they had been shown him kindness, David was persuaded not to take matters into his own hands but to trust God.
 01. He was glad that he had not avenged himself by shedding blood. He trusted God to avenge him. Ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal, and he died. (See 1 Samuel 25:32-38.)
 - ii. When David's son Absalom betrayed him and stole the hearts of the people to usurp David's authority as king of Israel, David allowed himself to be humiliated, mocked and cursed as he fled from Jerusalem, trusting God to avenge him.
 01. To avoid unnecessary battle and bloodshed in the city, David fled rather than fight Absalom. (See 2 Samuel 15:13-14.)
 02. David knew that if God was pleased with him, God would restore the kingdom to him. He trusted the Lord either to punish or avenge him. (See 2 Samuel 15:25-26.)
 001. Remember Saul cheating justice through suicide.
 03. David was deeply grieved in his heart, not angry, self-righteous, or vengeful. (See 2 Samuel 15:30.)
 - iii. When Shimei cursed David, threw stones at him, called him a worthless son of Belial, and said that God was punishing David for bloodshed, David did not retaliate but trusted himself into the hands of God to either punish or avenge him.

01. 2 Samuel 16:10-13 - 10 But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? **If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'**" 11 And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! **Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to.** 12 **It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done to me, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing today.**" 13 So David and his men went on the road, while Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him and **cursed as he went and threw stones at him and flung dust.**
- iv. When Absalom died, David wept in sorrow. He wished that he could have died instead of Absalom. (See 2 Samuel 18:33.) Even though Absalom had been his enemy, David loved his enemies and did not rejoice at his downfall. His men accused him loving those who hate him and hating those who love him. (See 2 Samuel 19:4-6.)
- v. David reunited Israel by showing mercy to those who had joined Absalom in treason against him and pardoning his enemies. (See 2 Samuel 19:11-15.)
01. He even pardoned Shimei who had cursed him. (See 2 Samuel 19:21-22.)
02. Note: In David's later years, he passed wisdom to Solomon about how to use wisdom in handling these enemies.
- g. He saw God's pleasure upon His people dwelling in unity. He knew God wanted His people to get along and be at peace.
- i. Psalm 133:1-3 - 1 A Song of Ascents. Of David. **Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!** 2 It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! **For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.**
- h. Note: David had eight wives mentioned by name and various concubines. (See 1 Chronicles 3:1-5 and 2 Samuel 5:13.)
- i. This was not unusual in his cultural context for wealthy men and kings.
- ii. His wives did not draw or steer David's heart away from God.
7. David was not a perfect person. But when David erred, even egregiously, he repented with brokenness and genuine contrition. He understood but did not abuse God's mercy.
- a. David knew what is was to not be perfect and appealed to God for mercy.
- i. Penitent Psalms of David: 6, 32, 39, 51
- ii. Psalm 6:1-2 - 1 O LORD, **rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath.** 2 Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing; heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled.
- iii. Psalm 32:3-5 - 3 For when I kept silent, **my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.** 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah 5 **I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity;** I said, "**I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,**" and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah
- iv. Psalm 39:8-11 - 8 **Deliver me from all my transgressions.** Do not make me the scorn of the fool! 9 I am mute; I do not open my mouth, for it is you who have done it. 10 **Remove your stroke from me;** I am spent by the hostility of your hand. 11 **When you discipline a man with rebukes for sin,** you consume like a moth what is dear to him; surely all mankind is a mere breath! Selah

- v. Psalm 51:1-3 - 1 **Have mercy on me**, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy **blot out my transgressions**. 2 **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!** 3 For I know my transgressions, and **my sin is ever before me**.

- b. Example: When he first tried to bring the Ark into Jerusalem, Uzzah died. But David corrected his approach because they had not carried the Ark the way God's Law prescribed.
 - i. 1 Chronicles 15:11-15 - 11 Then David summoned the priests Zadok and Abiathar, and the Levites Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab, 12 and said to them, "You are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites. **Consecrate yourselves, you and your brothers, so that you may bring up the ark of the LORD**, the God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it. 13 **Because you did not carry it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not seek him according to the rule.**" 14 So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel. 15 **And the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.**
 - 01. Note: David repented and aligned himself with the Word of God.

- c. Example: David committed adultery with Bathsheba and schemed the killing of her husband in battle. But when confronted by Nathan, David repented and confessed his sin.
 - i. David was King of all Israel. It was the time of year when he typically went out to battle, but this time he stayed home. From his roof, he noticed a woman bathing. He summoned her and slept with her and she became pregnant. To cover it up, he tried to persuade her husband to have sex with her but he would not because he was a soldier keeping himself ceremonially clean for battle. Instead, David arranged for him to be deserted on the frontlines of the battle field so that he would die. (2 Samuel 11.)
 - 01. She may have been bathing publicly for her mikveh to be ceremonially cleansed from her monthly menstruation.
 - 02. David was the king and was very famous. Bathsheba may have been flattered by his advances but even if she was not, she probably felt that she could not refuse his advances because of who he was.
 - 03. Note: David arranged Uriah's death in the same manner that Saul had plotted his demise on the battlefield.
 - ii. 2 Samuel 11:27 - 27 And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. **But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.**
 - 01. Even though it appeared that David had gotten away with it, God had seen what David did in secret. God was not pleased.
 - iii. 2 Samuel 12:9-12 - 9 **Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife** and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. 10 **Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me** and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' 11 Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, **I will raise up evil against you out of your own house**. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. 12 **For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.**"
 - 01. According to God's Law, both David and Bathsheba deserved to die by being stoned to death. (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22.) Adultery is a violation of the 7th commandment. (Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18.)
 - 02. David would suffer the consequences for what he had done.

- iv. 2 Samuel 12:13-14 - 13 David said to Nathan, "**I have sinned against the LORD.**" And Nathan said to David, "**The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.** 14 Nevertheless, **because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die.**"
 - 01. David realized his guilt, admitted it, and confessed his sin.
 - 001. The Lord was merciful to David and spared his life.
 - 02. Note: David fasted to see if God would allow the child to live.
 - 001. When the child died, David accepted God's decision not to.
 - 03. David understood that he would have trouble in his household. He did.
 - 001. David's son Amnon raped Tamar, Absalom's sister.
 - 002. Absalom killed Amnon to avenge Tamar. (At first, it was reported that Absalom killed all of David's sons, but he only killed Amnon.)
 - 003. Absalom seized David's throne, slept with all of his concubines, publicly humiliated him, and usurped his kingly authority.
 - 004. Adonijah attempted to appoint himself as king and steal the kingdom from Solomon.
 - v. Psalm 51:4-7 - 4 **Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,** so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, **you delight in truth in the inward being,** and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. 7 **Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**
 - 01. David knew his sin was against God and that God was right to judge him.
 - 02. God wanted truthfulness in the depths of the heart - the reality of upright character lived out in His people.
 - 03. Hyssop is used in the water for cleansing a person who was unclean and for purification. (Leviticus 14; Numbers 19.)
 - vi. Psalm 51:10-12 - 10 **Create in me a clean heart,** O God, and **renew a right spirit within me.** 11 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and **uphold me with a willing spirit.**
 - 01. David asked to be made new again.
 - 02. David asked God not to abandon him but to save him again.
 - vii. Psalm 51:13-15 - 13 Then **I will teach transgressors your ways,** and sinners will return to you. 14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and **my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.** 15 O Lord, open my lips, and **my mouth will declare your praise.**
 - 01. If God showed mercy, David would teach others about God's ways.
 - viii. Psalm 51:16-17 - 16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. 17 **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**
 - 01. David knew that God did not want sacrifices but a genuine humble heart.
- d. When David was well established as King, he took a census of the people, counting all the eligible fighting men, ready for battle. (See 1 Chronicles 21; 2 Samuel 24.)
- i. Satan incited David to count his military strength by numbering the fighting men in all Israel and Judah. (See 1 Chronicles 21:1.)
 - 01. Joab knew it was evil but submitted himself to David's authority.
 - 02. According to the Law, counting personal power is like forgetting God's power. (Deuteronomy 8:17-20.)

- ii. 2 Samuel 24:10 - 10 But **David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people.** And David said to the LORD, "**I have sinned greatly in what I have done.** But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly."
 - 01. David knew he had done wrong and asked God to forgive him.
- iii. 1 Chronicles 21:11-14 - 11 So Gad came to David and said to him, "**Thus says the LORD, 'Choose what you will:** 12 either **three years of famine**, or **three months of devastation by your foes while the sword of your enemies overtakes you**, or else **three days of the sword of the LORD**, pestilence on the land, with the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me." 13 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. **Let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is very great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man.**" 14 So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel, and 70,000 men of Israel fell.
 - 01. There must be a consequence for David's error. God let him choose.
 - 02. David chose to fall into the hands of the Lord, trusting His mercy.
- iv. 1 Chronicles 21:16-17 - 16 And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, and **in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem.** Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. 17 And David said to God, "Was it not I who gave command to number the people? **It is I who have sinned and done great evil. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand, O LORD my God, be against me and against my father's house. But do not let the plague be on your people.**"
 - 01. The angel of the Lord was ready to destroy Jerusalem because of David's sin. But God stopped him from total destruction.
 - 02. David and the elders humbled themselves on their faces before God to plead for His mercy on their people.
 - 03. David offered himself in place of the people. Rather than let them take the punishment for his mistake, he offered himself so they could be free.
- e. David, though not perfect, strived to be a man of integrity and uprightness so that he could be counted worthy to dwell with God. He conducted himself with integrity and righteousness to be pleasing to God.
 - i. Psalms of David about living with integrity to please God: 15, 24, 26, 37, 101
 - ii. Psalm 15:1-5 - 1 **O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?** 2 He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; 3 who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; 4 in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD; who swears to his own hurt and does not change; 5 who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.
 - iii. Psalm 24:3-5 - 3 **Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?** 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. 5 He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
 - iv. Psalm 26:4-5, 11 - 4 **I do not sit with men of falsehood**, nor do I consort with hypocrites. **5 I hate the assembly of evildoers**, and I will not sit with the wicked. ... 11 **But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity**; redeem me, and be gracious to me.
 - v. Psalm 101:2-4 - 2 **I will ponder the way that is blameless.** Oh when will you come to me? **I will walk with integrity of heart within my house**; 3 I will not set before my eyes **anything that is worthless.** I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me. 4 A perverse heart shall be far from me; **I will know nothing of evil.**
 - 01. Note: He would not set his eyes on anything worthless, by Belial, the devil.

8. David loved the Lord, the Lord's name, and the Lord's House with all His heart and soul. He gave all of his wealth to the purpose of God and building God's Temple.
 - a. David was zealous for God's House and God's presence.
 - i. Psalms of David about God's House/Temple/Tent: 11, 30, 61, 69
 - ii. Psalm 61:4 - 4 **Let me dwell in your tent forever!** Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings! Selah
 - iii. Psalm 69:9 - 9 **For zeal for your house has consumed me**, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.
 - b. He refused to accept a plot for the Lord that cost him nothing.
 - i. 1 Chronicles 21:22-26 - 22 And David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of the threshing floor that I may build on it an altar to the LORD--**give it to me at its full price**--that the plague may be averted from the people." 23 Then Ornan said to David, "**Take it**, and let my lord the king do what seems good to him. See, I give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for the wood and the wheat for a grain offering; **I give it all.**" 24 But King David said to Ornan, "**No, but I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing.**" 25 So **David paid Ornan 600 shekels of gold by weight for the site.** 26 And David built there an altar to the LORD and presented burnt offerings and peace offerings and called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering.
 01. David did not see it as the favor of God that the site for the Temple was offered to him for free. He wanted to offer sacrifices to God to honor the Lord with all his heart.
 - c. He did not accumulate wealth for himself and his own pleasure but gave all of it to the building of God's Temple. (1 Chron 21-29.)
 - i. 1 Chronicles 29:2-5 - 2 So **I have provided for the house of my God, so far as I was able**, the gold for the things of gold, the silver for the things of silver, and the bronze for the things of bronze, the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood, besides great quantities of onyx and stones for setting, antimony, colored stones, all sorts of precious stones and marble. 3 **Moreover, in addition to all that I have provided for the holy house, I have a treasure of my own of gold and silver, and because of my devotion to the house of my God I give it to the house of my God:** 4 3,000 talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and 7,000 talents of refined silver, for overlaying the walls of the house, 5 and for all the work to be done by craftsmen, gold for the things of gold and silver for the things of silver.
 01. 1 talent = 75 lbs.
 001. 112.5 tons of gold out of his own wealth
 002. 262.5 tons of silver out of his own wealth
9. David understood God's purpose for Israel: For God to make a name for Himself, to bestow His blessing to all the nations and ultimately, to restore the world and creation to peace with God.
 - a. He understood that Israel's God was the Most High God, maker of Heaven and Earth.
 - i. Psalms of David about God as King of all creation: 8, 19, 24, 29
 - b. He understood God's covenant with him to bring Messiah who would restore the world back to God through Him. (See 2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 17.)

- i. David's offspring would build God's House and God would establish His Kingdom forever. He would be God's Son.
 - ii. Psalm 110: David foresaw One coming from him who was above him. (Covered previously in Unit Two.)
- c. He understood that the God of Israel was also the judge of the whole world who would judge all nations and people one day.
- i. Psalms of David about God as Judge: Psalm 12, 14, 36, 53, 58
 - ii. Psalm 58:11 - 11 Mankind will say, "**Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God who judges on earth.**"
 - iii. Psalm 110:1-2, 5-6 - 1 **The LORD says to my Lord**: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." 2 **The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!** ... 5 The Lord is at your right hand; **he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.** 6 **He will execute judgment among the nations**, filling them with corpses; **he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.**

10. David died an honorable death, praising God with his last breath.

- a. His final words were about ruling over people with fairness and justice to purge all evil from God's people, to be pleasing to God, and to receive His blessings.
- i. 2 Samuel 23:1-7 - 1 **Now these are the last words of David**: The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel: 2 "The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me; his word is on my tongue. 3 The God of Israel has spoken; the Rock of Israel has said to me: '**When one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God, 4 he dawns on them like the morning light, like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning, like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.**' 5 For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. **For will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire? 6 But worthless men are all like thorns that are thrown away**, for they cannot be taken with the hand; 7 but the man who touches them arms himself with iron and the shaft of a spear, and they are utterly consumed with fire."
- 01. David gave praise to God for teaching him how to rule over God's people justly and establishing his dynasty forever.
 - 02. God had caused David to prosper all of his days and had established an everlasting covenant with him. His Kingdom would prosper forever.
 - 03. God would eliminate worthless people (sons of Belial, the devil) and utterly consume them with fire in judgment.

E. Solomon: Reigned 40 Years

1. Initially, Solomon loved the Lord, kept His way, and sought to obey God with wisdom and justice as his father, David, had done.
- a. The first thing Solomon did was lead the people in making offerings to the Lord and seeking God's counsel at the Tabernacle of Moses. He asked for wisdom to rule God's people well.
- i. 2 Chronicles 1:1-6 - 1 Solomon the son of David established himself in his kingdom, and the LORD his God was with him and made him exceedingly great. 2 **Solomon spoke to all Israel**, to the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to all

the leaders in all Israel, the heads of fathers' houses. **3 And Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon, for the tent of meeting of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness, was there.** **4** (But David had brought up the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to the place that David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem.) **5** Moreover, the bronze altar that Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, had made, was there before the tabernacle of the LORD. **And Solomon and the assembly sought it out.** **6 And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which was at the tent of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.** (See also 1 Kings 3:3-4.)

01. At that time, the Tabernacle with the altar of God was at Gibeon even though the Ark was in Jerusalem in the tent David made.
 02. Solomon offered an extravagant number of offerings to the Lord.
 - ii. 1 Kings 3:5-9 - **5** At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." **6** And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, **because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you.** And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. **7** And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. **8** And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. **9 Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"**
 01. Solomon linked God's faithfulness to David with David's heart for God.
 02. He asked for wisdom and discernment to lead God's people well.
 03. He was humble and wanted to be a good king for God's people.
 - iii. 1 Kings 3:10-13 - **10** It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. **11** And God said to him, "**Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right,** **12** behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, **I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.** **13** I give you also what you have not asked, **both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days.**
 01. God was pleased that Solomon did not ask for money or military power over enemies.
 02. God granted Solomon's request. He would also bestow riches and honor.
 - iv. 1 Kings 3:14 - **14** And **if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked,** then I will lengthen your days."
 01. If Solomon walked in God's ways like David, God would extend his life.
 001. Note: David is counted as walking in God's ways and keeping His commandments in spite of the abominations he committed.
 02. David's faithfulness becomes the plumbline measure of a king's success.
 - v. 1 Kings 3:15 - **15** And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to **Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings,** and made a feast for all his servants.
 01. Solomon offered more offerings before the Ark of God in Jerusalem.
- b. In Solomon's day, the people of Israel had peace. Each person in their family inheritance, tending and keeping the promised land of God. They were free from enemy oppression.
- i. 1 Kings 4:25 - **25** And Judah and Israel **lived in safety,** from Dan even to Beersheba, **every man under his vine and under his fig tree,** all the days of Solomon.

01. The vine and fig tree are used symbolically in Scripture for independence, private dominion, and freedom from war and oppression.
- c. Solomon faithfully built the Temple using the design that the Lord had given to David. He offered sacrifices, kept the feasts of the Lord, and honored the worship David set in place.
- i. God gave the blueprints for the Temple and priestly service to David and David gave them to Solomon. (See 1 Chronicles 28:11-13, 19 – 11.)
 - ii. Solomon built the Temple and all its furnishings according to plan: See 1 Kings 5-6, 7:13-51; and 2 Chronicles 2-4. Building the Temple took seven years.
 - iii. Solomon offered sacrifices to the Lord in the right way, in the right place, as each day and feast required. He instituted worship with instruments according to the pattern David had established. He did not turn aside from the pattern that God had revealed to David for the building and operation of the Temple. (See 2 Chronicles 8:12-16 – 12.)
- d. Solomon prayed earnestly at the Temple's dedication in a prayer directly linking national success and longevity with obedience, sin, repentance, and God's mercy.
- i. See Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8:22-53; 2 Chronicles 6:12-39.
 01. Disobedience would lead to difficulties. Repentance would lead to restoration to God if God would be merciful and forgive their sins when they prayed at the Temple of God.
- e. Solomon called the people to obey God's commands so that God would be known in all the earth.
- i. 1 Kings 8:56-61 - 56 "Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. **Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant.** 57 The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. May he not leave us or forsake us, 58 **that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules, which he commanded our fathers.** 59 Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires, 60 **that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other.** 61 **Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.**"
 01. Solomon recognized God's faithfulness and understood God's purpose for Israel to make a name for Himself in all the earth.
- f. Solomon offered exorbitant sacrifices to the Lord at the Temple's dedication.
- i. 1 Kings 8:5 - 5 And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were with him before the ark, **sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered.**
 - ii. 1 Kings 8:62-63 - 62 Then the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD. 63 **Solomon offered as peace offerings to the LORD 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep.** So the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.
- g. The glory of the Lord filled the Temple and the people feared the Lord.
- i. 2 Chronicles 7:1-3 - 1 As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, **fire came down from heaven** and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the **glory of the LORD filled the temple.** 2 And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house. 3 **When all the people of Israel**

saw the fire come down and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever."

- h. Solomon was famous all over the world and brought honor to the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. It was the closest that Israel had come to fulfilling the purpose of God to reveal the bounty of His blessings and the righteousness of His justice.
 - i. Solomon desired justice and abundant blessing to lead the people in righteousness and bring glory and dominion to God. The purpose of Israel being blessed was to make a name for God in all the earth. (See Psalm 72.)
 - 01. Psalm 72:1-2 - 1 Of Solomon. **Give the king your justice**, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! 2 **May he judge your people with righteousness**, and your poor with justice!
 - 02. Psalm 72:3-4 - 3 **Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness!** 4 May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and **crush the oppressor!**
 - 03. Psalm 72:16-19 - 16 May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field! 17 May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun! **May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed!** 18 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. 19 **Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory!** Amen and Amen!
 - 04. Psalm 72:20 - 20 The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.
 - 001. This may have been David's prayer for Solomon.
 - ii. 2 Chronicles 9:22-26 - 22 Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. 23 **And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind.** 24 **Every one of them brought his present**, articles of silver and of gold, garments, myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year. 25 And Solomon had 4,000 stalls for horses and chariots, and 12,000 horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. 26 **And he ruled over all the kings from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt.**
 - 01. This was the closest Israel came to possessing the full extent of the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- 2. Solomon loved foreign women and had many, many wives.
 - a. Reminder: Rules for Kings states that a king was not to acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart be turned away from God by them. (See Deuteronomy 17:17.)
 - b. Reminder: Intermarriage with non-Israelites is against the Law of God. It leads to whoredom.
 - i. Exodus 34:15-16 NIV - 15 "Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for **when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices.** 16 And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and **those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.**
 - ii. Deuteronomy 7:3-6 - 3 **You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons,** 4 **for they would turn away your sons**

from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. 5 But thus shall you deal with them: **you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.** 6 "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

- c. From the beginning of his reign, Solomon made military alliances by marrying foreign women.
 - i. 1 Kings 3:1 - 1 **Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt.** He took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her into the city of David until he had finished building his own house and the house of the LORD and the wall around Jerusalem.
 - d. Solomon knew better. (See 2 Chronicles 8:11.)
 - e. Solomon did not wholly cling to the Lord like David had done. Solomon clung to his wives.
 - i. 1 Kings 11:1-3 - 1 Now **King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh:** Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, 2 **from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods."** Solomon clung to these in love. 3 He had **700 wives**, who were princesses, and **300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart.**
 - 01. Solomon's heart turned away from God.
 - ii. 1 Kings 11:4-8 - 4 For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, **and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.** 5 For Solomon went after **Ashtoreth** the goddess of the Sidonians, and after **Milcom** the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did what was **evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done.** 7 Then Solomon **built a high place for Chemosh** the abomination of Moab, **and for Molech** the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. 8 **And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.**
 - 01. Instead of cutting down all of their altars, Solomon built many altars for many gods for all of his many foreign wives.
 - iii. Solomon's heart did not stay true to God, as David had.
 - 01. David's heart was wholly true to the Lord, even though he made mistakes.
 - 02. David wholly followed the Lord, even though he was not perfect.
3. Solomon accumulated horses and chariots, built a fleet of ships, and accumulated excessive silver and gold.
- a. Reminder: Rules for Kings states that a king must not acquire many horses or return to Egypt for horses, and that he must not acquire excessive silver and gold. (See Deuteronomy 17:16-17.)
 - b. Solomon's daily provision was extravagant.
 - i. 1 Kings 4:22-23 - 22 **Solomon's provision for one day** was thirty cors of fine flour and sixty cors of meal, 23 ten fat oxen, and twenty pasture-fed cattle, a hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened fowl.
 - ii. 1 cor = 220 liters. This equals 1.5 cubic miles of flour and 3 cubic miles of meal.
 - c. Solomon accumulated many horses.

- i. 1 Kings 4:26 - 26 Solomon also had **40,000 stalls of horses** for his chariots, and 12,000 horsemen.
 - ii. 1 Kings 10:26, 28-29 - 26 And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen. **He had 1,400 chariots** and 12,000 horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. ... 28 And Solomon's **import of horses was from Egypt** and Kue, and the king's traders received them from Kue at a price. 29 **A chariot could be imported from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver and a horse for 150**, and so through the king's traders they were exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.
 - 01. Horses and chariots were weapons in that day. Solomon became a dealer of weapons of war. He purchased and sold horses and chariots.
 - iii. 2 Chronicles 9:28 - 28 And **horses were imported for Solomon from Egypt** and from all lands.
- d. Solomon made ships to import more gold. Ships were also for military defense/conquest.
- i. 1 Kings 9:26-28 - 26 **King Solomon built a fleet of ships** at Ezion-geber, which is near Eloth on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. 27 And Hiram sent with the fleet his servants, seamen who were familiar with the sea, together with the servants of Solomon. 28 **And they went to Ophir and brought from there gold, 420 talents**, and they brought it to King Solomon.
 - 01. Note: Ophir is on the southern Arabian peninsula.
 - ii. 1 Kings 10:22 - 22 For the king had a fleet of ships of Tarshish at sea with the fleet of Hiram. **Once every three years the fleet of ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.**
 - 01. Note: Tarshish was on the other side of the Mediterranean. (Now Spain.)
- e. He had excessive gold and silver was as common as rocks.
- i. 1 Kings 10:14-15 - 14 **Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold**, 15 besides that which came from the explorers and from the business of the merchants, and from all the kings of the west and from the governors of the land.
 - 01. Gold is mentioned 11 times in these passages, including being used to make common household items.
 - ii. 1 Kings 10:21 - 21 All **King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold**, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None were of silver; **silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon.**
 - iii. 2 Chronicles 1:15 - 15 And **the king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stone**, and he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shephelah.
- f. Solomon built a palace for himself bigger than Temple. He also built an armory of weapons, a majestic throne room, and an opulent palace for his Egyptian wife.
- i. 1 Kings 7:1 - 1 Solomon was **building his own house thirteen years**, and he finished his entire house.
 - 01. Building the Palace took 13 years, the Temple only took 7 years.
 - ii. 1 Kings 7:2 - 2 **He built the House of the Forest of Lebanon.** Its length was a hundred cubits and its breadth fifty cubits and its height thirty cubits, and it was built on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams on the pillars...
 - 01. The House of the Forest was an armory. It was a collection of weapons for defense or attack against enemies.
 - 02. 1 Kings 10:16-17 - 16 King Solomon made **200 large shields of beaten gold**; 600 shekels of gold went into each shield. 17 And he made **300 shields of**

- beaten gold**; three minas of gold went into each shield. And the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.
- iii. 1 Kings 7:6 - 6 And **he made the Hall of Pillars**; its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth thirty cubits. There was a porch in front with pillars, and a canopy in front of them.
 01. This was the porch/entry to the armory, palace, and throne complex.
 - iv. 1 Kings 7:7 - 7 And **he made the Hall of the Throne where he was to pronounce judgment, even the Hall of Judgment**. It was finished with cedar from floor to rafters.
 01. 1 Kings 10:18-20 - 18 The king also made **a great ivory throne and overlaid it with the finest gold**. 19 The throne had six steps, and the throne had a round top, and on each side of the seat were armrests and **two lions standing beside the armrests, 20 while twelve lions stood there, one on each end of a step on the six steps. The like of it was never made in any kingdom**.
 - v. 1 Kings 7:8-12 - 8 **His own house where he was to dwell, in the other court back of the hall, was of like workmanship**. Solomon **also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter** whom he had taken in marriage. 9 **All these were made of costly stones**, cut according to measure, sawed with saws, back and front, even from the foundation to the coping, and from the outside to the great court. 10 **The foundation was of costly stones**, huge stones, stones of eight and ten cubits. 11 **And above were costly stones**, cut according to measurement, and cedar. 12 The great court had three courses of cut stone all around, and a course of cedar beams; so had the inner court of the house of the LORD and the vestibule of the house.
 01. Solomon's house, armory, throne room, and wife's palace were luxurious and extravagant. More costly in construction than the Temple.
4. Solomon lifted himself over his brothers. He put people into labor and military service. He taxed the people heavily.
- a. Reminder: Rules for Kings states that a king must meditate on the Law of God every day so that his heart does not become lifted up above his brothers.
 - b. Reminder: Samuel had warned Israel that a king would take their sons and daughters into his service, tax them, and take the produce of their fields and the best of their herds and flocks.
 - i. See 1 Samuel 8:11-18. (Previously covered.)
 - ii. Note: The Law states that Israelites are not permitted to be treated like slaves because God redeemed them out of slavery and belong to Him. (Leviticus 25:35-55.)
 - c. Solomon put Israelites to work on his building projects, taking them away from their families and working their own lands or tribal inheritances. Israelites were not slaves, but they were servants of the King, building cities for him under his direction.
 - i. 1 Kings 9:15-23 - 15 And **this is the account of the forced labor that King Solomon drafted to build the house of the LORD and his own house and the Millo and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer...** 17 so Solomon rebuilt Gezer) and **Lower Beth-horon** 18 and **Baalath** and **Tamar** in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, 19 and **all the store cities** that Solomon had, and the **cities for his chariots**, and the **cities for his horsemen**, and **whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion**. 20 All the people who were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, who were not of the people of Israel-- 21 their descendants who were left after them in the land, whom the people of Israel were unable to devote to destruction--**these Solomon drafted to be slaves**, and so they are to this day. 22 **But of the people of Israel Solomon made no slaves**.

They were the **soldiers**, they were his **officials**, his **commanders**, his **captains**, his **chariot commanders** and his **horsemen**.²³ These were the **chief officers who were over Solomon's work**: 550 who had charge of the people who carried on the work.

01. The foreigners in the land were slaves, subjected under Solomon's rule.
 02. Israelites were not slaves but worked to oversee the building of Solomon's cities and projects.
 001. Biblically, this is an allusion to Egypt, when it was the Israelites who were in forced labor. They were now they head, not the tail.
 002. Now they were again building cities for a ruler, their own king. Even in Egypt, there were Israelite foremen/overseers of slaves.
 03. Solomon's building projects took them away from their families and land, tending to their own vine and fig tree, to build cities for his kingdom.
 04. Consider: Solomon had Israelites building high places for foreign gods.
 001. When the leader's heart turns away, it impacts the people in many ways, leading them into sin or righteousness.
- d. In spite of the Kingdom's excessive wealth, Solomon taxed and worked the Israelites so heavily that it was their first complaint to his successor, Solomon's son, Rehoboam.
- i. 1 Kings 12:4 - 4 "**Your father made our yoke heavy**. Now therefore **lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke on us**, and we will serve you."
5. Solomon's heart turned away from God. His many marriages to foreign women turned his heart away from God to foreign gods, even though God had appeared to him twice. He declined to jealousy and murderous intent against his opponents.
- a. He worshipped, followed, and sought the counsel of other gods because of his foreign wives.
 - i. 1 Kings 11:5-8. (Previously covered.)
 - b. Therefore, God would tear the Kingdom from Solomon and it would be divided.
 - i. 1 Kings 11:9-13 - 9 And **the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice** 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But **he did not keep what the LORD commanded**. 11 Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "**Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant**. 12 Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but **I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen**."
 01. Only the tribe of Judah would remain with David's lineage because of David's obedience and God's covenant with David.
 02. Ten tribes would be passed to Solomon's servant, Jeroboam.
 03. The Levites already belonged to God as His servants.
 - c. When he heard that the kingdom was being torn from him and given to his servant, he did not repent and turn to God for mercy and forgiveness. Instead, he became murderous.
 - i. 1 Kings 11:40 - 40 **Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam**. But Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.
 - ii. His heart had hardened away from repentance, righteousness, and mercy.
 - d. Because of his disobedience, God raised up adversaries of Israel and Solomon.

- i. 1 Kings 11:14, 23-26 - 14 And **the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite**. He was of the royal house in Edom. ... 23 **God also raised up as an adversary to him, Rezon** the son of Eliada, who had fled from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah. 24 And he gathered men about him and became leader of a marauding band, after the killing by David. And they went to Damascus and lived there and made him king in Damascus. 25 **He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon**, doing harm as Hadad did. And **he loathed Israel and reigned over Syria**. 26 **Jeroboam the son of Nebat**, an Ephraimite of Zeredah, **a servant of Solomon**, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, **also lifted up his hand against the king**.
 - 01. A prince of Edom, who was also in a marriage alliance with Pharaoh.
 - 02. The King of Damascus, of Assyria.
 - 03. Jeroboam, Solomon's chief servant, in charge of all the labor.
- e. Because of his unfaithfulness, Solomon's witness to the world of the God of Israel being the most powerful, abundant, righteous, just, and peaceful would be shattered after his death by factions, revolt, and a national split of God's people.
 - i. God spoke through a prophet to Jeroboam, Solomon's servant, that the kingdom would be divided and he would be king over ten tribes. (Covered next.)

F. Northern Kingdom: No Commendations

- 1. **Jeroboam:** Reigned 21 years over 10 tribes of Israel. He was offered the opportunity to become like David and have God build him a lasting dynasty like David's - if only he would obey the Lord with all his heart.
 - a. God raised up adversaries of Solomon because of Solomon's lack of faithfulness. Jeroboam was one of these adversaries.
 - i. 1 Kings 11:26-28 NIV - 26 Also, **Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king**. He was one of Solomon's officials, **an Ephraimite from Zeredah**, and his mother was a widow named Zeruah. 27 **Here is the account of how he rebelled against the king:** Solomon had built the terraces and had filled in the gap in the wall of the city of David his father. 28 **Now Jeroboam was a man of standing, and when Solomon saw how well the young man did his work, he put him in charge of the whole labor force of the tribes of Joseph**.
 - 01. Jeroboam was a very capable and hard-working man. Solomon noticed him and put him in charge of some of his building projects.
 - 02. There must have been some kind of conflict in the way the building projects were done or the way the workers were treated. We do not have more details.
 - b. Jeroboam was told by a prophet of God that he would be the king over ten tribes of Israel.
 - i. 1 Kings 11:29-39 - 29 And at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him on the road. Now Ahijah had dressed himself in a new garment, and the two of them were alone in the open country. 30 Then Ahijah laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. 31 And he said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, **'Behold, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon and will give you ten tribes** 32 (but he shall have one tribe, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city that I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), 33 **because they**

have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the Ammonites, and they have not walked in my ways, doing what is right in my sight and keeping my statutes and my rules, as David his father did. 34 Nevertheless, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him ruler all the days of his life, for the sake of David my servant whom I chose, who kept my commandments and my statutes. 35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and will give it to you, ten tribes. 36 Yet to his son I will give one tribe, that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name. 37 **And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel.** 38 **And if you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you.** 39 And I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, but not forever." 40 Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

01. Judah, the tribe of David, had turned to other gods. But because of God's covenant with David, the tribe of Judah would remain under a king who was descended from David. Jeroboam was from the tribe of Ephraim.
02. Note: David's faithfulness is still the plumbline of success for a king.
03. Jeroboam had every opportunity to succeed, if he did things God's way.
04. Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam because of this.

- c. After Solomon died, Jeroboam returned and asked Solomon's son Rehoboam to treat the workers more fairly. He was willing to serve David's dynasty.
 - i. 1 Kings 12:2-4 - 2 And as soon as Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it (for he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), then Jeroboam returned from Egypt. 3 And they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and said to Rehoboam, 4 **"Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke on us, and we will serve you."**
 01. Rehoboam answered harshly. (Covered more later.)
 02. So, all Israel made Jeroboam king, except for the tribe of Judah.
- d. Jeroboam set up golden calves and altars, leading the people into false worship, contrary to the Law, with false priests and counterfeit feasts, in order to protect his own authority.
 - i. 1 Kings 12:25-33 - 25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. And he went out from there and built Penuel. 26 **And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David.** 27 If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and **they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah."** 28 **So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold.** And he said to the people, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. **Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt."** 29 And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one. 31 **He also made temples on high places and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites.** 32 **And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah,** and he offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. 33 He went up to the altar that he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, **in the month that he had devised**

from his own heart. And he instituted a feast for the people of Israel and went up to the altar to make offerings.

01. Jeroboam knew the Law but deliberately disobeyed it to keep people's loyalty to himself, rather than trusting God.
 02. He took counsel from advisors rather than counsel from God.
 03. "Behold your gods..." is the same thing that Aaron said of the golden calves Israel built at Mount Sinai. (See Exodus 32:4.)
- e. When a prophet rebuked Jeroboam for this false altar, he had the prophet seized. Even after an elder prophet confirmed the younger prophet's words, Jeroboam still did not repent.
- i. 1 Kings 13:1-7 - 1 And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the LORD to Bethel. Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make offerings. 2 **And the man cried against the altar by the word of the LORD and said, "O altar, altar, thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.'"** 3 And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This is the sign that the LORD has spoken: **'Behold, the altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out.'**" 4 And when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar at Bethel, **Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, "Seize him." And his hand, which he stretched out against him, dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself.** 5 **The altar also was torn down, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign that the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.** 6 And the king said to the man of God, "Entreat now the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me." And the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him and became as it was before. 7 And the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me, and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward."
 - ii. The words of the prophet are confirmed to be from God.
 - iii. 1 Kings 13:33-34 - 33 **After this thing Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way**, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people. Any who would, he ordained to be priests of the high places. 34 **And this thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam**, so as to cut it off and to destroy it from the face of the earth.
- f. God sent the same prophet who had prophesied that he would be king of Israel to rebuke Jeroboam for setting up false worship. He was told that his entire lineage and dynasty would be destroyed. (See 1 Kings 14:1-18.) Still, he did not repent.
- g. Eventually, Jeroboam was weakened in the days of Abijah, son of Rehoboam, son of Solomon. God struck Jeroboam and he died. (See 2 Chronicles 13:20.)
- h. Note: All the other Kings of Israel continued in the sins of Jeroboam. They followed their father and the traditions set up by men rather than seeking the Lord and obeying His Word.
2. **Nadab** (son of Jeroboam): Reigned one year. Walked in the way of his father, Jeroboam. (See 1 Kings 15.) Assassinated by Baasha.
3. **Baasha**: Reigned 23 years. Walked in the sins of Jeroboam which made Israel to sin. (See 1 Kings 15:33-34.)
- i. Note: A prophet of God rebuked Baasha about following in the way of Jeroboam, giving Baasha the opportunity to change. But Baasha did not repent. (1 Kings 16:1-7.)

4. **Elah** (son of Baasha): Reigned 1 year. Assassinated by Zimri. (See 1 Kings 16.)
5. **Zimri**: Reigned 7 days. Committed suicide by burning down the royal palace while inside it. (See 1 Kings 16.)
6. **Omri**: Reigned 11 years. Did more evil than all before him. Walked in the ways of Jeroboam. Purchased the hill of Samaria. (See 1 Kings 16.)
7. **Ahab** (son of Omri): Reigned 21 years. Did more evil than all before him. Married Jezebel, a foreign princess and Baal worshipper. Erected altars and temples to Baal and Asherah poles. Rebuilt Jericho which had been destroyed and was not supposed to be rebuilt. Allowed Jezebel to kill true prophets of God. Did not repent at the rebukes of Elijah. (See 1 Kings 16-22.)
 - i. Prophets during his reign: Elijah and other communities of prophets hiding in caves.
 - ii. Rebuked by Elijah the prophet. Treated Elijah like an enemy. "Troubler of Israel."
 - iii. God gave Ahab victory against Syria's multitude of mighty warriors. This was Ahab's opportunity to turn to God and trust Him. Ahab obeyed God's instructions through a prophet and won the battle. But he did not repent after this. (See 1 Kings 20:1-25.)
 - iv. God gave Ahab a second victory against Syria, but Ahab let the King go free and made a covenant of peace with him rather than destroying him. This disobedience would cost him his life and kingdom. (See 1 Kings 20:26-43.)
 - v. Ahab used his authority (through his wife Jezebel) to usurp and possess a common man's vineyard. For this, a prophet of God told him that he would die on that very same plot of land. (See 1 Kings 21.)
 01. After hearing this, Ahab briefly repented and humbled himself before the Lord. For this, the Lord granted that his household/dynasty would not be destroyed in his own days, but after he died.
 - vi. 1 Kings 21:25-26 - 25 (There was none who **sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the LORD like Ahab**, whom Jezebel his wife incited. 26 **He acted very abominably in going after idols**, as the Amorites had done, whom the LORD cast out before the people of Israel.)
 - vii. Died in battle. When an archer shot at random, the arrow pierced through Ahab's armor and he died.
8. **Ahaziah** (son of Ahab): Reigned 1 year. Walked in the ways of his father, Ahab, and the ways of Jeroboam. Served Baals.
 - i. Prophets during his reign: Elijah and other communities of prophets hiding in caves.
 - ii. Consulted Baal-zebub when he became ill rather than consulting the Lord. Was rebuked by Elijah the prophet for this. Died from this illness. (See 2 Kings 1.)
9. **Jehoram/Joram** (son of Ahab, because Ahaziah had no son): Reigned 11 years. Put away Baal idols but "clung to the sins of Jeroboam." (See 2 Kings 1.)
 - i. Prophets during his reign: Elisha and other communities of prophets.
 - ii. Consulted Elisha as the prophet of God, who rebuked him and told him to inquire of the prophets of his father and mother. Jehoram insisted and Elisha prophesied for the sake of King Jehoshaphat of Judah. God gave supernatural victory over the enemy. (See 2 Kings 3.)
 - iii. He listened when Elisha counseled kindness towards the prisoners of war, and showed mercy by authorizing their release rather than their destruction.
 - iv. When the city of Samaria was under siege, he tried to eliminate God's prophet to eliminate the problem. Thinking that the prophet was the cause of the problem.
 01. Instead Elisha prophesied the miraculous release of provision for the city.

- v. Wounded in battle and then assassinated by Jehu who rebuked Jehoram for leading Israel to follow in the whorings of his mother Jezebel in Baal worship. (See 2 Kings 9.)
10. **Jehu**: Reigned 27 years. Commended for his zeal and for eliminating Baal worship. But did not repent of the ways of Jeroboam and did not walk in the Law of God with all his heart. (See 2 Kings 10.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Elisha and other communities of prophets.
 - ii. Anointed king of Israel by a delegate/messenger of Elisha.
 - iii. 2 Kings 10:28-33 - 28 Thus Jehu **wiped out Baal from Israel.** 29 **But Jehu did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin--that is, the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan.** 30 And the LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in carrying out what is right in my eyes, and have done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel." 31 **But Jehu was not careful to walk in the law of the LORD, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He did not turn from the sins of Jeroboam, which he made Israel to sin.** 32 In those days the LORD began to cut off parts of Israel. Hazael defeated them throughout the territory of Israel: 33 from the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the Valley of the Arnon, that is, Gilead and Bashan.
11. **Jehoahaz** (son of Jehu): Reigned 16 years. Followed in the sins of Jeroboam. Therefore, God gave Israel over to Syria for plundering and oppression. Israel was oppressed by Syria all the days of Jehoahaz. (See 2 Kings 13.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Elisha and other communities of prophets.
 - ii. Cried out to the Lord for help and the Lord answered him out of pity for Israel because they were being oppressed. (See 2 Kings 13.) God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob and was gracious to Israel. (2 Kings 13:23.)
 - 01. In spite of God's rescuing them, Israel did not repent of the sins of Jeroboam.
 - 02. Their army was reduced to only 50 horsemen, 10 chariots, 10,000 footmen.
12. **Jehoash/Joash** (son of Jehoahaz): Reigned 15 years. Did not depart from sins of Jeroboam. (See 2 Kings 13.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Elisha and other communities of prophets.
 - ii. If Jehoash had greater faith, God would have given more victories. He struck the ground 3 times with the arrows of Elisha, so God gave him 3 victories over Syria. (See 2 Kings 13.)
13. **Jeroboam II** (son of Jehoash): Reigned 41 years. Did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam I. (See 2 Kings 14.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Amos, Jonah, Hosea and other unnamed men of God.
 - ii. It was a time of prosperity and expansion in Israel, according to the word of Jonah the prophet of God. This was because God saw that Israel was oppressed and there was no one in all Israel to help them. The Lord had promised not to blot Israel out completely, so He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam. (See 2 Kings 14:23-27.)
 - iii. Everything looked good externally. But spiritually, Israel had departed from God.
14. **Zechariah** (son of Jeroboam II): Reigned 6 months. Did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam. (See 2 Kings 14.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Hosea and other unnamed men of God.
 - ii. Assassinated by Shallum who conspired against him.

15. **Shallum:** Reigned 1 month. (See 2 Kings 14.)
 - i. Prophets during his reign: Hosea and other unnamed men of God.
 - ii. Overthrown and assassinated by Menahem with violence and force.

16. **Menahem:** Reigned 10 years. Did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam. (See 2 Kings 14.)
 - i. Prophets during his reign: Hosea and other unnamed men of God.
 - ii. Violent and hostile takeover of the Kingdom, including sacking the cities and ripping open pregnant women.
 - iii. Did not rely on the Lord but paid off the King of Syria with money exacted from the wealthy people of Israel.

17. **Pekahiah** (son of Menahem): Reigned 2 years. Did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam. (See 2 Kings 15.)
 - i. Prophets during his reign: Hosea and other unnamed men of God.
 - ii. Assassinated by Pekah who conspired against him.

18. **Pekah:** Reigned 20 years. Did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam. (See 2 Kings 15.)
 - i. Prophets during his reign: Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, and other unnamed men of God.
 - ii. Assyria captured many cities in Israel and carried captives away to exile.
 - iii. Assassinated by Hoshea who conspired against him, possibly with the assistance of the King of Assyria.

19. **Hoshea:** Reigned 9 years. Did evil in the sight of the Lord, but not the same way as the kings of Israel before him. Became a vassal to Assyria, may have been appointed as king by the king of Assyria. (See 2 Kings 15, 17.)
 - i. Prophets during his reign: Hosea, Micah, Isaiah and other unnamed men of God.
 - ii. Treachery was found in him by Assyria's king, so he was locked in prison while he besieged Samaria, captured the city, and brought the people away to exile.

20. All this happened because the Kings of Israel were in rebellious disobedience, not the obedience of faith in God.
 - a. 2 Kings 17:7-18, 20-23 - 7 And **this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God**, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, **and had feared other gods** 8 **and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced.** 9 And the people of Israel did secretly against the LORD their God things that were not right. **They built for themselves high places in all their towns**, from watchtower to fortified city. 10 **They set up for themselves pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree**, 11 and there **they made offerings on all the high places, as the nations did whom the LORD carried away before them.** And they did wicked things, provoking the LORD to anger, 12 and **they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this."** 13 **Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes**, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets." 14 **But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God.** 15 **They despised his statutes and his covenant** that he made with their fathers and the warnings that he gave them. **They went after false idols and became false, and they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them that they should not do like them.** 16 And they abandoned all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made for

themselves metal images of two calves; and they made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. 17 **And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger.** 18 **Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight.** None was left but the tribe of Judah only. ... 20 And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and **gave them into the hand of plunderers, until he had cast them out of his sight.** 21 When he had torn Israel from the house of David, **they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. And Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD and made them commit great sin.** 22 The people of Israel walked in all the sins that Jeroboam did. **They did not depart from them,** 23 until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had spoken by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day.

- i. Every king had the opportunity to repent and put their trust in God. But they did not.
- ii. Every king had the opportunity to smash the golden calves at Bethel and Dan and worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, according to God's Law. But they did not.
- iii. Every king had the opportunity to execute justice according to the Law of God. But they did not.
- iv. Every king had the opportunity to think for themselves rather than follow the traditions handed down by Jeroboam. But they did not.

G. Southern Kingdom – Some Commendations

1. **Rehoboam** (son of Solomon and an Ammonite woman): Reigned 17 years. Lorded over people harshly. Married many wives. Followed in the ways of David for 3 years. But did not set his heart to seek the Lord. (See 1 Kings 12 & 14; 2 Chronicles 11 & 12.)
 - a. Rehoboam lorded over people to exert his control and authority.
 - i. All Israel was willing to submit to Rehoboam as King if he would be kinder to them as workers than his father had been. But Rehoboam determined to force them into even harder labor.
 - ii. Israel stoned to death the man Rehoboam sent to force them into labor. They departed from the lineage of David and the house of Judah and made Jeroboam king of Israel.
 - iii. Rehoboam gathered together an army to fight and reclaim his authority over Israel.
 - iv. He obeyed the prophet of God who stopped him by saying that God had brought this about to fulfill His word to Jeroboam.
 - v. There were continual wars between Jeroboam and Rehoboam.
 - b. Rehoboam built up cities of defense throughout Judah. Though this is impressive in building projects for the Kingdom (like his father, Solomon) it is also equal to trusting in man-made defense rather than in God.
 - c. Rehoboam's commitment to faithful worship in Jerusalem according to God's Law and commands only lasted 3-4 years.
 - i. Priests, Levites, and faithful people from the Northern Kingdom defected to Judah to be obedient to the Law of God and Jerusalem, God's chosen place of worship.
 - ii. Once Rehoboam's kingdom was strong and established, he abandoned the Law of the Lord and led the people astray.

- iii. Then, Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord by building high places and instituting pagan worship altars in the land.
 - d. King Shishak of Egypt came to Judah and attacked.
 - i. When a prophet told Rehoboam this was because he had abandoned the Lord,
 - ii. Rehoboam led the people in repentance and humbling themselves before the Lord. So, the Lord relented of His wrath and did not destroy them.
 - iii. The King of Egypt took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house.
 - iv. Rehoboam replaced the golden shields Solomon had made with bronze shields. His personal body guards used them for his protection when he entered his royal palace.
2. **Abijah/Abijam** (son of Rehoboam): Reigned 3 years. Walked in the sins of his father and was not wholly true to the Lord. (See 1 Kings 15; 2 Chronicles 13.) God preserved the lineage of David because of David's faithfulness, not because of his descendants' faithfulness or lack thereof.
- a. There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam all his days.
 - i. Abijah demonstrated faith and commitment to God's ways in his attacks against Jeroboam. He defended the lineage of David and the proper order of worship in Jerusalem at the Temple and condemned the northern kingdom for their golden calves and false worship.
 - ii. In the battle, he cried out to the Lord for help. God gave Judah victory over Jeroboam because of Abijah's bold faith.
 - iii. It is possible that Abijah wanted to reunite the kingdoms under his authority, but this did not happen because the division had been the will of God due to Solomon's disobedience.
 - iv. Jeroboam was struck in battle and died during the reign of Abijah.
3. **Asa** (son of Abijah): Reigned 41 years. Did what was right, like David, and his heart was true to the Lord but not all the way to the end. Asa removed idol worship but the high places of pagan worship were not taken away. In the end, he broke the law of God and did not seek the Lord in his sickness.
- a. When attacked by a massive army of Ethiopians, Asa cried out to the Lord. God gave them great victory and much spoil, and the fear of the Lord fell on other kingdoms.
 - i. 2 Chronicles 14:11 - 11 And Asa cried to the LORD his God, "**O LORD, there is none like you to help, between the mighty and the weak. Help us, O LORD our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this multitude. O LORD, you are our God; let not man prevail against you.**"
 - ii. A prophet of God said that this victory was because the Lord was with them because they had cried out to Him. The prophet exhorted them that all of Israel's problems in the past were because they had abandoned the Lord but that if they remained true to the Lord, God would be with them and give them peace.
 - b. Therefore, Asa removed idol worship from the land, rebuilt the altar of God at the Temple, and gathered together all the people (including those who had defected from the northern kingdom) and worshipped God by offering the spoils of war to Him.
 - i. They all entered into a covenant to seek the Lord with all their hearts and that anyone who would not would be put to death.
 - ii. He deposed his own mother because she made a detestable image.

- c. For 35 years, the land had rest because of Asa's faithfulness to God, and Asa gave God glory for this, explaining to the people that it was because they had sought the Lord and God had answered.
 - i. Nevertheless, he built defense cities and a large army.
 - d. However, in his 36th year when there was war between Judah and Israel, Asa bribed the king of Syria with silver and gold to ally with them and protect them from Israel rather than crying out to God and relying on Him.
 - i. A prophet of God rebuked him for this, reminding him of his early victory against the Ethiopians.
 - 01. 2 Chronicles 16:9 NIV - 9 For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth **to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.** You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war."
 - ii. Asa became angry, filled with rage, and put the prophet in prison.
 - e. In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, he became diseased in his feet. But he did not seek the Lord, but only the physicians.
4. **Jehoshaphat** (son of Asa): Reigned 25 years. Walked in the ways of Asa, his father, and of David. He did not turn aside from doing what is right in the sight of the Lord. However, the high places of pagan worship were not removed from the land. (See 1 Kings 22; 2 Kings 3; 2 Chronicles 17-20.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Elijah (in the Northern Kingdom) and other unnamed men of God.
- a. He did not seek the Baals but sought the Lord and walked in the commandments of God.
 - i. He did not walk in the practices of Israel and he took the Asherah out of Judah.
 - ii. In his third year, he sent officials, Levites, and priests to teach the people the Law of God.
 - iii. Therefore, God established Jehoshaphat's kingdom and blessed him. The fear of the Lord fell on all the surrounding kingdoms so that they made no war with Judah and brought tribute to the king.
 - b. He made a marriage alliance with Israel by marrying his son to Ahab's daughter.
 - i. Ahab used their alliance to induce/compel him into battle against Syria.
 - ii. Jehoshaphat could tell the difference between real and false prophets.
 - iii. When Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem safely, after Ahab had been killed in battle, a prophet rebuked him for helping the wicked (Israel) who hate God.
 - c. After this, Jehoshaphat went back out among the people to bring them back to the Lord.
 - i. He appointed judges in the land to judge fairly according to the Law of God, and appointed priests and Levites to judge the harder cases. He reminded them that their judgments were for God and prayed for God to defend the upright.
 - d. When Moab, Ammon, and Edom attacked Judah, Jehoshaphat led the people in national prayer and fasting, calling upon the Lord for mercy and help. They sought the Lord's help, and God helped them.
 - i. 2 Chronicles 20:5-13 - 5 And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, 6 and said, "O LORD, God of our fathers, **are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you.** 7 Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel,

and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? 8 And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, 9 **'If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you--for your name is in this house--and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.'** 10 And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy-- 11 behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. 12 **O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.**" 13 Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

- ii. The Spirit of the Lord then came upon a certain Levite who prophesied that the Lord was going to deliver them without a fight.
 - iii. Jehoshaphat worshipped God and led the people in bowing down on their faces in reverence for God. They praised God for His mercy and might.
 - iv. God set an ambush against the enemies so that they fought against one another and destroyed one another. Judah did not fight, but only heard report from their watchmen of all the dead bodies. They took much plunder and rejoiced in the Lord.
- e. The high places were not fully removed because the people had not yet fully set their hearts to seek the Lord completely.
- f. Toward the end of his reign, Jehoshaphat allied with Ahaziah, king of Israel, to build ships.
- i. These were either war ships or trading ships, going to the farthest parts of the earth to bring back goods and merchandise.
 - ii. A prophet rebuked him for allying with Israel, saying that because of it, the ships would be destroyed. Therefore, Jehoshaphat was unwilling to allow Israel to go on the ships. But the ships were destroyed anyway, before they ever made it to Tarshish.
5. **Jehoram/Joram** (son of Jehoshaphat): Reigned 7 years. Walked in the ways of the kingdom of Israel, because he was married to Ahab's daughter. Killed all his brothers who were competitors for the throne. The Lord preserved the line of David because of His promise to David, not because of the king's faithfulness. (See 2 Kings 8; 2 Chronicles 21.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Elijah (in the Northern Kingdom) and other unnamed men of God.
- a. Edom and Libnah revolted against his authority and won their independence because he forsook the Lord.
- b. Made high places of worship and led the people of Judah into whoredom against the Lord.
- i. Elijah the prophet sent him a letter of rebuke, prophesying a great plague on the people, including himself, his wives, children, and possessions. He would suffer from a disease of the bowels.
 - ii. The Lord fulfilled this word by stirring up the Philistines as an enemy to attack. They carried away all the possessions of the king's house, including his wives and children, except for his youngest son.
 - iii. The Lord also struck him with an incurable disease in his bowels and he died in agony.

6. **Ahaziah** (son of Jehoram): Reigned 1 year. Walked in the ways of Ahab, king of Israel because his mother was Ahab's daughter and was his closest counselor, in addition to other counselors from Israel. (See 2 Kings 8-9; 2 Chronicles 22.)
 - i. Prophets during his reign: Elijah (in the Northern Kingdom) and other unnamed men of God.
 - a. Due to bad counsel from house of Ahab, he allied with Israel to make war against Syria. When the king of Israel was wounded in battle, Ahaziah went to visit him.
 - i. They were both assassinated by Jehu.

7. **Athaliah** (mother of Ahaziah, daughter of Ahab & Jezebel, granddaughter of Omri): Reigned 6 years. Took the throne for herself after her son's death. Killed all the rest of the royal family in Judah to establish her reign. Reigned for six years while Ahaziah's son Joash grew up in hiding. Was executed. (See 2 Kings 11; 2 Chronicles 22-23.)
 - i. Prophets during his reign: Elijah & Elisha (in the Northern Kingdom) and other unnamed men of God.

8. **Joash/Jehoash** (son of Ahaziah): Reigned 40 years. Hidden in the Temple for 6 years before becoming king. Faithful to the Lord as long as he was counseled by Jehoida the priest. But the high places of pagan worship were not totally removed from the land. (See 2 Kings 11-12; 2 Chronicles 23-24.)
 - i. Prophets during his reign: Elisha (in the Northern Kingdom) and other unnamed men of God.
 - a. Once anointed King (at age 7) by Jehoida the priest, Jehoida covenanted the people to be the Lord's people and they agreed.
 - i. They went home and smashed their Baal temples and pagan altars, and killed the priests of Baal.
 - ii. Jehoida appointed priests and Levites in the Temple, according to the Law of Moses and the order of worship established by David.

 - b. Joash did what was right in the sight of God as long as Jehoida was alive.
 - i. He had only two wives (compared to hundreds of Solomon and other kings)
 - ii. He restored the Temple of God from the damage done to it by Athalia who had also used all the dedicated things in the Temple for Baal worship.
 - iii. The people gladly brought offerings to fulfill the work of repairing the Temple and they regularly offered sacrifices on the altar of God.
 - iv. There was a delay in the work on the Temple, so Joash hired masons rather than having the priests and Levites do the work. Jehoida made a wooden box for the offerings.

 - c. Once Jehoida died, the princes of Judah came to king Joash and turned his heart away from the Lord. They abandoned the Temple and the Lord, and turned back to Baals and Asherah and idols.
 - i. God sent prophets to rebuke them, but they would not listen.
 - ii. Even Jehoida's son, Zechariah, prophesied against them and they stoned him to death with stones in the courtyard of the Temple.
 01. This is the Zechariah Jesus said would be avenged for his shed blood. (Luke 11:50-51.)
 02. Joash did not honor the kindness Jehoida had shown him.

- d. Wrath of God came upon Judah because of this. Syria came against Jerusalem.
 - i. Joash's response was to give him all the sacred gifts that Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah his fathers had dedicated to the Lord, plus all the gold that was in the royal treasuries of the Temple and the king's palace.
 - 01. Kings: Syria turned away because of this bribe but it was not the same as crying out to God.
 - 02. Chronicles: Syria took plunder and carried it away.
 - ii. The Syrians had come with only a few men but God gave them victory over a great army of Judah because of Judah's disobedience and rebellion.
 - iii. Joash was severely wounded in the battle. But it was his own servants who conspired against him and assassinated him to avenge the blood of Zechariah, the son of Jehoida.
9. **Amaziah** (son of Joash): Reigned 29 years. Did right in the sight of God, but not with a whole heart, not like David. He did as his father Joash had done but the high places were not removed from the land. (See 2 Kings 14; 2 Chronicles 25
- a. As soon as the king was established in power, he killed all the servants who had killed his father.
 - i. However, he honored the Law of God that children should not be put to death for their parents. He let the children of the assassins live.
 - b. He mustered an army to fight against Edom, including hiring soldiers from Israel.
 - i. A prophet rebuked him for allying with Israel, because the Lord was not with Israel.
 - ii. Amaziah pointed out that he had already paid them and would suffer financial loss and animosity for sending them back.
 - iii. The prophet assured him that God could restore much more to him than he lost if he would simply trust God alone.
 - iv. Amaziah discharged the army of Israel, and took the financial loss. They became very angry.
 - v. Amaziah led the soldiers of Judah into battle and they won.
 - vi. However, the angry soldiers of Israel plundered their cities while they were gone.
 - c. When Amaziah returned from striking down the Edomites, he brought the Edomites gods with him and set them up and worshipped them.
 - i. God sent a prophet to rebuke him for this.
 - ii. 2 Chronicles 25:15 - 15 Therefore the LORD was angry with Amaziah and sent to him a prophet, who said to him, "Why have you sought the gods of a people who did not deliver their own people from your hand?"
 - iii. Amaziah rebuked the prophet, telling him he was not a royal counselor and threatening to kill him.
 - iv. The prophet prophesied Amaziah's demise because he was refusing to listen to God.
 - d. Amaziah then asked to meet the king of Israel in battle.
 - i. The king of Israel warned Amaziah not to be arrogant due to his victory over Edom.
 - ii. But Amaziah did not listen because this was God's way of destroying Amaziah because he had sought the gods of Edom.
 - iii. Judah was defeated by Israel.
 - iv. The king of Israel captured Amaziah and broke into Jerusalem, tore down the wall for 400 cubits (600 feet) and seized all the gold, silver, and vessels in the Temple and the king's palace.

- e. Amaziah lived 15 years after this. But a conspiracy was formed since the time of Amaziah's rebellion against God. He fled to Lachish to escape but was found and assassinated.
10. **Azariah/Uzziah** (son of Amaziah): Reigned 52 years, some co-reigning with father and later co-reigning with son. Did right in the sight of God, according to the ways of his father, Amaziah, and set his heart to seek the Lord all the days of Zechariah the priest. But the high places were not removed from the land. (See 2 Kings 15; 2 Chronicles 26.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Amos, Isaiah, Jonah (in the Northern Kingdom), and other unnamed men of God.
- a. Similar to his father before him, Azariah was counseled well by Zechariah, a wise priest.
 - i. As long as he sought the Lord, God prospered him.
 - b. God helped Azariah/Uzziah to win battles against Judah's enemies, the Philistines, Arabians, and Meunites. Ammonites paid tribute to him.
 - i. He built cities and towers in Judah and became very strong. He fortified the walls and built towers in Jerusalem.
 - ii. He built inventions and war machines for shooting arrows and great stones from towers onto oncoming enemies. He built weapons for his very large army.
 - iii. His fame spread far and wide.
 - c. When he became strong, he became proud and violated the ways of God.
 - i. He was unfaithful to the Lord and entered the Temple unauthorized, doing what only a priest is allowed to do.
 - ii. When rebuked by the chief priest and 80 other priests with him, Azariah/Uzziah became angry.
 - iii. In his anger, he broke out with leprosy while the incense offering was still in his hand. The Lord had struck him.
 - iv. Because of his leprosy, he lived isolated from the people for the rest of his life and was not able to enter the Temple.
 - v. His son co-reigned in his place until Uzziah died.
11. **Jotham** (son of Azariah/Uzziah): Reigned 16 years, some co-reign with father. Did right in the sight of God, as his father had done but without rebelling by entering the Temple unauthorized. But the high places were not removed from the land. (See 2 Kings 15; 2 Chronicles 27.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Micah, Hosea, Isaiah, and other unnamed men of God.
- a. He fought with the Ammonites and prevailed. He built cities and the walls around Jerusalem.
 - ii. He became "mighty" the same word used to describe his father. This was because he ordered his way after the ways and Word of God. But he did not become proud like his father did.
 - b. In his days, the Lord began to send enemies against Judah, particularly Israel and Syria, because of the people's ongoing unfaithfulness.
12. **Ahaz** (son of Jotham): Did not do right in the sight of God. Walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, made images of Baals, and even burned his son as an offering according to the practices of the nations. He sacrificed on the high places. (See 2 Kings 16; 2 Chronicles 27.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Micah, Hosea, Isaiah, and other unnamed men of God.
- a. Therefore, God sent enemies, Syria and Israel, against Judah.

- i. Syria recovered cities that had been conquered by Judah by Azariah.
 - ii. Israel killed 120,000 soldiers in one day because Judah had forsaken God. They also killed the king's son and took 200,000 captives and much spoil.
 - 01. A prophet was sent by God to rebuke Israel for their wrath against Judah. He informed them that they were only allowed to conquer Judah because of Judah's disobedience to God. He warned them against taking the people of Judah captive to be their slaves because this would be a sin against God and they were already under God's wrath. The soldiers of Israel fed and clothed the captives and brought them back to Jericho while they returned to Samaria.
 - iii. Syria took great plunder and a many captives to Damascus. They besieged Ahaz but could not completely conquer him.
 - iv. Edom also attacked and defeated Judah and carried away captives.
 - v. The Philistines also made raids on Judah and overtook territories to settle in them.
 - vi. The Lord humbled Judah because of Ahaz because he made Judah act sinfully against the Lord and had been very unfaithful to God.
- b. Therefore, Ahaz sent messengers to Assyria, offering servitude and asking for help against their enemies. He sent all the gold and silver from the Temple and the king's palace to the king of Assyria.
- i. The king of Assyria then conquered Damascus and took it from the Syrians.
 - ii. Assyria also attacked instead of strengthening Judah.
 - iii. Sending all the money to Assyria did not help him at all.
- c. In the time of distress, Ahaz went to Damascus to visit the king of Assyria, and saw the altars to their gods. This was the ruin of the people, leading them away from God.
- i. He sent a model of the altar with all its specifications to the priests of the Temple of God. They built it according to the design.
 - ii. When he returned to Jerusalem, he offered offerings on the altar modeled after the one in Damascus.
 - iii. The bronze altar of God was removed from its place before the Temple and put on the north side of the new altar.
 - iv. He called the new altar from Damascus the "great altar" which would be the one for morning and evening sacrifices. The altar of God would still be consulted to inquire of the Lord when deemed necessary.
 - v. The priests did as the king commanded.
- d. Ahaz also tore down the bronze sea (wash basin) and covered the way for the king to go on the Sabbath.
- i. He shut the doors to the Temple of God, cut up the vessels of the Temple, and made pagan altars on every corner in Jerusalem. He made high places in every town of Judah to make offerings to other gods.
13. **Hezekiah** (son of Ahaz): Reigned 29 years. Did right in the sight of God, according to the ways of David, with all his heart. Witnessed the downfall and exile of Israel (became king of Judah in the 3rd year of Hoshea, king of Israel.) Removed all the high places and tore down the Asherah. (See 2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chronicles 29-32.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Micah, Hosea, Isaiah, and other unnamed men of God.
- a. Trusted the Lord like no other. Held fast to the Lord and did not depart from following Him and kept His commandments according to the Law of Moses.

- b. Restored the Temple and Temple worship, according to the Law of Moses.
 - i. In the 1st year in the 1st month of his reign, it was his 1st priority.
 - ii. Brought priests and Levites to consecrate themselves for service. They brought everything unclean out of the Temple and burned it in the Kidron Valley. They restored the vessels that King Ahaz had discarded in faithlessness.
 - iii. Testified openly that the sins of their fathers had brought God's wrath upon Judah.
 - iv. Brought sacrifices and offerings to the Lord for all the people, to make atonement for sin for all Israel (not just Judah.)
 - 01. Encouraged the people to bring sacrifices and offerings. They brought so many that Levites had to help the priests in the slaughter.
 - v. Organized Levites to worship God according to the pattern established by David.
 - vi. Organized the priests and the tithes and storehouses of the Temple. The people brought abundant offerings to the Lord.

- c. Celebrated the Passover. Celebrated in the second month because the Temple was not ready in time for the 14th of Nisan. Invited all Israel (not just Judah) to attend the Passover celebration.
 - i. 2 Chronicles 30:6-9 - 6 So couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with letters from the king and his princes, as the king had commanded, saying, "O people of Israel, **return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may turn again to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria.** 7 Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were faithless to the LORD God of their fathers, so that he made them a desolation, as you see. 8 **Do not now be stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the LORD and come to his sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God,** that his fierce anger may turn away from you. 9 **For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your children will find compassion with their captors and return to this land.** For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him."
 - 01. They mostly laughed at the couriers but some came.
 - ii. The people removed all the altars around Jerusalem.
 - iii. Even though it was in the second month, God heard Hezekiah's prayer and healed all the people who attended.
 - iv. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (7 days) went so well that they kept it for another 7 days, and Hezekiah supplied more offerings for sacrifices to the Lord for the people.
 - v. The priests and Levites blessed they people, and God heard their prayer.

- d. Hezekiah became ill and was told by Isaiah the prophet that he was going to die.
 - i. He prayed to God to have regard for his faithfulness and not let him die. (Note: Self-centered prayer.)
 - ii. God turned Isaiah around to tell Hezekiah that God had heard his prayer and would add 15 years to his life. Isaiah also said that God would deliver Hezekiah and Jerusalem out of the hands of Assyria.

- e. In Hezekiah's 4th year as King, Israel was overthrown by the Assyrians and sent into exile.
 - i. Hezekiah rebelled against Assyria and would not serve him, even though Israel had been overtaken by them.

- f. In Hezekiah's 14th year as King, Assyria attacked the fortified cities of Judah and took them.
 - i. At first, Hezekiah's response was to bow to Assyria, pay tribute, including all the treasures in the Temple and the king's palace. But Assyria came to Jerusalem.

- ii. The King of Assyria threatened that Hezekiah's God would not be able to deliver Judah from his hand because he had already conquered Israel and all the other surrounding nations. They implored the people not to trust Hezekiah.
 - iii. Hezekiah went to the Temple and prayed to God and sent his officials to Isaiah the prophet. Hezekiah and Isaiah cried out to the Lord for help. The Lord sent an angel to cut off the warriors of Assyria. The Lord gave victory.
 - iv. Many people brought gifts to the Lord in Jerusalem because of Hezekiah's victory. He was exalted in the sight of the nations.
 - g. Hezekiah did not make return according to the benefits God had given him. His heart became proud in the end.
 - i. Envoys from Babylon were sent to Hezekiah with gifts, most likely seeking a military alliance. Hezekiah showed them everything he had, also seeking a military alliance and out of pride in his heart.
 - ii. Isaiah came and rebuked him, telling him that Babylon would eventually overtake Judah and possess everything he had shown them – which was everything, and that Hezekiah's sons would be taken captive to Babylon.
 - iii. Hezekiah's response was "Ok, good. At least it won't happen in my days."
14. **Manasseh** (son of Hezekiah): Reigned 55 years. Did evil in the sight of God, according to the detestable practices of the nations.
- i. Prophets during his reign: Micah, Isaiah, and other unnamed men of God.
 - a. Rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah had torn down. Built altars for the host of heaven, and an Asherah in the Temple of the Lord. Burned his son in the fire, according to the practice of the nations. Consulted with mediums and necromancers.
 - i. Led the people astray to do more evil than the nations.
 - ii. Shed much blood and filled the streets of Jerusalem with innocent blood.
 - iii. God sent prophets to prophesy disaster against Jerusalem and Judah because of Manasseh's sin. God would hand them over to their enemies.
 - 01. They paid no attention to God's prophets.
 - b. Therefore, God brought Assyria against Judah and Manasseh was carried away captive.
 - i. When in distress, Manasseh humbled himself before the Lord and repented.
 - ii. God heard his prayer, had mercy on him, and brought him back to Jerusalem. Then, Manasseh knew that the Lord was God.
 - c. After this, Manasseh built an outer wall for Jerusalem and the City of David and took away all the foreign gods and idols from the Temple and all the altars around Jerusalem. He restored the altar of God and offered right sacrifices on it.
 - i. He commanded Judah to serve the Lord.
 - ii. But the people still sacrificed on the high places.
15. **Amon** (son of Manasseh): Reigned 2 years. Did evil in the sight of God, as Manasseh had done before his repentance. Did not humble himself before the Lord but abandoned the Lord and did not walk in the ways of the Lord. (See 2 Kings 21; 2 Chronicles 33.)
- a. Assassinated by his servants. Then the people of the land killed the his assassins.
16. **Josiah** (son of Amon): Reigned 31 years. Did right in the sight of God, and walked in the ways of David. Did not turn aside from following the Lord. There was no king like him, before him or after

him who turned to the Lord with all his heart and soul and might, according to the Law of Moses. (See 2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chronicles 34-35; portions of the Book of Jeremiah.)

- i. Prophets during his reign: Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Huldah, and other unnamed men of God.
- a. In the 8th year of his reign, he began to seek God when he was still a boy and began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, Asherah, and idols. Chopped down the altars of Baal and killed the priests of Baal.
 - i. Went into the territories of Israel (not just Judah) and broke down the altars there, including the one built by Jeroboam that the prophet said Josiah would destroy.
 - b. In the 18th year of his reign, he had cleansed the land and the house of God, he brought money to restore and repair the Temple.
 - i. The Book of Law was discovered in the Temple. Josiah's heart was broken when he heard it read out loud. He realized that God had been faithful to bring all the curses of the Law upon Israel and Judah because of their own unfaithfulness.
 - ii. He sought counsel from Huldah the prophetess. She said that because his heart was tender, destruction would not come in his day. But that destruction must come.
 - c. In response to this, Josiah gathered all the elders, priests, Levites, prophets, and people and read the Book of Law for everyone to hear.
 - i. He made a covenant to follow the Lord by keeping his commandments with all his heart and soul. The people joined him in this covenant.
 - ii. Note: Contrast Hezekiah's reaction to the same type of news.
 - iii. Josiah took away all the abominations in the land and all his days, the people did not turn away from following the Lord. He took out all the vessels of other gods that were in the Temple and burned them outside Jerusalem.
 - iv. He put away all the necromancers and mediums and household gods and idols.
 - d. Josiah kept the Passover, according to the Law of Moses and contributed offerings for the people. No Passover had been celebrated like this since the days of Samuel.
 - e. After all this, Josiah did not regard the word of the Lord through a Gentile leader. He went into battle against Pharaoh Neco who was on his way to wage war in Assyria, and was not waging war against Judah or Josiah.
 - i. Josiah died in a battle that God did not call him to.

17. **Jehoahaz** (son of Josiah): Reigned 3 months. Did evil in the sight of God.

- i. Prophets during his reign: Jeremiah.
- a. Was captured by Pharaoh Neco (the same man who killed his father) and carried off to exile in Egypt.
 - i. Pharaoh also imposed a tribute tax on Judah at this time.

18. **Eliakim/Jehoiakim** (son of Josiah): Reigned 11 years. Appointed by Pharaoh Neco (who killed his father, Josiah) who changed his name from Eliakim to Jehoiakim. Did evil in the sight of God. (See 2 Kings 23-24; 2 Chronicles 36; portions of the Book of Jeremiah.)

- i. Prophets during his reign: Jeremiah, Habakkuk.
- a. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came against Judah, and Jehoiakim paid tribute for 3 years.

- i. Then, he turned and rebelled against Babylon. (While Jeremiah was commanding submission to Babylon as obedience to the Lord.)
 - ii. So the Lord sent bands of Chaldeans and Syrians against Judah, according to the words of God's prophets.
19. **Jehoiachin/Jeconiah** (son of Jehoiakim): Reigned 3 months. Did evil in the sight of God. (See 2 Kings 24; 2 Chronicles 36; portions of the Book of Jeremiah.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Jeremiah, Habakkuk.
- a. Jerusalem was besieged and he gave himself up to Nebuchadnezzar, including his family and his servants. He was carried off to Babylon.
 - i. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah as king in his place.
 - ii. Eventually, Jeconiah was treated well by Babylon and freed from prison. He ate at the king's table regularly and was given an allowance for the rest of his life.
20. **Zedekiah** (son of Josiah): Appointed by Babylon. Reigned 11 years. Did evil in the sight of God and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet. (See 2 Kings 24; 2 Chronicles 36; portions of the Book of Jeremiah.)
- i. Prophets during his reign: Jeremiah, Habakkuk.
- a. Made an alliance to submit to Babylon at first. But then rebelled against Babylon, breaking the alliance he made in God's name, and contrary to God's instruction through Jeremiah.
 - i. Stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the Lord.
 - ii. Temporarily did right by releasing Hebrew slaves but then reversed the decision and was rebuked by Jeremiah.
 - iii. Burned the scroll of Jeremiah prophesying disasters and refused to listen.
 - iv. All the people became increasingly unfaithful and followed the practices of the nations, polluting the Temple in Jerusalem.
 - b. When Babylon overtook Jerusalem, Zedekiah fled the city.
 - i. He was captured at Jericho and brought towards Babylon.
 - ii. His sons and officials were slaughtered before his eyes. Then, his own eyes were gouged out.
 - iii. He was brought captive to Babylon and stayed in prison until he died.
21. The obedience of faith, demonstrated through the Scriptures.
- a. 1 Corinthians 10:6 - 6 **Now these things took place as examples for us**, that we might not desire evil as they did.
 - b. Romans 15:4 - 4 **For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction**, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
 - c. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - 16 **All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness**, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Unit Four: Commendation from God, Part Two: Hall of Faith

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

A. Hebrews 11: The Hall of Faith

1. Context of the Letter to the Hebrews.

- a. Hebrews was written to Jewish/Hebrew believers in Jesus as their Messiah who had endured persecution for many years. They had grown so weary that they were considering reverting back to Judaism, which would constitute falling away from the faith.
- b. Hebrews was written to establish the supremacy of Christ and the superiority of the New Covenant promises, priesthood, sacrifices, tabernacle, etc. It is an exhortation of endurance in obedience to Christ as Messiah and life by the Holy Spirit.
 - i. Hebrews 3:14-19 - 14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. 15 As it is said, "**Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.**" [quoting Psalm 95] 16 For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 **So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.**

Hardened Heart:

Pharaoh: "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?" (Exodus 5:3.)

Israel: Hardened their hearts to God's messengers and did not obey Him.

Jesus' Disciples: Did not perceive and understand that Jesus is God in the flesh, with authority over all creation. They still thought in a natural way and doubted Him. (See Mark 6:52, 8:17, 16:11-13; Matthew 28:17; John 14:9.)

After Jesus multiplied bread and fish to feed 5,000 people, the disciples were astounded that He could walk on water. Their hearts were hard. (Mark 6:52.) Again after Jesus had fed 4,000, the disciples thought they would starve. Their hearts were hard. (Mark 8:17.)

Warning to Us: (Scripture preceding verses above.) Hebrews 3:12-13 -Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you **an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.** But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," **that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.**

- c. Hebrews 10 leaves off with a reminder to these believers of their faithfulness in the early days of their faith in spite of severe trials.
 - i. Hebrews 10:32-39 - 32 But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, **you endured a hard struggle with sufferings,** 33 sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. 34 For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of

your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. 35 Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 **For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.** 37 For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; 38 but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." 39 **But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.**

- ii. This is the set up for Hebrews 11, known as the "Hall of Faith" for its list of those who have received commendation from God for their belief, obedience, and enduring faithfulness.
- d. Hebrews 11:1-2 - 1 **Now faith is the assurance of things** hoped for, the **conviction of things** not seen. 2 For by it the people of old **received their commendation.**

Faith: Greek-G3982: *pistis*: 1. Conviction of the truth about anything, belief. 2. Fidelity, faithfulness; **the character of one who can be relied upon.**

Assurance: Greek-G5287: *hypostasis*: 1. A setting or placing under, i.e. a substructure or foundation. 2. That which has foundation or is firm, that which has actual existence; the substantial quality or nature of a person or thing. 3. Steadfastness of mind, firmness, courage, resolution, confidence, firm trust, assurance.

Conviction: Greek-G1650: *elegchos*: 1. Proof, evidence, that by which a thing is proved or tested. 2. Conviction.

- i. Note: What we hope for is eternal life with God in the world to come where Jesus reigns for all eternity and all evil has been eliminated and there is no death, sorrow, pain, mourning, sickness, or wickedness.
- e. Hebrews 11:3 - 3 **By faith we understand** that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

B. Abel to Abraham

1. By faith, Abel offered...

- a. Hebrews 11:4 - 4 **By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain**, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. (See Genesis 4:2-7.)
 - i. Abel's sacrifice was not accepted because it was blood, or God would not have said that Cain's sacrifice would also be accepted. The only distinguishing factor we have in Scripture about Abel's sacrifice vs Cain's is that Abel's was made by faith.

2. By faith, Enoch walked...

- a. Hebrews 11:5 - 5 **By faith Enoch was taken up** so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken **he was commended as having pleased God.**
 - i. Genesis 5:23-24 - 23 Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. 24 **Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.**

- ii. Jude 1:14-15 - 14 It was also about these [false teachers, unbelievers] that **Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied**, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, 15 to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."
- b. Hebrews 11:6 - 6 And **without faith it is impossible to please him**, for whoever would draw near to God **must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him**.

Believe: Greek-G4100: *pisteuo*: 1. To think to be true, to be persuaded of, to place confidence in.

3. By faith, Noah built...

- a. Hebrews 11:7 - 7 **By faith Noah**, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, **in reverent fear constructed an ark** for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (See Genesis 6:13-22.)
 - i. 2 Peter 2:5 - 5 if he did not spare the ancient world, but **preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness**, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

4. By faith, Abraham obeyed, and went, and lived...

- a. Hebrews 11:8-9 - 8 **By faith Abraham obeyed** when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 **By faith he went** to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, **living in tents** with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. (See Genesis 12:1-4.)
- b. Hebrews 11:10 - 10 **For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God**.
 - i. Abraham believed in what he hoped for – not what he could see with his eyes. He believed what God showed him.
 - ii. He believed that he would be the father of the faithful people on earth who would dwell with God for eternity, being fruitful, multiplying, filling the earth, and fulfilling God's original design for mankind.

5. By faith, Sarah believed, received, and conceived...

- a. Hebrews 11:11 - 11 **By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive**, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.
 - i. Sarah was 90 years old when she conceived and had been barren her entire life.
 - ii. Abraham was 99 years old when Sarah conceived. His body was as good as dead.
 - 01. Romans 4:18-22 - 18 **In hope he believed against hope**, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." 19 **He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead** (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. 20 **No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith** as he gave glory to God, 21 **fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised**. 22 That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness."

- b. Hebrews 11:12 - 12 **Therefore from one man**, and him as good as dead, were born **descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore**.
6. These all died in faith, still believing that God would fulfill His promise, even though they did not see the fulfillment of His eternal Kingdom on earth.
- a. Hebrews 11:13-16a - 13 **These all died in faith, not having received the things promised**, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having **acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth**. 14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are **seeking a homeland**. 15 If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have **had opportunity to return**. 16 But as it is, they **desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one**.
 - i. Their faith kept their focus on eternity and they felt like foreigners and exiles in the mist of this wicked world.
 - ii. Their faith kept them seeking the homeland promised to them by God, where God's design for creation and humanity is fulfilled.
 - iii. In their earthly lives, they had freewill to return to their original country and lifestyle whenever they wanted to.
 - iv. But their faith assured them that the heavenly homeland would so far surpass what this world has to offer that they willingly chose to never look back.
 - 01. Reminder of Hebrews 10 context – need endurance, no shrinking back.
 - b. Hebrews 11:16b – 16b **Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God**, for he has prepared for them a city.
 - i. They received commendation from God, and God has prepared an eternal city for them, just as He promised.
 - ii. See Revelation 21-22 for a description of this city.

C. Abraham to Rahab

- 1. By faith, Abraham offered Isaac and considered that God could raise the dead to fulfill His promise.
 - a. Hebrews 11:17-19 - 17 **By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac**, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, 18 of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." 19 **He considered that God was able** even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. (See Genesis 22.)
 - i. Isaac was the special son, the one through whom God had promised to bless Abraham and multiply his descendants. Offering Isaac in obedience included offering every promise of God on the altar in absolute confidence of God's ability to fulfill what He promised, including authoring life and death.
 - ii. This was a test of Abraham's faith and faithfulness. He passed the test.

Reminder

Faith: Greek-G3982: pistis: 1. Conviction of the truth of anything, belief. 2. Fidelity, faithfulness; **the character of one who can be relied upon**.

- 2. By faith, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph blessed and gave directions...

- a. Hebrews 11:20-22 - 20 **By faith Isaac invoked future blessings** on Jacob and Esau. 21 **By faith Jacob**, when dying, **blessed** each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. 22 **By faith Joseph**, at the end of his life, **made mention of the exodus** of the Israelites **and gave directions** concerning his bones.
 - i. Isaac blessed Jacob but did not bless Esau. (See Genesis 27.)
 - ii. Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh as his own sons, including them in God's covenant people as full heirs, even though they were half Egyptian. (See Genesis 48.)
 - iii. Joseph looked forward to the promised exodus from Egypt and directed that his bones be carried to the burial place of his fathers. (See Genesis 50:24-26.)
 01. The promise of the exodus is in Genesis 15; Genesis 50:24-26; Joshua 24:32.

3. By faith, Moses' parents hid him and were not afraid...
 - a. Hebrews 11:23 - 23 **By faith Moses**, when he was born, **was hidden for three months by his parents**, because they saw that the child was beautiful, **and they were not afraid** of the king's edict. (See Exodus 2.)

4. By faith, Moses chose to be mistreated with God's people, and left Egypt...
 - a. Hebrews 11:24-27 - 24 **By faith Moses**, when he was grown up, **refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter**, 25 **choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God** than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 **He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth** than the treasures of Egypt, **for he was looking to the reward**. 27 By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for **he endured as seeing him who is invisible**.
 - i. Moses was focused on eternity with God and the promise of the world to come. All the wealth of Egypt (which was available to him as one raised in Pharaoh's house) did not compare to the riches of being included in God's covenant people. He believed in God's reward for the faithful.
 - ii. Moses fled from Egypt to continue to identify as a Hebrew rather than cover over his crime using political favors of Egyptian royal household status. He preferred to dwell in the wilderness as a Hebrew than in Pharaoh's palace with all its splendor.
 01. Note: It is chronologically out of sequence for this to refer to Moses leaving Egypt at the time of the Exodus.

5. By faith, Israel kept the Passover and crossed the Red Sea...
 - a. Hebrews 11:28-29 - 28 **By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood**, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. 29 **By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land**, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.
 - i. Sprinkling blood on their doors was an act of FAITH that God would protect them.
 - ii. Crossing through the waters of the Red Sea was by faith in God. The Egyptians did not believe God and therefore, the waters crashed on them and they drowned.

6. Note: JUMP of FAITH.
 - a. There is no account in the Hall of Faith of the years Israel spent in the wilderness.
 - i. Reminder: The Law was never God's will or intention. Obedience of faith was.
 01. From the first test of obedience in the wilderness, Israel failed.

- 02. When it was time to enter the Promised Land, the people did not believe that God was able to bring them in. That entire generation died in the wilderness.
- b. Reminder: The context of the letter of Hebrews uses the wilderness generation that did NOT receive the Promised Land as the example of what NOT to be like.
- 7. By faith, the walls of Jericho fell, and Rahab was spared...
 - a. Hebrews 11:30-31 - 30 **By faith the walls of Jericho fell down** after they had been encircled for seven days. 31 **By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish** with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. (See Joshua 6.)

D. Great Feats of Faith and Martyrs

- 1. Many did great conquests by faith because God gave them victory through their obedience to Him. Others were subjected to torture and death, refusing to deny God and His Word. These are the ones counted as faithful.
 - a. Hebrews 11:32-35a - 32 And what more shall I say? **For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets--** 33 who **through faith** conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received back their dead by resurrection.
 - i. Gideon conquered the Midianites with 300 men. (See Judges 6.)
 - ii. Barak was given victory under the direction of Prophetess Deborah. (See Judges 4.)
 - iii. Jephthah defeated the Ammonites. (See Judges 11.)
 - iv. David was given many mighty victories as he obeyed God. (previously covered.)
 - v. God raised the dead for Elijah and Elisha ministering to women whose sons had died. (See 1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 4.)
 - vi. Through faith, people received temporal promises of life in this world. It built their faith that God would fulfill His eternal promises as well.
 - b. Hebrews 11:35b-38 – 35b **Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life.** 36 **Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.** 37 **They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword.** They went about in skins of sheep and goats, **destitute, afflicted, mistreated--** 38 of whom the world was not worthy--**wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.**
 - i. Many of the prophets of God were imprisoned, tortured, and martyred for speaking for God.
 - ii. Entire communities of prophets had to hide in caves to escape execution by evil Kings. (See 1 Kings 18.)
 - iii. Isaiah the prophet was sawn in two from top to bottom.
 - iv. Jeremiah suffered many persecutions. (See the Book of Jeremiah.)

- c. Hebrews 11:39-40 - 39 **And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised**, 40 since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.
 - i. These were the ones commended for their faith in God.
 - ii. The promise they did not receive was the eternal Kingdom, dwelling with God for eternity in a perfect world, restored to God's design.
 - iii. They did not receive it because God wanted us to be included with them.

E. Hall of Faith Continues: Jesus, the Champion of Our Faith

1. By faith, Jesus endured the cross...

- a. Hebrews 12:1-4 - 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 **looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him **who endured from sinners such hostility against himself**, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.
 - i. Jesus is the King of FAITH. He went to the cross by FAITH that God would raise Him from the dead according to the Scriptures.
 - ii. Jesus is the King of OBEDIENCE. He OBEYED God, even unto death.
 - iii. Jesus considered the reward and therefore, the shame was a small price to pay for the joy of receiving the promise of God – eternal life and an eternal Kingdom.
 - iv. THEREFORE, Jesus has been given all authority and the name that is above all names. (See Philippians 2:5-11.)
 - 01. Philippians 2:5-11 - 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, **he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross**. 9 **Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name**, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

F. Therefore, We Must Endure in FAITH and Live by FAITH Until the Kingdom Comes

1. By faith, we must endure...

- a. Hebrews 12:1-4 - 1 **Therefore**, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us**, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility

against himself, **so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.** 4 **In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.**

- i. Nothing of this world matters and will only hinder us.
 - ii. Sin must be repented of, overcome, and discarded.
 - iii. 1 John 3:3 - 3 And **everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself** as he is pure.
 - iv. Scorn and shame in this world are a small cost to pay for the greatness of eternity.
2. We overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the testimony of who God is and what Christ has done for us. We overcome by having an eternal focus rather than a temporal one, even if it costs us our lives in this world.
- a. Revelation 12:9-11 - 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world--he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. 11 **And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.**
 - i. Reminder: Faith the substance of what we hope for – eternal life with God – not anything of this world.
3. Based on your demonstration of the obedience of faith by comparison to these descriptions, would God be ashamed to be called your God?
- a. Are you maintaining an eternal focus on God and His Kingdom or are you more consumed with the things of this world (i.e. what you will eat, what you will wear, issues with your family, job, house, retirement account, cares of this life.)
 - b. Are you shrinking back from proclaiming the truth of God?
 - c. Are you proving faithful through the tests and trials of this life?
 - d. Would you be in the Hall of Faith?

Unit Five: Faith that the Gospel is the Power of God

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed--a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Romans 1:16-17 NIV

A. The Gospel is the Power of God for Salvation

1. The term "Gospel" was used in the Roman Empire to describe the good news of Rome's victory over newly conquered territories. Heralds were sent out to proclaim the "gospel of Rome" by describing the battles and victories and how the new territories were being brought into subjection to Roman culture, politics, religious beliefs, and social systems.
 - a. Accordingly, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, is the Good News that Jesus has conquered the evil one and the world that has been subjected to his reign of tyranny.
2. Mankind's need for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - a. Mark 1:1-4 - 1 **"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ**, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, 3 the voice of one crying in the wilderness: **'Prepare the way of the Lord**, make his paths straight,'" 4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and **proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.**" (Quoting Isaiah 40:3.)
 - i. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus' arrival by commanding people to repent of their sins to make themselves ready for the day of the Lord.
 - b. We enter into a story already in progress. A story of God's covenant people, Israel, who are anticipating the arrival of the Messiah who would redeem them from every enemy, destroy all unrighteousness, vindicate their faith in the Most High God, and bring them into eternal life in a resurrection of the just and of the condemned on the day of the Lord. This is in fulfillment of promises and prophecies given since the fall of mankind.
 - i. The day of the Lord is the ultimate victory for the righteous remnant of God's people. They will be delivered from all the sweat, toil, pain, sickness, and oppression of this world and brought into eternal life to dwell with God for eternity in His Kingdom in the world to come. They will enjoy the wedding banquet prepared by God for His people.
 - ii. The day of the Lord will bring about the total annihilation of all wickedness and every enemy of God, including the devil, the ancient serpent, and everyone following his ways. They will be sent to the realm of torment for eternity where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.
 - c. The whole world rightly deserves God's judgment and wrath.

- i. Romans 3:10-12 - 10 as it is written: "**None is righteous, no, not one**; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 **All have turned aside**; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."
 - ii. 1 John 5:19b – 19b ... and **the whole world lies in the power of the evil one**.
 - d. Once Jesus began ministry, He proclaimed the Kingdom of God, while continuing John's message of repentance in preparation for the final day of the Lord.
 - i. Mark 1:14-15 - 14 "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming **the gospel of God**, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.**"
2. The Gospel is Good News! God gave His Son to SAVE people from their sins. The Day of the Lord is GOOD NEWS for those who have put their trust in Him.
- a. Jesus was sent by God to extend GOOD WILL and pardon, and to show mercy to sinners who deserved wrath.
 - i. Luke 2:13-14 NKJV - 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 'Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, **goodwill toward men!**'
 - ii. Matthew 1:21 - 21 "She will bear a son, and you shall **call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.**"
 - b. God loves the world and desires for all people to be saved through repentance and FAITH in Jesus Christ. (See 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9.) He gave His Son to make a way for salvation.
 - i. John 3:16-19 - 16 "**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.** 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 **Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.** 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.
 - c. Jesus' mission the first time He came was NOT to judge and condemn and destroy, but to SAVE. He offered mercy and forgiveness of sins to all came to Him.
 - i. John 12:47-48 - 47 If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for **I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.** 48 The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.
 - ii. Luke 19:10 - 10 For the Son of **Man came to seek and to save the lost.**
 - iii. 1 Timothy 1:15 - 15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**, of whom I am the foremost.
3. Jesus lived the perfect life, died on a cross as a sacrifice to God, shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins, and was raised from the dead on the third day. He is victorious over death and the ancient serpent!
- a. He lived the perfect life, and never sinned.
 - i. Hebrews 4:15 - 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who **in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.**

- ii. 1 John 3:5 - 5 You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and **in him there is no sin.**
- b. He gave His life and was crucified as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus was the perfect atoning sacrifice for the sins of all mankind.
 - i. John 1:29 - 29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**"
 - ii. 1 John 2:2 - 2 **He is the propitiation for our sins**, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- c. He was raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of God with all power and authority in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.
 - i. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 - 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that **Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures**, 4 that he was buried, that **he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...**
 - ii. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 - 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: **that one has died for all**, therefore all have died; 15 and **he died for all**, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him **who for their sake died and was raised.**
 - iii. Acts 2:32-35 - 32 This Jesus **God raised up**, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore **exalted at the right hand of God**, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "'The Lord said to my Lord, "**Sit at my right hand**, 35 **until I make your enemies your footstool.**"
 - iv. Philippians 2:9-11 - 9 Therefore **God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name**, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- d. It is GOOD NEWS that God is VICTORIOUS!!
 - i. Just like Rome would declare victory over conquered territories, proclaiming Jesus is proclaiming God's victory over the evil one and the ultimate victory over the world when this world will become the Kingdom of God.
 - ii. All things in heaven and earth will be brought into subjection to Jesus.
 - iii. Until then, all people who believe this come into submission to Jesus – through the obedience of faith. We conform ourselves to God's ways similar to how territories conquered by Rome would be conformed to Roman ways.
- 4. The Gospel is the Power of God for salvation from the wrath of God AND temporal saving benefits of being released from sin while we are still in this life.
 - a. John 5:24 - 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. **He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.**
 - b. Romans 1:16 - 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for **it is the power of God for salvation** to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
 - i. Salvation, deliverance, healing, sustenance.

Salvation: Greek-G4991: *soferia*: 1. Deliverance, preservation, safety, salvation. 2. Deliverance from the molestation of enemies. 3. That which concludes to the

salvation of the soul. 4. Future salvation and the sum of the benefits which Christians, redeemed from all earthly ills will enjoy after the visible return of Christ from heaven.

- c. Example of Salvation: Noah's Ark. Safety/salvation from the flood. Like Noah's Ark, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God made a way for preservation and safety from present enemies and from the wrath to come.

Salvation: Hebrew-H3444: *yeshua*: 1. Salvation, deliverance. 2. Welfare, prosperity, health. 3. Victory. 4. That which is delivered.

- d. Example of Salvation: Israel's exodus from Egypt. When God delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery and being chased by the Egyptian army, they sang a song about the Lord has their salvation.
 - i. Exodus 15:2 - 2 The LORD is my strength and my song, and **he has become my salvation**; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.
 - ii. Note: Jesus' name in Hebrew is **Yeshua** - salvation.
- e. Example of Salvation/Saving: Jesus went about forgiving sin, healing the sick, delivering people from demonic oppression, and raising the dead. He came to SAVE.

Save: Greek-G4982: *sozo*: 1. To keep safe and sound, rescue from danger or destruction. 2. To save a suffering one from perishing, i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health. 3. To deliver from the penalties of Messianic judgment and to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of Messianic deliverance.

- i. During His ministry, Jesus set people free from their sins and from the oppression of the evil one, including sickness, every curse found in the Law of God, and all forms of bondage and torment including demonic oppression.
 - ii. Luke 4:17-21 - 17 "And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 18 "**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news** to the poor. He has sent me to **proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.**" 20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, "**Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.**" (Quoting Isaiah 61:1-3.)
 - 01. Jesus identified Himself as the One appointed and anointed by God to bring the good news of salvation to God's people. He came to set people free from oppressive powers in this world, from sin, from sickness, and from hostility with God.
 - iii. Acts 10:38 - 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. **He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil,** for God was with him.
- 5. Jesus is coming back to judge, in fulfillment of the Scriptures. Jesus Christ is the One appointed by God to carry judgment against all who have not put their faith in Him. The final day of the Lord is yet to come when it will be revealed who has submitted themselves to Jesus and who has not. All will be judged based on what we have DONE.
 - a. Acts 10:42 - 42 "And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that **he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.**"

- b. Acts 17:30-31 – 30 “The times of ignorance God overlooked, **but now he commands all people everywhere to repent**, 31 **because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world** in righteousness by **a man whom he has appointed**; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”
 - c. Romans 2:16 - 16 “On that day when, **according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.**”
 - d. Revelation 20:11-15 - 11 **Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it.** From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, **standing before the throne, and books were opened.** Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. **And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.** 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 **And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**
 - e. Since we will be judged by what we have DONE: Do your actions, decisions, and life choices demonstrate the obedience of faith?
 - i. Note: Through faith in Jesus, we will not be judged for our own righteousness.
 - ii. However, professing faith without doing works in keeping with repentance which demonstrate that faith, is dead faith. It will prove useless on the day of judgment.
 - iii. Our actions prove what we believe and whether we truly believe the Gospel or not.
6. Jesus is the way God has made for salvation. God has made no other way. Everything else is a creation of man or a counterfeit made by the evil one.
- a. Acts 4:12 - 12 And there is **salvation [soteria] in no one else**, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be **saved [sozo].**”
7. The Question of this Unit Is: Do you truly believe the Gospel?
- a. If you say you believe the Gospel: Do your actions demonstrate that you believe this?

B. Power for Salvation In No One Else

1. If you believe this, you will put aside all other gods, all other forms of spirituality, and all other types of religious activity to earn or justify yourself before God. Jesus ONLY.
 - a. John 14:6 - 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through me.**
 - i. Jesus is the only way that God has made for salvation.
 - b. John 6:45-46 - 45 It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' **Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me**-- 46 not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father.
 - i. Everyone who has heard and learned from God points to Jesus.

- ii. Anyone claiming to have talked to God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, who does not point to Jesus, has not talked to God.
 - 01. This disqualifies all other world religions and forms of spirituality.
 - c. 1 Timothy 2:5-6 - 5 **For there is one God**, and **there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.
 - i. Jesus is the only mediator appointed by God for mankind.
 - d. Acts 4:11-12 NLT - 11 For **Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures**, where it says, 'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.' 12 **There is salvation in no one else!** God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."
 - i. Jesus fulfills all the Scriptures. Reminder: the Gospel is a story in progress.
2. If you believe this, you will not serve or worship the idols or gods of this world, and will not adhere to the philosophies of this world, including not serving money.
- a. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 - 9 For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you **turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God**, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
 - i. This includes turning totally from all idols, images, and gods including those of Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Taoism, Jainism, ancestor worship, polytheistic gods and goddesses, Universalism, etc.
 - b. Acts 14:15-16 - 15 "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, **that you should turn from these vain things [gods and spirituality of this world] to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.**
 - i. This includes turning totally from all forms of religion and spirituality including New Age, horoscopes, tarot cards, Ouija boards, zen, yoga, fortune telling, divination, speaking to the dead (necromancy), quantum mysticism, witchcraft, sorcery, black magic, satanism, atheism, etc.
 - c. Colossians 2:8 - 8 See to it that no one takes you captive by **philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world**, and not according to Christ.
 - i. This includes turning totally from all philosophies of man such as psychology, humanism, post-modernism, mentalism, etc.
 - ii. This includes turning totally from all political philosophies of man such as communism, socialism, Marxism, Maoism, capitalism, fascism, democracy, liberalism, etc.
 - iii. This includes turning totally from all philosophies rooted in national or geographical culture, practices, traditional beliefs, etc. (i.e. Greek, German, Indian, British, Russian, Arabic, Islamic, Asian, African, etc. philosophies.)
 - d. 1 Corinthians 1:19-20, 25 - 19 For it is written, "**I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.**" 20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? **Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?** ... 25 For **the foolishness of God is wiser than men**, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

- i. This includes turning totally from all other kinds of “wisdom,” being wise in our own sight, and following our own ideas about things.
 - ii. Proverbs 14:12 - 12 There is **a way that seems right to a man**, but its end is the way to death.
 - iii. James 3:15 - 15 **This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.**
 - e. 1 John 2:15-17 - 15 **Do not love the world or the things in the world.** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 **For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life--is not from the Father but is from the world.** 17 **And the world is passing away along with its desires**, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.
 - i. This includes turning totally from indulgence of carnal desires, gluttony, sexual immorality, impurity, etc.
 - ii. This includes turning totally from indulgence of consumerism, materialism, excess, covetousness, etc.
 - iii. This includes turning totally from selfish ambition, keeping up with the Joneses', posturing for position/rank, guarding reputation, etc.
 - f. Matthew 6:24 - 24 **"No one can serve two masters**, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and money.**
 - i. This includes turning totally from serving money to totally serving God and trusting God to provide all that is needed.
 - 01. Note: One can work and be paid with their heart on God, not money.
 - ii. Greed is idolatry. (See Colossians 3:5.) The greedy will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (See 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.)
3. If you believe this, you will not try to attain, retain, or grow righteousness through religious activity or mental ascent.
- a. Romans 10:5-11 - 5 For Moses writes about the **righteousness that is based on the law**, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. 6 But the **righteousness based on faith** says, **"Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'"** (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 **"or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'"** (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 **But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);** 9 **because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, **"Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."**
 - i. It is not about ascending to God through spiritual or mental activity or descending through self-deprecation and asceticism.
 - ii. The work of Christ is complete. He said, "It is finished." We must simply believe this.
 - b. Galatians 3:1-3, 10-12 - 1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 Let me ask you only this: **Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?** 3 Are you so foolish? **Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?** 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain--if indeed it was in vain? 5 **Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith--** 6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"? ... 10 **For all who rely on works**

of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." 11 Now it is evident that **no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."** 12 But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."

- i. We cannot earn more righteousness through obedience/adherence to the Law of Moses. Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses and was crucified as the perfect sacrifice, far surpassing any sacrifice made under the Law.
 - ii. Salvation is by faith from start to finish.
 01. Romans 1:17 NLT - 17 This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. **This is accomplished from start to finish by faith.** As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."
- c. Colossians 2:18-23 - 18 **Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions,** puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. 20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, **why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations--** 21 **"Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch"** 22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used)--**according to human precepts and teachings?** 23 These have indeed an **appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body,** but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.
- i. Religious abstention, asceticism, and self-torture based on man-made rules, practices, and traditions disqualifies us from salvation by FAITH.
 01. These types of things have an appearance of humility but result in the most pungent form of spiritual pride and superiority.
 02. Contrast to genuine self-denial which is resisting the power of sin, flesh, and the world – denying selfish desires by FAITH.
 - ii. Excessive "spirituality" or emphasis on spiritual experiences not rooted in the truth of Scripture disqualifies us from salvation by FAITH.
 01. This includes only hearing from God through dreams when the Holy Spirit wants to speak to us plainly even while we are awake.
 02. This includes over-emphasis on angelic guidance or visitation when the Holy Spirit has been given to dwell in us to guide us.
 03. This includes needing to "feel" God's presence or some form of physical manifestation to confirm God's guidance.
- d. John 5:39-40 - 39 **You search the Scriptures** because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, 40 **yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.**
- i. Note: The Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes had the Scriptures memorized but did not recognize God when He was standing right in front of them in the person of Jesus.
4. The only work God wants from us is to believe Jesus. Everything else is a stronghold and a lie from the evil one.
- a. John 6:28-29 - 28 Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, **"This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."**
 - b. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 - 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine **power to destroy strongholds.** 5 We destroy **arguments** and every **lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God,** and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

C. Power for Salvation from the Wrath of God

1. If you believe this, you will be thankful and give glory to God.
 - a. Hebrews 13:15 - 15 Through him then **let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God**, that is, the fruit of **lips that acknowledge his name**.
 - b. Revelation 5:13-14 - 13 And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "**To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!**" 14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders **fell down and worshiped**.
2. If you believe this, you will (out of gratitude) offer your life and your body to Him to be pleasing to Him, without fear of man.
 - a. Romans 12:1 NLT - 1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God **because of all he has done for you**. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice--the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 - 9 So whether we are at home or away, **we make it our aim to please him**. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due **for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil**.
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 - 1 Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how **you ought to walk and to please God**, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 3 **For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality**; 4 that each one of you know how to **control his own body in holiness and honor**, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7 **For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness**. 8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.
 - d. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 - 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own**, 20 **for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body**.
 - e. 1 Corinthians 7:23 - 23 **You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men**.
 - i. Jesus is King. Jesus is Your King, Master, Teacher, etc. Do not become slaves of anyone else.
3. If you believe this, you will persevere in well-doing and things that are pleasing to Him (Rom 3)
 - a. Romans 2:6-11 - 6 He will render to each one according to his works: 7 **to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life**; 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but **glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good**, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 **For God shows no partiality**.

- b. Galatians 6:7-10 - 7 Do not be deceived: **God is not mocked**, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 **For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.** 9 And **let us not grow weary of doing good**, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, **let us do good to everyone**, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

D. Power for Salvation from Sin and Sins

1. If you believe this, you will have a clear conscience before God because of the blood of Jesus and your mind and thoughts will not be consumed with your own sin.
 - a. Hebrews 9:9b-14 – 9b According to this arrangement [the Old Testament Tabernacle and Temple], **gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper**, 10 but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. 11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 **how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.**
 - b. Hebrews 10:1-2, 12-14, 19-22 - 1 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, **since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins?** ... 12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13 waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. 14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. ... 19 Therefore, brothers, **since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus**, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 **let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**
 - c. 1 Timothy 1:5 NLT - 5 The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, **a clear conscience**, and genuine faith.
 - d. 1 Peter 3:21-22 - 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but **as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ**, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.
2. If you believe this, you will know that you are the righteousness of God by FAITH, as a free gift, not because of anything you do or do not do.

- a. Ephesians 2:8-9 - 8 For **by grace** you have been saved **through faith**. And **this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast**.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:16-17, 21 - 16 From now on, therefore, we **regard no one according to the flesh**. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation**. The old has passed away; behold, **the new has come**. ... 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so **that in him we might become the righteousness of God**.
 - c. Romans 5:6-11 - 6 "For **while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly**. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person--though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die-- 8 but **God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us**. 9 Since, therefore, we have now **been justified by his blood**, much more shall we be **saved by him from the wrath of God**. 10 For if **while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son**, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom **we have now received reconciliation**."
 - d. Colossians 1:21-22 NLT - 21 "This includes **you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies**, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. 22 Yet **now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ** in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and **you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault**."
3. If you believe this, you will draw near to God with full assurance of His acceptance of you and your unhindered access to Him because of Jesus' sacrifice.
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- a. Hebrews 4:16 - 16 Let us then **with confidence draw near** to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
 - b. Ephesians 3:11-12 - 11 This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 **in whom we have boldness and access with confidence** through our faith in him.
 - c. Romans 5:1-2 - 1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**. 2 Through him we have also **obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand**, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

E. Power for Redemption from Curse of the Law

1. If you believe this, you will be set free from all the curses found in the Law of God because Jesus took the curse upon Himself.
 - a. See the curse of the Law in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26.
 - i. Every kind of lack, need, drought, famine, scarcity, debt, etc.
 - ii. Every kind of sickness and disease, physical, mental, and emotional, etc.
 - iii. Every kind of oppression by other people, subjugation, defeat, slavery, etc.
 - iv. Every kind of fear, dread, anxiety, terror, etc.

- b. Any limitation on your ability to receive blessing. Things such as:
 - i. Lack, defeat, missed opportunities, inability to advance, lack of joy, hopelessness, heaviness, self-loathing...
 - ii. Sickness, disease, physical limitations, weakness, mental torment, miscarriages, stillbirths, barrenness...
 - iii. Subjugation to others, broken relationships, oppression...
2. If you believe this, you will live as one who is free from condemnation, free from the law of sin & death, and free to live by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- a. Galatians 5:1 - 1 **For freedom Christ has set us free**; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.
 - b. Romans 8:1-2 - 1 There is therefore now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life **has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death**.
3. If you believe this, you will know that no weapon formed against you is from God because Jesus took the curse upon Himself.
- a. Isaiah 54:14-17 - 14 **In righteousness you shall be established**; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you. 15 **If anyone stirs up strife, it is not from me**; whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you. 16 Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy; 17 **no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment**. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, declares the LORD."

See Established in Righteousness Poster.
www.manifestinternational.com/free

The poster is titled "ESTABLISHED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS" and features a grid of text in various colors (blue, green, yellow, red) on a dark background. The text is organized into columns and rows, with some words in bold. At the bottom right, it says "NEW CREATION LIFE".

F. Power for Salvation from the Powers and Forces of Darkness

1. If you believe this, you will not live a life of subjection to the spiritual powers ruling this world in chaos, wickedness, and rebellion against God. (See the Gospel is the Power.)
 - a. The spiritual forces ruling over this world influence cultural practices, social norms, (what is acceptable vs what is not) and ideals about justice and how to carry it out.
 - i. These forces are in rebellion against God and seek to deceive and drive humanity into rebellion against God.
 - b. Ephesians 6:11-17 - 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **stand against the schemes of the devil**. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but **against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places**. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **withstand in the evil day**, and having done all, to stand firm.

14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the **belt of truth**, and having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the **gospel of peace**. 16 In all circumstances take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can **extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one**; 17 and take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**,

- i. The Gospel of Jesus Christ redeems us from this world to be obedient sons of God by the power of the Holy Spirit and gives us strength to stand as we resist these spiritual forces of wickedness in this world.
 - c. Colossians 2:13-15 - 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 **He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.**
 - i. Jesus disarmed the spiritual powers and authorities through His death on the cross. They thought they succeeded by killing Him, but God displayed His glory by raising Him from the dead.
2. If you believe this, you will live free from demonic oppression, not giving the evil one any place in your life and exercising the authority of a believer to cast demons out of your own life.
- a. Luke 9:1-2 - 1 And he called the twelve together and **gave them power and authority over all demons** and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.
 - b. Luke 10:19-20 - 19 Behold, I have **given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you**. 20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."
 - c. Demonic oppression can include but is not limited to:
 - i. Compulsions, addictions, chronic and tormenting behaviors, etc.
 - ii. Infirmities, illnesses, chronic illnesses, allergies, accident-prone, etc.
 - iii. Mental illness and disorders, abnormal behaviors, ADD/ADHD, bipolar, etc.
 - iv. Depression, suppression, suicide, etc.
 - v. Anger, rage, violent behavior, self-harm, night terrors, etc.
 - vi. Witchcraft (manipulation of others), cruelty, sociopathism, narcissism, etc.
 - vii. Pornography and sex addiction, etc.
 - viii. etc.

G. Power for Salvation from Sickness

1. If you believe this, you will trust God to heal you when you get sick. Not that you will not *get* sick but you will not *stay* sick.
 - a. Isaiah 53:4-5 - 4 **Surely he has borne our griefs [sickness,disease, grief] and carried our sorrows [pains, griefs]**; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, **and with his wounds we are healed**.

- b. Matthew 8:16-17 - 16 That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and **healed all who were sick**. 17 This was to **fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."**
 - c. 1 Peter 2:24 - 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. **By his wounds you have been healed.**
2. If you believe this, you will run to God FIRST when you get sick, BEFORE running to the pill bottle, and you will persevere in FAITH with the Lord until you see your healing manifest. You will seek to avoid man-made substances, potions, remedies, and drugs (even prescription) into your body which is the Temple of the Holy Spirit.
- a. Proverbs 18:10 - 10 **The name of the LORD is a strong tower**; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 - 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine **power to destroy strongholds**. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,
 - i. Anything you are putting trust and confidence in other than Jesus is a stronghold.
 - ii. Anything that lifts itself up as an alternative solution to trusting God is a lie.
 - c. Revelation 18:21-23 - 21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more; 22 and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, 23 and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and **all nations were deceived by your sorcery [pharmaekeia]**.
 - i. Definition of pharmaekeia: The use of administration of drugs.

H. Power for Provision of All Your Needs

1. If you believe this, you will trust God to provide for all you need, you will not be anxious about money or provision, and you will give generously to the poor and to the work of God's Kingdom.
 - a. Isaiah 55:1-2 - 1 "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and **he who has no money, come, buy and eat!** Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 **Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?** Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.
 - b. John 6:27-29 - 27 **Do not work for the food that perishes**, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." 28 Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, "**This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.**"
 - c. Matthew 6:19-34 - 19 "**Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 **but lay up for yourselves treasures in**

heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy [implies generous], your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! 24 **No one can serve two masters**, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and money.** 25 Therefore I tell you, **do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on.** Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 **Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'** 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 **But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.** 34 "Therefore **do not be anxious about tomorrow**, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

- i. An unhealthy eye was one who looked grudgingly on their poor brother and would not share openhandedly with them. (See Deuteronomy 15:9 NKJV.)
2. If you believe this, you will not be anxious but will receive blessings and provision from God by faith.
 - a. Philippians 4:6-7, 19 NKJV - 6 **Be anxious for nothing**, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, **let your requests be made known to God**; 7 and **the peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. ... 19 **And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**

I. Power for Godliness – Conforming to God's Will

1. If you believe this, you will allow your mind and life to be transformed and conformed by the Holy Spirit and not the pattern of this world and its desires or models of success.
 - a. Romans 12:2 - 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
 - b. Reminder: Like a territory conquered by Rome and being brought into conformity with the ways, beliefs, practices of Roman culture – except for God's ways and practices that are pleasing to Him.
2. If you believe this, you will apply the teachings and commands of Jesus to your own life and live them out as the Holy Spirit leads you.

- a. John 8:31-32 NIV - 31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "**If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.** 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free [from sin, death, curse, Law, the devil, torment, affliction, disease, etc.]"
 - b. John 14:15, 21, 23-24, 26 - 15 "**If you love me, you will keep my commandments.** ... 21 **Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.** And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." ... 23 Jesus answered him, "**If anyone loves me, he will keep my word,** and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 **Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.** And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. ... 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, **he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.**
3. If you believe this, you will aim to live a righteous life that is holy and pleasing to God, doing the right thing from the heart. (To be covered more in Unit Six.)
 - a. 2 Peter 1:3-4 - 3 His divine power has granted to us **all things that pertain to life and godliness**, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that **through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.**
 - i. When we believe Jesus is Lord, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside of us and write the Law of God upon our hearts, to obey Him willingly from the heart. (See Unit Two.)
 - ii. Through the strength of the Holy Spirit within us, we are given power to resist the corrupt urges of sinful desire to live a holy life for God.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 - 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and **he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.**
 - i. We live for God and to please Him rather than to please ourselves.
 - c. Micah 6:8 NKJV - 8 He has shown you, O man, what [is] good; And what does the LORD require of you **But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?**
 - d. James 4:17 - 17 So **whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.**
 4. If you believe this, you will love God more than anything and anyone else. To honor Him, you will deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus no matter the cost. Otherwise, you are not worthy to be His disciple.
 - a. Matthew 10:37-39 - 37 **Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,** and **whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.** 38 **And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.** 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

J. Responses of FAITH in Life & Trials

1. If you believe the Gospel, you will seek the Lord through prayer, worship, and fasting. You will live a life of devotion to Him and abiding in Him daily.

2. If you believe the Gospel, you will trust God in trials to move on your behalf, guide you with His wisdom, and you will wait for Him until He does.
 - a. You will turn to God when trials or blessings come, rather than self-searching for why God might be punishing or rewarding you.
 - i. i.e. Not asking "What have I done?", or "Why is God punishing me?", or "What do I have to do to make it right and get back in God's good graces?",
 - ii. i.e. Not thinking "God is rewarding my obedience" when it is Christ's obedience that has earned the blessings for us.
 - b. You will not fall away or shrink back from the faith or stumble back into patterns or behaviors of your former life. What we truly believe is exposed when the trials of life come.
 - i. i.e. 2nd Soil hearts that receive the Gospel with joy but have no deep root and fall away when there is persecution or tribulation or trial.
 - ii. i.e. Reverting to false worship, or syncretizing other spiritual practices or philosophies into our own version of Christianity.
 - iii. i.e. 3rd Soil hearts that prioritize the things of this world rather than the things of God's Kingdom and never mature. (Trials are designed by God to bring us to maturity.)
 - iv. Reminder: Kings of Israel & Judah.
 - c. You will trust God for deliverance from your enemies and opponents.
 - i. i.e. Not compromising to make worldly alliances to bolster your position and strength.
 - ii. i.e. Not counting on or relying on money or your own resources.
 - iii. i.e. Not relying on your own wisdom, ideas, strength, or abilities, but submitting totally to God and His wisdom and direction.
 - iv. Reminder: Kings of Israel & Judah.
 - d. You will not defend or avenge yourself or your reputation but trust God to defend you and your reputation.
 - i. i.e. Not gossiping or spreading rumors, true or false, to get your side of the story out before your opponents.
 - ii. i.e. Not arguing against false accusations or lying about accusations that are true.
 - iii. i.e. Leaving all vengeance to God, to whom it belongs. (See Romans 12:19; Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 32:35.)
 - iv. i.e. Being willing to become of no reputation and not defending your public image in trust for God's vengeance and defense. (Philippians 2:7 KJV.)
 - v. i.e. Not falling on your own sword to avoid humiliation. (Example: King Saul.)
3. If you believe the Gospel, you will treat others with love, kindness, and respect.
 - a. You will obey Jesus by loving others, especially other believers.
 - i. John 13:34-35 - 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another**: just as I have loved you, **you also are to love one another**. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, **if you have love for one another**."
 - b. You will not dominate, manipulate, or bully others into subjection in order to get your own way (or what you think is God's way.)
 - i. Matthew 20:25-28 - 25 But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 26 **It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,** 27 **and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,** 28

even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

- ii. Matthew 23:8-12 - 8 **But you are not to be called rabbi [teacher]**, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. 9 **And call no man your father** on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. 10 **Neither be called instructors [master, guide]**, for you have one instructor, the Christ. 11 **The greatest among you shall be your servant.** 12 Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.
- c. You will love people.
 - i. 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 - 1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, **but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.** 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, **but have not love, I am nothing.** 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, **but have not love, I gain nothing.** 4 Love is **patient and kind**; love **does not envy or boast**; it is **not arrogant** 5 **or rude.** It **does not insist on its own way**; it is **not irritable or resentful**; 6 it does **not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.** 7 Love **bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.** 8 Love **never ends.** As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.
 01. Faith is not proved by what you mentally understand or by spiritual gifts.
 02. Faith is not proved by strict adherence to a religious code or willingness to sacrifice.
 03. Real faith is proved by love.

K. Not Ashamed of the Gospel, No Fear of Man

1. If you believe, you will not be ashamed of Jesus as your Lord, or of the Gospel.
 - a. Romans 1:16 - 16 **For I am not ashamed of the gospel**, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
 - b. 2 Timothy 1:8-10 - 8 "Therefore **do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord**, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 **who saved us and called us to a holy calling**, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, 10 and which now has been **manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.**"
 - c. Matthew 10:32-33 - 32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, 33 but **whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.**
 - d. Mark 8:38 - 38 **For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words** in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the **Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes** in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."
 - e. 2 Timothy 2:11-13 - 11 The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him; **if we deny him, he also will deny us**; 13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful-- for he cannot deny himself.

2. If you believe the Gospel, you will not fear man but will boldly proclaim Jesus.
 - a. Acts 4:29-30 - 29 And now, Lord, **look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness**, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."
 - i. Even in the midst of intense persecution, potential imprisonment, beatings, or death, believers prayed for boldness to continue to proclaim that Jesus is King!
 - b. John 9:20-23 - 20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. 21 But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." 22 **(His parents said these things because they feared the Jews**, for the Jews had already agreed that **if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue**.) 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."
 - i. A blind man's parents didn't confess knowledge of Jesus because they were afraid of the people and of being kicked out of the synagogue.
 - c. John 12:42-43 - 42 Nevertheless, **many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue**; 43 for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.
 - i. Many leaders believed Jesus but would not openly confess their belief because they feared the Pharisees and being kicked out of the synagogue.
 - d. John 5:44 - 44 **How can you believe**, when you receive glory from one another and **do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?**
 - i. Those who seek glory from man and fear man more than they fear God do not glorify God and will not receive glory from God.

L. Form of Godliness, Denying the Power

1. If you are deficient in any of these areas you are denying the power of the Gospel.
 - a. 2 Timothy 3:2-7 - 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 **having the appearance [form, resemblance] of godliness, but denying its power**. Avoid such people. 6 For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, 7 **always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge [precise and correct understanding] of the truth**.
 - i. Outward behaviors are what the Pharisees focused on. God looks at the heart.
 - ii. A form of godliness without a true reliance on the Holy Spirit, denies the power of the Gospel to transform sinners into children of God.
 - iii. Head knowledge and mental ascent is not the same as a life lived in dependent reliance on God for His strength and power in all situations.

Unit Six: The Fight of Faith: Presenting Yourself for Obedience

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

1 Timothy 6:12

A. Fight the Fight of Faith

1. Paul charged Timothy to fight the good fight of faith by persevering and growing in the truth leading to eternal life, including living a holy life of godliness.
 - a. 1 Timothy 6:3-10 - 3 If anyone teaches a different doctrine and **does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness**, 4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, **imagining that godliness is a means of gain**. 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 **But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content**. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. **It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs**.
 - i. The context and set up for Paul's instruction about the fight of faith includes exposing false doctrines and worldly ambitions presented as acceptable beliefs, goals, and lifestyles for those claiming to be believers.
 - ii. 1 Timothy 1:4-6 NLT - 4 **Don't let them waste their time in endless discussion** of myths and spiritual pedigrees. These things only lead to meaningless speculations, which **don't help people live a life of faith in God**. 5 The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and **genuine faith**. 6 **But some people have missed this whole point**. They have turned away from these things and **spend their time in meaningless discussions**.
 - iii. 1 Timothy 4:16 NLT - 16 **Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching**. **Stay true to what is right** for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.
 - iv. The fight of faith is to maintain pure doctrine and not be conformed to the pattern of this world, even if Scripture can be quoted (out of context) to seemingly justify it.
 - v. You cannot serve God and money. You cannot serve God and this world.
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:11-12 - 11 But as for you, O man of God, **flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness**. 12 **Fight the good fight of the faith**. **Take hold of the eternal life** to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
 - i. The fight of faith is about turning from and guarding our hearts and minds against the schemes and lies of the evil one, temptations of the flesh, and wisdom of this world.
 - ii. The fight of faith is about vigorously pursuing God and living virtuously.

- iii. It is a war between good and evil, light and darkness, God and satan. It is a fight to resist evil and remain with God.
- c. 1 Timothy 6:13-16 - 13 I charge you in the presence of **God, who gives life to all things**, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, 14 to **keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ**, 15 which he will display at the proper time--he who is the **blessed and only Sovereign**, the **King of kings and Lord of lords**, 16 who **alone has immortality**, who **dwells in unapproachable light**, whom no one has ever seen or can see. **To him be honor and eternal dominion**. Amen.
- i. Paul reminds Timothy of God's supreme authority as Creator and giver of life. No other god can do that so no other god is worth living for or dying for.
 - ii. Paul reminds Timothy of Jesus when He stood before Pilate and testified of His purpose to be King, even though Pilate had the authority to crucify Him – and did.
 - 01. John 18:33-37 - 33 So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "**Are you the King of the Jews?**" 34 Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" 35 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" 36 **Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."** 37 Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "**You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world--to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.**"
 - 001. Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God to Pilate.
 - 002. Note: He did not fight a physical battle or war, nor did His servants. It was a fight of faith in God's promise of resurrection and eternal life.
 - 02. John 19:9-11 - 9 [After having Jesus flogged] He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? **Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?**" 11 Jesus answered him, "**You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.** Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin."
 - 001. Jesus did not cave into pressure even though Pilate was going to give the order to have Him executed.
 - iii. Paul reminds Timothy that Jesus is God, the only and Most High God, the only author of eternal life, the one who has and deserves all glory, and who has all dominion over all creation for all time.
 - 01. By magnifying God's greatness, he was hoping to make Timothy's problems and challenges look small (miniscule) by comparison.
 - 02. This is the fight of faith. To magnify God and minimize the problem – to focus on eternal life rather than temporal comfort and benefit... While trusting God to fix the problem – OR deliver us into eternal life even if the problem is not "fixed" in the world's view.
2. From prison, before his execution, Paul charged Timothy to keep fighting the fight of faith. He had fought the fight of faith and finished his race for the Lord by completing the work God had given him to do.

- a. 2 Timothy 4:1-5 - 1 **I charge you** in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 **preach the word**; be ready in season and out of season; **reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching**. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5 **As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry**.
 - i. This is the set up for Paul saying that he had fought his fight of faith. He is charging Timothy to keep fighting a pure fight.
 - ii. Again, He magnifies God as ultimate Judge of all.
 - iii. He charges Timothy to preach the word purely, rebuking and correcting those who oppose him with kindness and patience but firmness in the truth because of the excess of false teachers who discount/dismiss the truth to indulge carnal people.

- b. 2 Timothy 4:6-8 - 6 **For I am already being poured out as a drink offering**, and the time of my departure has come. 7 **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith**. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me **the crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.
 - i. Paul had already poured out his life for God. At a prior time, he had wanted to die and be with the Lord but knew it was more profitable for him to stay because God had more work for him to do. (See Philippians 1:23-24.)
 - ii. He knew he was about to die. These are his last words to Timothy.
 - iii. He had fought the fight of faith in spite of massive opposition, horrendous trials, beatings, imprisonments, shipwrecks, hardships, riots, expulsions, false accusations, rebellious believers, etc. (See 2 Corinthians 11.)
 - iv. Acts 20:24 - 24 **But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry** that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.
 01. He knew he had finished his race and completed God's work for him.
 - v. He had not fallen away, shrunk back, denied Jesus, or lost hope in eternal life and the resurrection from the dead to dwell with God forever in the world to come.
 - vi. He knew God was a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him and he anticipated his eternal reward.

B. Follow Jesus

1. Jesus' disciples dropped everything to follow Him.
 - a. Matthew 4:18-22 - 18 While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, "**Follow me**, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 **Immediately they left their nets and followed him**. 21 And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, **and he called them**. 22 **Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him**.

 - b. Matthew 9:9 - 9 As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "**Follow me**." **And he rose and followed him**.

2. Following Jesus may be costly, and there's no looking back.
 - a. Luke 9:57-62 - 57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "**I will follow you wherever you go.**" 58 And Jesus said to him, "**Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.**" 59 To another he said, "**Follow me.**" But he said, "**Lord, let me first** go and bury my father." 60 And Jesus said to him, "**Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.**" 61 Yet another said, "**I will follow you, Lord, but let me first** say farewell to those at my home." 62 Jesus said to him, "**No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.**"
3. Those who refuse to follow Jesus will walk away sad.
 - a. Luke 18:22-23 - 22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "**One thing you still lack.** Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and **come, follow me.**" 23 But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich.
4. Jesus calls us to follow Him by following His voice. His sheep hear His voice and follow Him.
 - a. John 10:2-5, 27 - 2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the gatekeeper opens. **The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.** 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and **the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.** 5 **A stranger they will not follow,** but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ... 27 **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.**
5. To truly serve Jesus, we must follow Him in the path of righteousness and offering our lives totally to God.
 - a. John 12:24-26 - 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.** 25 Whoever loves his life loses it, and **whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.** 26 **If anyone serves me, he must follow me;** and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.
6. It doesn't matter what anyone else is doing, we must keep our eyes on Jesus and follow Him.
 - a. John 21:21-22 - 21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? **You follow me!**"

C. Offer Yourself as a Living Sacrifice

1. Live for God by offering yourself to Him completely.
 - a. Romans 12:1-2 NLT - 1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to **give your bodies to God** because of all he has done for you. **Let them be a living and holy sacrifice**--the kind he will find acceptable. **This is truly the way to worship him.** 2 **Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world,** but **let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.** Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.
 - i. In view of what God has done, this is a reasonable response. This is true worship.

- b. A sacrifice in the Old Covenant was an animal that was presented upon an altar and gave its life unto God.
 - i. A burnt offering was offered to God in petition or out of praise. It was completely consumed in the fire of the altar.
 - ii. Note: In the New Covenant, Jesus is the sacrifice that atones for sin.
 - c. But Paul is saying for US to be the sacrifice – even while we live.
 - i. We do not give ourselves over to literal death but offer ourselves completely to the will of God.
 - ii. We live DEAD to ourselves, DEAD to our own desires, DEAD to our own ideas, DEAD to our own plans and agenda, DEAD to our flesh, DEAD to this world, DEAD to the schemes of the evil one, DEAD to being offended by people, DEAD, DEAD, DEAD.
 - iii. Dead people don't have opinions, agendas, desires, and they can't be tempted to sin because they are DEAD.
2. We DIED with Christ. Live DEAD to sin so that you can live alive to God and righteousness. Dead people do not have sinful desires.
- a. Romans 6:3-7 - 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into his death**? 4 **We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death**, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might **walk in newness of life**. 5 For if we have been **united with him in a death like his**, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 **We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin**. 7 For **one who has died has been set free from sin**.
 - i. Baptism is the symbolic death of our old self and our rebirth as a new creation in Christ. Our old self was put to death.
 - ii. The old is DEAD so that we don't have to live that way anymore, including indulging our own sinful thoughts and behaviors.
 - iii. We have DIED so that we have been set free from sin. Dead people don't sin.
 - b. Romans 6:11-13 - 11 So you also must **consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God** in Christ Jesus. **12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions**. 13 **Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness**, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and **your members to God as instruments for righteousness**.
 - i. By faith, we live as if we are dead to sin by not indulging sinful desires.
 - ii. By faith, we present ourselves to God to do what is right in God's sight.
3. We were CRUCIFIED with Christ. Live DEAD to the Law and legalistic religious practices trying to earn God's blessing so that you can live in this world by FAITH. Dead people cannot do anything to earn or deserve God's favor or blessing.
- a. Galatians 2:19-21 - 19 For through the law **I died to the law, so that I might live to God**. 20 **I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me**. And the life I now live in the flesh **I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.
 - i. When Jesus died on the cross, we died with Him. Our old self was crucified.
 - ii. By faith, we believe that Jesus earned right standing with God for us and we live in ongoing right standing with God by faith.

4. We were CRUCIFIED to this world. Live DEAD to its ambitions, demands, and standards. Dead people don't have to measure up to the world's standards of success.
 - a. Galatians 6:14 - 14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, **by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**
 - i. The world's pressures and measurements of success no longer apply to our life.
 - ii. By faith, we believe that God redeemed us out of the world so that we no longer have to live to fulfill its demands and desires.
5. We DIED with Christ. Live DEAD to yourself in order to live for Him.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 - 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and **he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised**
6. We must deny ourselves and our very lives in order to fully follow Jesus.
 - a. Mark 8:34-38 - 34 And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "**If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.** 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.** 36 **For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?** 37 For what can a man give in return for his soul? 38 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

D. Mind Set on the Spirit

1. Jesus fulfilled the requirement of the Law, died a sacrificial death, was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven in order to pour out the Holy Spirit into the hearts of those who believe so that we can be led by His Spirit into a life pleasing to God.
 - a. Hebrews 10:16 - 16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: **I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,**" (Quoting Jeremiah 31:31.)
 - b. Ezekiel 36:26-27 - 26 And **I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.** And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And **I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**
2. Now, we can truly follow Jesus by following His Spirit – as if He were here with us – because HE IS. We do so by setting our mind on the Spirit of God dwelling within us through faith in Jesus.
 - a. John 6:63 NKJV - 63 "**It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.** The words that I speak to you are spirit, and [they] are life.
 - b. John 15:4-5 - 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, **neither can you, unless you abide in me.** 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for **apart from me you can do nothing.**

- c. Romans 8:5-8 - 5 For those who **live according to the flesh** set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who **live according to the Spirit** set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 **For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.** 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 **Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**
 - i. We retain free will to choose to follow Jesus by the promptings of the Holy Spirit or to follow the inclinations of our flesh.
 - ii. Those who are in the flesh are living the old life, not the dead-to-old-life.
 - d. Philippians 4:8-9 - 8 Finally, brothers, **whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.** 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me--practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.
 - i. Keep your mind on things that are righteous, holy, and true.
 - ii. Keep your mind on the purity of the Gospel and the example of Jesus and the apostles.
 - e. Romans 8:12-14 - 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but **if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.
 - i. The Holy Spirit within us will bring us into conviction about sin and give us strength to resist the urges of our flesh.
 - ii. Because of what Jesus has done for us and the gift of the Holy Spirit that He has given us, we owe it to Him to obey the Holy Spirit rather than our flesh.
3. We must walk by the Spirit rather than the flesh.
- a. Galatians 5:16-17 - 16 But I say, **walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.** 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, **to keep you from doing the things you want to do.**
 - i. A person's "walk" means their way of life, including motivation, empowerment, decisions, daily lifestyle.
 - ii. "To walk by the Spirit" means to live by the Holy Spirit's guidance and direction, basing life decisions on wisdom given by the Holy Spirit, and executing upon that wisdom with strength that the Holy Spirit gives.
 - iii. To walk in the flesh means to live according to its desires and cravings.
 - b. Galatians 5:19-21 - 19 **Now the works of the flesh are evident:** sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that **those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**
 - i. Flesh works the works of carnality and darkness, leading to depravity and a debased mind, hostile to God and His ways.
 - ii. Those who live this way will not inherit the Kingdom, even if they claim to be believers.
 - c. Galatians 5:22-25 - 22 **But the fruit of the Spirit is** love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 **And those who**

belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we **live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.**

- i. The Spirit produces fruit in our lives of righteous Christ-like character and love for God and others.
 - ii. Those who have crucified their flesh are the ones who truly belong to Christ.
 - iii. We must continually stay in step with the Holy Spirit, daily, moment-by-moment, in every decision.
4. If we continue to live for our flesh and our own desires, we will limit the work of God in our lives. God is not limited and God does not limit us. We only limit ourselves.
- a. 2 Corinthians 6:3, 12 - 3 **We put no obstacle in anyone's way**, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ... 12 You are not restricted by us, but **you are restricted in your own affections.**
 - i. Mark 4:18-19 - 18 And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, 19 but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the **desires for other things** enter in and choke the word, and **it proves unfruitful.**
 01. Luke version says, "Does not mature."
 - b. James 1:13-15 - 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 **But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.** 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.
 - c. Matthew 26:41 - 41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. **The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."**

E. Out with the Old, In with the New

1. Present yourself for new life by not indulging the old.
 - a. Romans 6:16-19 - 16 **Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?** 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. **For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.**
 - i. We must choose to live for God and not for ourselves/flesh.
 - ii. We present the members of our body to God as instruments of righteousness to fulfill His will and purposes.
2. Take Off the Old.
 - a. Ephesians 4:17-22 - 17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that **you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.** 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to

sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!-- 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, **22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,**

- i. We must put off the old way of living, thinking, and behaving according to our own deceitful and sinful desires.
 - ii. Ephesians 4 goes on to list: Put away falsehood, do not give place to the devil, do not steal, do not allow corrupting talk, do not grieve the Holy Spirit, put aside bitterness, wrath, anger, slander, malice, etc.
 - iii. Ephesians 5 continues to list: Refrain from sexual immorality, impurity, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talk, crude joking, etc.
- b. Colossians 3:5-9 - **5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:** sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 **But now you must put them all away:** anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that **you have put off the old self with its practices...**
- i. You have free will to choose to continue in the old way or to diligently live for the new way of life by the Spirit.
- c. 2 Corinthians 7:1 - 1 Since we have these promises, beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion** in the fear of God.
- i. Context of separating from unbelievers and their practices for the promise of being the children of God. (2 Corinthians 6:14-18.)
- d. 2 Timothy 2:22 - **22 So flee youthful passions** and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.
- i. Youthful passions: Success, notoriety, money, fame, conquest, women/men, sex, etc.
- e. 1 Timothy 6:10-11 - 10 For **the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.** It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. 11 But as for you, O man of God, **flee these things.** Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.
- f. 1 Peter 3:10-11 - 10 For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, **let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit;** 11 **let him turn away from evil** and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. (Quoting Psalm 34:12-16.)
- g. 2 Timothy 2:19 NIV - 19 Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "**Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.**"
- i. Reference: Numbers 16:5, Korah's rebellion. God made a distinction between those who were consumed by the earth swallowing them and those who were spared.
3. Put On the NEW.
- a. Ephesians 4:22-24 - **22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,** 23 and to **be renewed in the spirit of your minds,** 24 and to **put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.**
- i. We have a free will choice to put on the new and diligently live for God.

- ii. Our job and mission in this world is to represent God to the rest of the world by revealing His heart of mercy and His perfect righteousness to everyone we meet.
 - b. Colossians 3:10-14 - 10 **...and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.** 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. 12 **Put on then, as God's chosen ones,** holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 **And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.**
 - i. Put on the new self and live a holy life for God.
 - ii. Put on LOVE as the greatest evidence of your faith in what Jesus has done for you.
 - c. 2 Peter 1:5-10 - 5 **For this very reason [because we have divine nature dwelling inside of us through faith in Christ], make every effort** to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 8 **For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 **For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind,** having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to **confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.**
 - i. Demonstrate your faith by diligently growing in the character of Christ.
 - ii. If you fail to grow in these qualities, you prove that you are walking in darkness and are blind.
 - iii. Nearsighted people can only see what is right in front of them. They cannot see what is far off.
 - d. 1 Peter 1:13-16 - 13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 **As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,** 15 but as he who called you is holy, **you also be holy in all your conduct,** 16 **since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."**
4. You are New. So be New.
- a. 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 - 16 From now on, therefore, we **regard no one according to the flesh.** Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**

F. Work Out Your Own Salvation with Fear and Trembling

- 1. Each of us needs to work out our own salvation as God works it in us according to His purpose.
 - a. Philippians 2:12-13 - 12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,** 13 **for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**

- i. "Therefore" Context: Giving Jesus as the example of offering His life in total submission and obedience to God. (To be covered in Part G.)
 - ii. Paul is exhorting obedience and total faithfulness to God, even in trials, persecution, and unto death.
 - 01. Note: Paul is writing this letter from his own prison cell.
 - iii. Paul is using the example of Jesus emptying Himself of heaven's glory, denying Himself worldly status, and receiving an eternal reward to exhort the Philippians to persevere in their own obedience, leading to their ultimate salvation and eternal life.
 - 01. Note: Elsewhere Paul commends the Philippian church for giving generously even out of their poverty. They know how to deny themselves and live for God's Kingdom. He wants them to continue to do so.
 - iv. "Fear and trembling" indicates proper fear of God, and reverence for who He is which leads to submission, obedience, and proper worship.
 - 01. Psalm 2:11-12 - **11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.** 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.
2. We must retain an eternal focus, knowing that eternal life with God is worth more than anything this world has to offer – even life itself.
- a. Romans 8:35-39 - **35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? **36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."** 37 **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.** 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**
 - i. Jesus has paid the price for us to have eternal life with God. The will be completely realized in the world to come when we dwell with Him forever.
 - ii. Troubles and difficulties of this world cannot separate us from God. (i.e. tribulation, persecution, famine, etc.)
 - iii. Even martyrdom – being a sheep led to slaughter – cannot separate us from eternal life with God and seeing His promise of eternity fulfilled.
 - 01. Quoting Psalm 44 about Israel being conquered by enemies even though they had done nothing wrong. It looked bad and like the enemies had won or were more powerful than God.
 - 02. But Paul says, "NO!" Even if they kill all of us, God is still greater and God will ultimately be victorious over evil, raise us from the dead, and allow us to dwell with Him forever in eternity.
 - iv. Spiritual opposition and powers of darkness cannot separate us from God. (i.e. angels, rulers, powers, etc.)
3. We must examine ourselves with ruthless honesty to see if we truly believe what we say we believe and if our actions demonstrate this belief or something else.
- a. 2 Corinthians 13:5 - **5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.** Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you fail to meet the test!
 - i. In your daily life, are you obeying God in all things? Do you always do the right thing?
 - ii. In your daily life, are you led by His Spirit in all things? Do you ask God what He wants you to do in all situations?

- 01. Or is your prayer life mostly you asking God what you want Him to do in your situations?
 - iii. When the trial comes, do you cave into desires of your flesh?
 - iv. When the trial comes, do you cave into the pressures of this world? Money?
 - v. Are you living for eternity? Are you focused on eternity? Do you even think about eternity?
 - 01. Or are you focused on how to get what you want in this life and how to get God to give it to you?
 - vi. Are most of your thoughts and conversations about this world and things of this world and other people in this world?
 - 01. What you are going to eat? What you are going to wear? What somebody else was wearing? How you are going to buy something? What the latest movie was?
- 4. Comparison can be a tool for testing the genuineness of faith and faithfulness.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 NLT - 1 Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia [Philippi]. 2 They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. 3 For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. 4 **They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift** for the believers in Jerusalem. 5 They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do. 6 So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of giving. 7 Since you excel in so many ways--in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us--I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving. 8 I am not commanding you to do this. **But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches.** 9 You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.
 - i. The context is giving. The believers in Philippi, though very poor, had given well beyond their means and joyfully so. It demonstrated real faith.
 - ii. The Corinthians had much more than the Philippians and Paul is saying that their giving will prove that their faith is equally genuine.
 - iii. The Corinthians excelled in many things (knowledge, spiritual gifts, etc.) but their willingness to give of their own substance (deny themselves) would demonstrate genuine faith and obedience.
 - iv. 2 Corinthians 9:13 NIV - 13 Because of the service **by which you have proved yourselves**, others will praise God for **the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ**, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.
 - v. Note: Paul's ultimate example and comparison is JESUS. Are you Jesus yet?

G. Example: Jesus

- 1. Example: Jesus humbled Himself to obey God, even unto death on a cross. For that He received His eternal reward.

- a. Philippians 2:5-11 - 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 **but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant**, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, **he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** 9 **Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name**, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
2. Example: Jesus submitted Himself totally to the Father in all things at all times. He did nothing from His flesh and did nothing of His own will. He always did what was pleasing to God.
 - a. John 5:19, 30 - 19 So Jesus said to them, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing.** For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. ... 30 "**I can do nothing on my own.** As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because **I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.**
 - b. John 6:38 - 38 For I have come down from heaven, **not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.**
 - c. John 8:29 - 29 And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, **for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.**
 3. Example: Jesus spoke and taught only what the Father gave Him to speak and teach.
 - a. John 7:16-18 - 16 So Jesus answered them, "**My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.** 17 If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. 18 The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; **but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.**
 - b. John 12:49-50 - 49 **For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment--what to say and what to speak.** 50 And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, **I say as the Father has told me."**
 - c. John 14:10 - 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? **The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me** does his works.
 4. Example: Jesus was tested in all points but without sin. He maintained righteousness according to God's Word. He maintained perfect faith in God's purpose, plan, and protection.
 - a. Hebrews 4:15 - 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who **in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.**
 - b. 1 Peter 2:22 - 22 **He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.**
 5. Example: Lust of the flesh: Indulge the craving of your flesh to satisfy your hunger.
 - a. Matthew 4:1-4 - 1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves

of bread." 4 But he answered, "**It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."**"

- b. Jesus enjoyed food and wine and feasting, but did not overindulge in wine or food.
 - c. There were women among the disciples of Jesus who accompanied Him and provided for His ministry. (See Luke 8:1-3.) Jesus did not look at them lustfully but with purity as sisters (and daughters of God.)
 - d. He lived by divine nature within Him, relied upon the power of God through the Holy Spirit and the written Word of God. He did not live by His flesh.
 - 01. Note: We have this same divine nature in us. (2 Peter 1:4.)
6. Example: Lust of the eyes: See something you want and go attain it. Twist Scriptural promises for your own personal advantage. Create a spectacle to prove your identity and attain your desire.
- a. Matthew 4:5-7 - 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple 6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you," and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." 7 Jesus said to him, "**Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'**"
 - b. Jesus did not strive for material possessions, homes, clothes, or money. He had no place to lay His head, He gave generously to the poor, and didn't even carry a denarius.
7. Example: Pride of Life: Compromise pure worship of God to attain glory for yourself.
- a. Matthew 4:8-10 - 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "**Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."**"
 - b. Jesus did not take shortcuts to attain Kingship in this world or to avoid the suffering ordained by God for Him. When they wanted to make Him King, He withdrew from them and returned to give His most offensive teaching. (See John 6.)
 - c. Jesus trusted God to guard and protect Him from death threats. He did not have bodyguards or security systems. He trusted God.
8. Example: Temptation in the face of death.
- a. Mark 14:32-36 - 32 And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 And he took with him Peter and James and John, and **began to be greatly distressed and troubled.** 34 And he said to them, "**My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.** Remain here and watch." 35 And going a little farther, **he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.** 36 And he said, "**Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.**"
9. Example: No retaliation. No violence. No threatening with vengeance. Only trusting God.

- a. 1 Peter 2:23 - 23 When he was reviled, **he did not revile in return**; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.
 - b. Luke 22:35-38, 49-53 - 35 And he said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." 36 He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. **And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one.** 37 For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors.' For what is written about me has its fulfillment." 38 And they said, "**Look, Lord, here are two swords.**" **And he said to them, "It is enough."** ... 49 And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "**Lord, shall we strike with the sword?**" 50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus said, "**No more of this!**" **And he touched his ear and healed him.** 52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? 53 When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."
10. Example: Martyrdom as proof that He had done the will of God and did not back down or shrink back, even from death. Perfect faith that God would fulfill His word and His promise. Perfect focus on eternity rather than this temporal world.
- a. John 8:28 - 28 So Jesus said to them, "**When you have lifted up the Son of Man**, then you will know that I am he, and that **I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.**"
 - b. John 14:30-31 NIV - 30 I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, 31 but **he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.** "Come now; let us leave.
 - i. The evil one had no hold on Jesus and no rightful accusation against Him. Jesus' willingness to serve God even unto death, proved His love for the Father and Jesus' total obedience to Him.
11. Example: Resurrection as the evidence that He had done the will of God.
- a. Acts 2:24 - 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because **it was not possible for him to be held by it.**
 - b. Romans 1:4 - 4 and **was declared to be the Son of God** in power according to the Spirit of holiness **by his resurrection from the dead**, Jesus Christ our Lord,

Unit Seven: Learning Obedience through Suffering

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Hebrews 2:10

A. Jesus Was Made Perfect through Suffering

1. Jesus was already perfect in character and holiness. He was proved to be perfect by being put in the most challenging situation where His earthly existence was on the line. Even in death, He never weakened or waived in His faith. He proved to be perfect.
 - a. Hebrews 2:9-10 - 9 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, **crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death**, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should **make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering**.
 - i. Jesus received the reward for His perfect obedience when He was in a flesh just like yours and mine.
 - ii. It was God's design that Jesus was made/found to be perfect through the suffering of death. He was tested to the uttermost but trusted and obeyed God, even through gossip, rumors, false accusations, beatings, imprisonment, torture, and death.
 - iii. The word "founder" of our faith means: champion, leader, captain, or one who gives an example.

To Perfect (Make Perfect): Greek-G5048: *teleioo*: 1. To make perfect or complete, as in to carry through to completion, accomplish, finish, or bring to an end. 2. **To be found perfect**. 3. To bring the end proposed (i.e. accomplish the goal)
 - iv. Through this, Jesus was also made into the perfect leader for all of us. He left us a perfect example to follow. No matter what we face in our trials, we can look to Him and know that He does not ask us to die for Him without being willing to die for us first.
 01. Leaders of the world ask others to die for them and their cause so that they can keep on leading.
 02. Jesus led the way by going first into death, being willing to die for the purpose of obedience and submission to God, in faith for the resurrection from the dead and eternal life with God and being unwilling to deny His identity as the Son of God.
 03. A leader who will not die for their own cause is not much of a leader.
 04. We can take courage in our trials because of Jesus example and victory.
 - b. John 17:4 - 4 I glorified you on earth, **having accomplished the work that you gave me to do**.
 - c. Hebrews 5:7-10 - 7 **In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears**, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard

because of his reverence. 8 Although he was a son, he **learned obedience through what he suffered.** 9 **And being made perfect,** he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, 10 being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

- i. Jesus prayed earnestly and with reverence for God to deliver Him from and through His trials.
 - ii. Through this, Jesus learned what it takes for us to submit each trial and challenge to God in prayer and how to rely on divine nature rather than human strength. He learned the strength and endurance required to obey God by resisting sin, the flesh, and the evil one.
 - iii. Now because of this, He can intercede effectively for us as our High Priest, no matter what we may be struggling with in our own trials.
2. Through suffering, Jesus was made into a perfect, merciful, and compassionate High Priest.
- a. Hebrews 2:17-3:2 - 17 Therefore **he had to be made like his brothers in every respect**, so that he might become a **merciful and faithful high priest** in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For **because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help** those who are being tempted. ... 3:1 Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 **who was faithful to him who appointed him**, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.
 - i. Jesus had a flesh like ours and was tested in all points but without sin. Now, He is able to be merciful and helpful when we are being tested and going through trials.
 - ii. Jesus proved FAITHFUL. He passed the test of obedience. He did not waiver in His faith towards God, did not back down on His identity or His mission. He finished His race.
3. The perfect image of God is LOVE. Jesus proved FAITHFUL in representing His Father.
- a. God is perfect. To be perfect is to be like God.
 - i. Perfect [*teleios*]: Wanting nothing, complete, fullness, full grown, mature, of full age.

Perfect: Greek-G5046: teleios: 1. Brought to its end, finished. 2. Wanting in nothing necessary to completeness. 3. Perfect. 4. That which is perfect, including consummate human integrity and virtue. 5. To be full grown, mature, of full age.
 - b. Matthew 5:38-48 - 38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, **Do not resist the one who is evil.** But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, **turn to him the other also.** 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, **let him have your cloak as well.** 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, **go with him two miles.** 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. 43 "**You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'** 44 **But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,** 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 **You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**
 - i. Luke 6:35-36 - 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 **Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.**

- c. 1 John 4:16 - 16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. **God is love**, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
 - i. God is love. To be like God is to love like Him.
 - ii. Exodus 34:6-7 - 6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God **merciful and gracious**, slow to anger, and **abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness**, 7 **keeping steadfast love** for thousands, **forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin**, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

B. A Servant Like the Master

1. Jesus was perfected through trials and suffering, and we are not greater than Him. We follow His example to be like Him in character and faithfulness.
 - a. Matthew 10:24-25 - 24 "**A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.** 25 **It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master.** If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.
 - i. Said when sending His disciples out to proclaim the Kingdom of God.
 - b. Luke 6:40 - 40 **A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.**
 - i. Said in the context of not judging others. Note: The Son of Man did not come to judge but to save. (John 3:17, 12:47.)
 - c. John 13:15-17 - 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. 16 Truly, truly, I say to you, **a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.** 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.
 - i. Said after washing the disciples' feet.
2. Conformed to the image of Christ through trials and suffering.
 - a. Romans 8:18, 28-29 - 18 For I consider that the **sufferings of this present time** are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ... 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.**
 - b. James 1:2-4 - 2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 **for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.** 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, **that you may be perfect [teleios] and complete, lacking in nothing.**
3. Conformed to the image of love.
 - a. 1 John 4:7-8, 19-21 - 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because **God is love.** ... 19 **We love because he first loved us.** 20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has

seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: **whoever loves God must also love his brother.**

- b. John 15:12-14 - 12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 **Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.** 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.
- c. 1 John 3:16-17 - 16 By this we know love, that **he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.** 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

C. Sharing in Christ's Sufferings

- 1. Jesus warned His disciples that we will suffer just like He did. The world hates Him and will hate us because we shine light in darkness and live for the truth rather than lies and error.
 - a. John 7:6-7 - 6 Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. 7 The world cannot hate you, but **it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.**
 - b. John 15:18-21, 16:1-2 - 18 "**If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.** 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore **the world hates you.** 20 Remember the word that I said to you: '**A servant is not greater than his master.**' **If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.** If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. ... 16:1 "**I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.** 2 They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, **the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.**
 - c. John 16:33 - 33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. **In the world you will have tribulation.** But take heart; I have overcome the world."
 - d. Matthew 10:16-22 - 16 "Behold, **I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves,** so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. 17 Beware of men, for **they will deliver you over to courts and flog you** in their synagogues, 18 and you will be **dragged before governors and kings for my sake,** to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. 19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. 21 **Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death,** 22 and **you will be hated by all for my name's sake.** But the one who endures to the end will be saved.
- 2. The apostles warned and exhorted believers that trials and suffering must come as we follow Jesus. We are not greater than our Master.
 - a. Acts 14:22 - 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that **through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.**
 - b. 2 Timothy 3:12 - 12 Indeed, **all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,**

- c. 1 Peter 4:1-5 - 1 Since therefore **Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking**, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh **no longer for human passions but for the will of God**. 3 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. 4 With respect to this they are surprised **when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you**; 5 but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.
- i. We must be prepared to suffer for Jesus as we set out to live a holy life.
 - ii. As we repent of sins to follow Jesus, those we previously sinned with will persecute us.
- d. 1 Peter 4:12-16 - 12 **Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you**, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you **share Christ's sufferings**, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14 **If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed**, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. 16 **Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name**.
- i. Trials come to TEST our FAITH.
 - ii. It is not shameful to suffer as a Christian. Rejoice and glorify God!
 - iii. Acts 5:41 - 41 Then they left the presence of the council, **rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name**.
3. Paul was willing to suffer for the sake of knowing Christ, fulfilling His purpose, and attaining the eternal promise. He exhorted everyone claiming to be a believer to have the same mindset.
- a. Acts 9:15-16 - 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. 16 **For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name**."
- i. Paul knew that suffering would be a part of walking with, following, and obeying the Lord Jesus and the Gospel.
- b. Philippians 3:7-11 - 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, **I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**. For his sake **I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ** 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith-- 10 **that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death**, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.
- i. Paul forsook all the advantages he had in this world and counted them as dung compared to knowing Christ. He lived by FAITH.
 - ii. Paul's only objective was to KNOW God and the power of His resurrection in order to be found worthy to attain resurrection from the dead.
 - iii. Paul wanted to share in the sufferings of Christ in order to be tested and proved, even unto death so as to be found worthy to attain the resurrection.
 01. Note: If the Apostle Paul did not consider the resurrection a "sure thing" for himself, perhaps we should not treat it casually.
- c. Philippians 3:12-19 - 12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but **I press on to make it my own**, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and

straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 **I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.** 15 **Let those of us who are mature think this way,** and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. 16 Only let us hold true to what we have attained. 17 Brothers, **join in imitating me,** and keep your eyes on those who walk according to **the example you have in us.** 18 For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, **with minds set on earthly things.**

- i. Paul did not consider himself to be perfect or spiritually mature as Christ.
 - ii. He pressed on to attain the fulness of Christ, no matter what he faced because he was thankful for what Jesus had done for him. He pressed on to attain maturity, holiness, and perfect Christlike character no matter what trials he underwent.
 - iii. He pressed on to attain eternal life with God – focused on eternity and not on this world. The upward call – not the temporal call.
 - iv. He encouraged believers to imitate him and others who walk/live the way he did, just as he looked to the example of Jesus and followed.
 - v. Those who do not walk this way are enemies of the cross, and their minds are set on the things of this world rather than on eternity.
- d. 2 Corinthians 11:18, 23-28 - 18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. ... 23 Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one--I am talking like a madman--with **far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death.** 24 Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the **forty lashes less one.** 25 Three times I was **beaten with rods.** Once I was **stoned.** Three times I was **shipwrecked;** a night and a day I was **adrift at sea;** 26 on frequent journeys, **in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers;** 27 in toil and hardship, through many a **sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.** 28 And, apart from other things, there is the **daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches...**
- i. Paul was not speaking of minor inconveniences and calling it suffering for Christ.
 - ii. Paul was not speaking squabbles between friends and calling it suffering for Christ.
 - iii. Paul's sufferings were sufferings for the sake of obeying God's commission and proclaiming the Gospel. Suffering for resisting sin and living a righteous life.
- e. Colossians 1:24 - 24 Now **I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake,** and in my flesh I am **filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions** for the sake of his body, that is, the church,
- i. Christ's suffering and atonement was not lacking in anyway. It is finished.
 - ii. What is lacking in Christ's sufferings are the sufferings of His faithful followers for the sake of righteous living and proclaiming the Gospel.
 01. Acts 9:4-5 - 4 And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, **"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"** 5 And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, **"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."**
 02. When Saul/Paul was persecuting and murdering believers, Jesus intervened and said that Saul/Paul was persecuting HIM.

D. NOT These Types of Sufferings:

1. Not suffering for your own wrongdoing.

- a. 1 Peter 2:19-21 - 19 **For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.** 20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if **when you do good and suffer for it** you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. 21 **For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.**
 - i. We have been called to sufferings which give us the opportunity to follow Jesus' example and become mature.
 - ii. If you are punished for doing wrong, the punishment is just.
 - iii. It is when you are punished for not doing wrong that you are sharing in the sufferings of Jesus who never sinned.
 - iv. 1 Peter 4:15 - 15 But **let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.**
 01. If you suffer for sin, the suffering is a consequence of your own actions.
 02. God is merciful and does not leave you, but He will not always remove or protect you from the necessary consequences.
 - v. Galatians 6:7-8 - 7 Do not be deceived: **God is not mocked**, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For **the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption**, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.
2. NOT suffering for your own lack of faith. We must do whatever is necessary to be strong in the spirit and press through unbelief to see the results.
 - a. Matthew 17:19-20 NKJV - 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 So Jesus said to them, "**Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.**"
 - b. Sickness is not suffering for righteousness' sake.
 - i. The only possible exception to this is if you become sick through exposure on the mission field or in the course of fulfilling God's purpose.
 - ii. Sickness is suffering, but it is not the same as suffering for righteousness.
3. NOT creating your own suffering and hardships to seem more spiritual. (See Colossians 2:18-23.)
 - a. Putting yourself under the Law of Moses to practice legalistic self-denial is NOT the same as taking up your cross to follow Jesus.
 - i. Your circumcision is as uncircumcision if you put yourself under the Law. (Romans 2:25-26.)
 - ii. Putting yourself back the Law of Moses puts you under a curse and cuts you off from Christ. (Galatians 5:3-4.)
 - iii. Keeping Levitical laws (i.e. eating kosher) is of very little value. Jesus declared all foods to be clean. (Mark 7:19.)
 - iv. Reminder: God never desired the Law. He desired obedience from the heart. Putting yourself under the Law, you completely missed the point of the New Covenant. (See Unit Two.)
 - v. The command of Jesus is to love one another. (John 13:34.) Man-made commands nullify the power of the word of God and miss the point of God's mercy.
 - vi. "Holiness" will be as unholiness if there is no love and mercy. (James 2:13.)
 - b. Asceticism, extreme self-denial, and self-torture may look super-spiritual but have NO VALUE in actually stopping flesh.

- c. Sacrificing all material possessions or giving your body up to torture or martyrdom can be a religious act of zero value, if it is self-initiated rather than ordained or commanded by God.
 - i. 1 Corinthians 13:3 - 3 If I **give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned**, but have not love, I gain nothing.
 - ii. God gave all things for our enjoyment. (1 Timothy 6:17.) In the context of having worldly wealth and enjoying it but not trusting in wealth or setting hopes on it.
 - iii. Jesus did not torture Himself and He did not crucify Himself.
 - 01. He humbled Himself and lived by faith in the circumstances of this world to which He was sent. He did not relish in or exalt poverty but lived by faith in God's abundant provision. (i.e. Feeding 5,000 with miracle bread and fish.)
 - 02. Jesus did not seek out opportunities to suffer. He lived without sin and spoke the truth of God. For this, He suffered and was crucified by others.

- 4. NOT fasting or striving spiritually to seem more righteous or holy.
 - a. Matthew 6:16 - 16 "And when you fast, **do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces** that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.
 - i. Zechariah 7:3-5 - 3 saying to the priests of the house of the LORD of hosts and the prophets, "**Should I weep and abstain** in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?" 4 Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me: 5 "Say to all the people of the land and the priests, "**When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh, for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted?**"
 - ii. Isaiah 58:3-4 - 3 "**Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?**" Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. 4 Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. **Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high.**
 - 01. People were fasting (depriving themselves of food) in order to twist God's arm to give them what they wanted even though their hearts were not truly with God, and their lives were not submitted in obedience.

 - b. Romans 10:6-8 - 6 But the righteousness based on faith says, "**Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'**" (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "**or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'**" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);
 - i. Not spiritual striving upwards to heaven.
 - ii. Not glorifying excessive prayer or "spiritual warfare" as if the results depend on you.
 - iii. Not spiritual striving downwards to a state of self-created abasement.
 - iv. Not glorifying "enemy attacks" as you obey God and live for Him.
 - v. Not exaggerating or spiritualizing normal sufferings to glorify yourself and get attention from others.

- 5. All suffering is suffering and is painful. But not all kinds of suffering are sharing in Christ's sufferings or for righteousness' sake. No matter what we suffer in this world, and no matter the cause of the suffering, we must remain faithful to God.
 - a. James 5:13a - 13 **Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.**
 - i. No matter what you are suffering, pray. Seek God and pour your heart out to Him.
 - ii. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and to guide you through the trial.

- iii. Listen to what he says. DO IT.
- b. When you are suffering, for whatever reason, seek the Lord in His Word.
- i. Read the Psalms to encourage and strengthen your heart and faith, particularly Psalm 1, 23, 25, 27, 37, 91, & 119.
 - ii. Read the Book of Proverbs to gain wisdom and insight into how to walk prudently.
 - iii. Read the Gospels to stay connected to the teachings of Jesus and follow His example and His instructions.
- c. When you are suffering, keep the ways of God and learn to wait upon the Lord.
- i. Do not forsake faithfulness to God and solve your problems with your own skills, wisdom, or strength.
 - ii. Do not gossip, defend yourself, speak ill of others – even in the guise of “prayer requests.”
 - iii. Do not grumble, complain, or fall into self-pity – even in the guise of “prayer requests.”
 - iv. Do not excessively seek out the counsel of other people – even in the guise of “prayer requests” aside from perhaps a few trusted faithful spiritual advisors or friends.
- d. When you are suffering, meditate on God's wonderful works to build your faith.
- i. Meditate on the miracles of Scriptures and God's great deliverances and victories.
 - ii. Remember times in your own life when God rescued, delivered, or healed you.
 - iii. Remember times when God has spoken to you, guided you, and shown you His way.
- e. When you are suffering, maintain an eternal focus on the joys of the world to come, not an earthly focus on the troubles of this world.
- i. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 - 17 **For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison**, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. **For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.**
 - ii. Romans 8:18 - 18 For I consider that **the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**
- f. When you are suffering, be willing to let go of anything and everything. Put your whole life and every element of it at the foot of the cross as a sacrifice unto the Lord. Let Him have His way in your life.
- i. Matthew 16:25-26 - 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses his life for my sake will find it**. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?
 - ii. Even if you truly believe that something in your life is ordained by God, put it on the altar and let it die. If it is of God, God will resurrect it.
 - 01. John 12:24 - 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
 - iii. Even if you lose your life – literally – trust God for resurrection to eternal life.

E. Suffering Produces (Perfects) Maturity & Proves Faithfulness

1. Perfecting hope. Biblical, eternal hope. Trials test and prove our hope and build our hope for the eternal promises of God.

- a. Romans 5:2-5 - 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and **we rejoice in hope of the glory of God**. 3 Not only that, but we **rejoice in our sufferings**, knowing that **suffering produces endurance**, 4 and **endurance produces character**, and **character produces hope**, 5 and **hope does not put us to shame**, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
 - i. When we see God fulfill His promises to deliver us and bring us through temporal trials, it builds our hope that He will be faithful to fulfill His eternal promises.

 - b. Biblical hope is hope in the resurrection to eternal life with God. It is not the same as hoping for a beneficial outcome in this world or circumstances.
 - i. Titus 1:2 - 2 **in hope of eternal life**, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began
 - ii. Titus 2:13 - 13 **waiting for our blessed hope**, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,
 - iii. 1 Peter 1:13 - 13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, **set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ**.
 - iv. Jesus was made known to us so that our faith and hope could be in God and His promises. (1 Peter 1:20-21.)
 - v. Paul was on trial because of the hope of the resurrection, not because he hoped to escape persecution. (Acts 23:6, 24:15, 26:6.)
 - vi. We are saved through hope in the final redemption of our bodies and all of creation. For this, we wait with patience, even though we don't see it now. (Romans 8:24-25.)
 - vii. Our hope as Christians is not in this life only but for life with God in the world to come. (1 Corinthians 15:19.)
 - viii. Christ dwelling in us is the hope of glory – to dwell with Him for eternity because He has redeemed us. This is the hope of the Gospel. (Colossians 1:5, 23, 27.)
 - ix. We become heirs of God due to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:7.)

 - c. When we set our hope fully on God, we are bold in this life and in our trials because we look to something better than this – eternity with God in a perfect world.
 - i. 2 Corinthians 3:12 - 12 **Since we have such a hope**, we are very bold,
 - ii. 1 Timothy 4:10 - 10 For to this end we toil and strive, **because we have our hope set on the living God**, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.
 - iii. Hebrews 10:23 - 23 Let us **hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering**, for he who promised is faithful.

 - d. FAITH is the substance of HOPE. Faith is what you do when you confidently expect a future outcome.
 - i. Hebrews 11:1 - 1 **Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for**, the conviction of things not seen.
 - ii. Reminder: Hebrews 11 Hall of Faith – they all died, not having seen the promise of the Kingdom of God.

 - e. When we have hope that the righteous will live for eternity with God, we purify our lives.
 - i. 1 John 3:2-3 - 2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that **when he appears we shall be like him**, because we shall see him as he is. 3 **And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure**.
2. Perfecting humility and submission to God. Learning obedience.

- a. Matthew 6:9-10 - 9 Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10 Your kingdom come, **your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**
- i. It is easier to say, "Your will be done" or "I surrender all" or "I love God" when things are going well. But when the trial comes, our resolve is tested and put to the proof of whether we really want to do God's will or not.
- b. John 14:15 - 15 "If you love me, you will **keep my commandments.**
- i. We can do our best to keep Jesus' commands in our own lives and become a siloh and a self-righteous Pharisee. But when the trial comes, we have to opportunity to demonstrate obedience and grow deeper in our submission to God.
 - ii. Matthew 5:38-42 - 38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, **Do not resist the one who is evil.** But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, **turn to him the other also.** 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, **let him have your cloak as well.** 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, **go with him two miles.** 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.
 01. If no one was ever evil to you, how could you practice submitting to Jesus' commands to love?
 - iii. John 14:1 - 1 "**Let not your hearts be troubled.** Believe in God; believe also in me.
 01. If everything was always easy, how could you practice not being anxious but trusting God?
- c. 1 Peter 5:6-7 - 6 **Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God** so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 **casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.**
- d. James 4:7-10 - 7 **Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.** 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. **Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.** 9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 **Humble yourselves before the Lord,** and he will exalt you.
 - i. In the context of resisting selfish ambition, anger, covetousness, and desires for the things of this world which cause quarrels.
3. Perfecting holiness. Being set apart from the world to be a son of God
- a. Hebrews 12:3-17 - 3 **Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.** 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. 6 **For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."** 7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. **God is treating you as sons.** For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 **For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.** 12 Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. 14 Strive for peace with everyone, and for the **holiness without which no one will see the Lord.** 15 See to it that

no one fails to obtain the grace of God; **that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled**; 16 that no one is sexually immoral or **unholy like Esau**, who sold his birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

- b. Matthew 7:13-14 - 13 "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 **For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.**
 - c. 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1 - 17 **Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them**, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty." 7:1 Since we have these promises, beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.**
4. Perfecting faith. Believing God and entrusting ourselves to Him.
- a. 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 - 8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of **the affliction we experienced** in Asia. For we were **so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself**. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. **But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead**. 10 He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.
 - i. 2 Corinthians 1:9 NLT - 9 In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, **we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God**, who raises the dead.
 - ii. Trials force us to rely on God and not ourselves. If we truly believe that God raises the dead, then we can trust Him by faith in the trials of this life.
 - b. 1 Peter 4:19 - 19 **Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator** while doing good.
 - i. We must learn to entrust ourselves to God, living out a demonstration of "Not my will but yours be done."
 - c. 1 Peter 5:8-9 - 8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 **Resist him, firm in your faith**, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.
 - i. The enemy brings attacks and trials and it takes FAITH to stand for God.
 - ii. Resisting the evil one and his temptations and allurements takes FAITH.
 - d. 1 Peter 1:6-7 - 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, **you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--**may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - i. Trials test by fire the genuineness of our faith. If it is found genuine, it is more precious in God's sight than all the gold in the world.
 - ii. Job 23:10 - 10 But he knows the way that I take; **when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.**
5. Perfecting love and mercy. The character of God.

- a. Galatians 5:22-24 - 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
 - i. It is easy to love the loveable – but what about the unlovable and ungrateful?
 - ii. It is easy to be joyful when things are good – but what about in the midst of the fire?
 - iii. It is easy to be kind when you want something from someone – but what about the one who can do nothing for you in return?
 - iv. It can be easy to resist the urges of the flesh when you are satisfied in other areas of your life – but when everything is challenging, we justify our carnality.

- b. Matthew 5:43-48 - 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you**, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain **on the just and on the unjust**. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 **You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

- c. Luke 6:32-36 - 32 "**If you love those who love you**, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And **if you do good to those who do good to you**, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And **if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive**, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. 35 **But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return**, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, **for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil**. 36 **Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.**

6. Proved worthy to inherit the Kingdom.
 - a. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-5 - 3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your **faith is growing abundantly**, and the **love of every one of you for one another is increasing**. 4 Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for **your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring**. 5 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, **that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—**
 - i. The Thessalonians were under severe trials and persecutions but they continued in faith and grew in love for one another. Paul said that this was the evidence that they were worthy to inherit the Kingdom of God.

Unit Eight: Faith that God is Judge

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Acts 17:30-31

A. God's Righteous Judgement of the World

1. Since Adam's sin in the garden of Eden, the whole world has been in rebellion against God, their Creator. God has a right to judge those whom He created but do not worship Him as Creator.
 - a. In the days of Noah, the whole of humanity was in rebellion against God and had filled the world with violence and wickedness.
 - i. God sent a flood to judge the world and the evil of mankind.
 - ii. He promised not to judge the world by flood ever again. (See Genesis 6-9.)
 - iii. He gave humanity a "redo," a second chance.
 - iv. Only a remnant of eight people was preserved through the flood because they believed God and obeyed.
 - b. In the generations after the flood, mankind united together in rebellion against God to build the Tower of Babel attempting to reach heaven's power to make a name for themselves rather than give God glory. God executed judgment by scattering the people.
 - i. God blocked humanity's attempt at a hostile takeover of the world.
 - ii. Humanity proved their hatred for God, the One who created them, and rightly deserved God's judgment.
 - iii. Babel/Babylon became a symbol for the sin of the whole world, united together against God.
2. Messiah was expected to come with wrath and judgment against all enemies of God. The "day of the Lord."
 - a. Amos 5:18-20 - 18 **Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!** Why would you have the day of the LORD? **It is darkness, and not light,** 19 as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him. 20 **Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?**
 - i. Amos was chronologically the first prophet to speak about the day of the Lord.
 - ii. Up to this point, Israel considered the day of the Lord to be a day of their victory over all nations – like the victory God had given them over Egypt at the Red Sea. They longed for this day because they thought they were safe.
 - iii. However, Amos makes clear that everyone will be judged in the day of the Lord based on their own righteousness and that even members of God's own people who were in rebellion against Him would face judgment.

- b. Isaiah 13:6-11 - **6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!** 7 Therefore all hands will be feeble, and **every human heart will melt.** 8 They will be dismayed: **pangs and agony will seize them;** they will be in anguish like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at one another; their faces will be aflame. 9 Behold, **the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it.** 10 For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light. 11 **I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.**
- i. Isaiah speaks of the judgement of Babylon but the text quickly shifts to the judgment of the whole world for its evil.
- c. 2 Peter 3:6-7 NLT - 6 Then he used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. 7 And by the same word, **the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire.** They are being **kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed.**
- d. Daniel 2: 44 - 44 And in the days of those kings **the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed,** nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. **It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end,** and it shall stand forever,
- i. Nebuchadnezzar's dream (and Daniel's interpretation) revealed that God was going to establish an eternal Kingdom that would completely demolish and eliminate every other Kingdom of this world.
3. The day of the Lord will bring judgment upon those who have played the whore and lived by the pattern of this world rather than living in the obedience of faith.
- a. Revelation 17:1-5 - 1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "**Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute** who is seated on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk." 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and **I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.** 4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, **holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.** 5 **And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations."**
- i. Babylon is representative of the world system, ruled by the evil one and full of people who have rebelled and committed abominations against God.
 - ii. Babylon is the mother all who have whored and sold out to the ways of this world.
- b. Revelation 18:2-8 - 2 And he called out with a mighty voice, "**Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!** She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. 3 **For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.**" 4 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; 5 **for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.** 6 Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. 7 As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no

widow, and mourning I shall never see.' 8 For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; **for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her.**"

- i. In the day of the Lord still yet to come, God will bring final judgment on all who are in rebellion against Him, playing the whore to the gods of this world for their own benefit and pleasure.
4. The final day of the Lord will bring vindication to all who have lived in the obedience of faith. The victorious Bride who has lived in obedience.
- a. Revelation 19:1-5 - 1 After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "**Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, 2 for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.**" 3 Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever." 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" 5 And from the throne came a voice saying, "**Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.**"
 - i. We do not have to avenge or vindicate ourselves because God is judge and will bring ultimate justice and punishment on all who have done wrong and have not repented.
 - ii. We will rejoice on the day of the Lord when our vindication comes from Him.
 - b. Revelation 19:6-9 - 6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "**Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; 8 it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"-- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.** 9 And the angel said to me, "Write this: **Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.**" And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."
 - i. We will rejoice to participate in the wedding feast of God.

B. Responding to God's Messengers

1. Those Who Responded with Obedience. (Select examples.)
 - a. God revealed to Noah that He was about to bring judgment by a flood upon the earth. He told Noah to build an Ark to preserve a remnant. (See Genesis 6-9.)
 - i. Noah responded with obedience.
 - ii. Noah was a preacher of righteousness but nobody else believed that rain would flood the earth so only Noah and his family were spared. (See 2 Peter 2:5.)
 - b. God revealed to Abraham what He was about to do in bringing judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. This was a prophetic picture of the judgement of fire that would come of the whole world. He commanded Abraham to walk before Him and be blameless and teach his family the ways of God. (See Genesis 18:17-21.)
 - i. Abraham responded with obedience.
 - c. God sent Jonah to declare that Nineveh would be destroyed. (See the Book of Jonah.)

- i. The people of Nineveh responded with repentance and submission to God.
2. Those Responded with Disobedience. (Select examples.)
- a. God sent Moses before Pharaoh ten times but Pharaoh did not see fit to listen to God or submit to Him.
 - i. Pharaoh hardened his heart and did not obey the Lord.
 - ii. Exodus 5:2 - 2 But Pharaoh said, "**Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice** and let Israel go? **I do not know the LORD**, and moreover, I will not let Israel go."
 - iii. Pharaoh's kingdom was utterly destroyed. His army were buried in the Red Sea.
 - b. God sent prophets to His own people repeatedly to warn them of His coming judgment if they did not turn from their wicked ways.
 - i. Israel hardened their hearts and refused to listen to God's messengers.
 - 01. 2 Kings 17:13-15 - 13 **Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways** and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets." 14 **But they would not listen, but were stubborn**, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God.
 - 02. God sent Assyria to overthrow Israel and send them into exile. Their kingdom no longer existed.
 - ii. Judah hardened their hearts and refused to listen to God's messengers.
 - 01. 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 - 15 The LORD, the God of their fathers, **sent persistently to them by his messengers**, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 **But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people**, until there was no remedy.
 - 02. God sent Babylon to overthrow Judah and send them into exile.
 - 03. Only a righteous remnant remained.
3. God sends messengers out of compassion and fairness. He is totally just.
- a. He gives people fair warning and the opportunity to receive the message and repent.
 - b. He allows people to reject Him and fill up the measure of their sins, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life. (Matthew 23:32; Acts 1 Thessalonians 2:16; Acts 13:46.)

C. God's Ultimate Messenger: His Son

- 1. If people received judgment for not listening to God's prophets, how much more do they prove themselves worthy of wrath when they reject God's Son?
 - a. Hebrews 1:1-2 - 1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 **but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
 - b. Hebrews 10:28-29 - 28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 29 **How much worse punishment, do you think, will be**

deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

2. Jesus' message was "Repent!" The Gospel message is "Repent!"
 - a. As Jesus' forerunner, John the Baptist's message was "Repent!" He knew that the day of the Lord and God's judgment were imminent.
 - i. Matthew 3:1-2 - 1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."**
 - ii. Luke 3:9-10, 17-18 - 9 **Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees.** Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." ... 17 His **winnowing fork is in his hand**, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, **but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.**" 18 So with many other exhortations he preached good news [the Gospel] to the people.
 01. See Unit One. It is good news that God has made a way of salvation and has sent His messengers to warn people of the destruction to come.
 - b. Jesus' message was "Repent!" The day of the Lord, when God would judge all enemies, destroy all kingdoms, demolish all nations and establish His eternal rule on earth was at hand!
 - i. Mark 1:14-15 - 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, **proclaiming the gospel of God**, 15 **and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."**
3. The message of the apostles was "Repent!" The day of judgment is still yet to come!
 - a. Acts 17:30-31 NLT - 30 "God overlooked people's ignorance about these things in earlier times, **but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him.** 31 **For he has set a day for judging the world with justice** by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead."
 - b. Acts 2:38-40 - 38 And Peter said to them, "**Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins**, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." 40 And with many other words he bore witness and **continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."**
 - c. Acts 3:19-21 - 19 **Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out**, 20 that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, 21 whom heaven must receive **until the time for restoring all the things** about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.
 - i. The "time for restoring all things" is when God will wipe away the world and the present heavens and earth and usher in the new heavens and the new earth where only the righteous and holiness dwells.

D. The Final Judgment: Sheep or Goat

1. Jesus told several parables about the time of His return (the day of the Lord) and the final judgment. (See the course: Parables of Jesus.)

- a. Example: The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard. (Matthew 20:1-16.) All laborers receive the same pay.
 - i. Everyone will receive the same pay for their work, no matter how long they have labored. The gift of salvation is the same for all.

 - b. Example: The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids. (Matthew 25:1-13.) Only those who are ready will enter.
 - i. Only those who have kept their lamps burning with fire for the Lord through obedience to His commands and fullness of the Holy Spirit will enter into His Kingdom and enjoy the wedding feast.

 - c. Example: The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25) & The Ten Minas (Luke 19). Eternal rewards and responsibilities in the world to come will be given based on the work we have done in this world and our obedience to God's commands.
 - i. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 - 10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. **Let each one take care how he builds upon it.** 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with **gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw--** 13 **each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.** 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, **he will receive a reward.** 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, **but only as through fire.**
 - ii. Those who have prayed to be seen on earth have already received their reward.
 - iii. Those who have fasted to be seen on earth have already received their reward.
 - iv. Those who have given to be seen or to receive in return have already received their reward.
 - v. Those who have labored in secret without pay will receive a reward in eternity.
 - vi. Those who have laid up treasure in heaven by giving generously to the poor and needy without expecting anything in return will receive a reward in eternity.
 - vii. Those who have used money to make friends in heaven will be greeted by them in eternal dwellings.
 - viii. Those who have sacrificed the things of this world for the sake of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God will receive much more in the world to come.
2. The Parable of the Wicked and Faithful Servants: (Matthew 24:44-51; Mark 13:32-37.) Only those who have been faithful and obedient to the end will receive a reward.
- a. Luke 12:35-48 - 35 "Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, 36 and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. 37 **Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes.** Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. 38 If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! 39 But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. 40 **You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.**" 41 Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?" 42 And the Lord said, "**Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time?** 43 **Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.** 44 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. 45 But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is

delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, **46 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful.** **47 And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating.** **48** But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. **Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required,** and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

- i. We must endure in the obedience of faith to the very end, until Jesus returns.
 - ii. If we become slack, He will come when we are not ready.
 - iii. If we know what Jesus commands and have not done it, we will be judged and cast out with those who have no faith (the unfaithful.)
 - iv. If you have taken this course, you know the Master's will. Now go do it.
3. The Parable of the Persistent Widow: Trials and persecutions against believers will be intense before Jesus returns. Will anyone endure to the end in the obedience of faith?
- a. Context: Jesus answering Pharisee's questions about the day of the Lord, the end of the age, and the coming of the Kingdom. He responds by announcing disasters, woes, and calamities like the days of Noah in the flood and Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - i. Luke 17: 32-33 - **32 Remember Lot's wife.** **33** Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. (Referring to Genesis 18.)
 - ii. A warning not to turn back or fall away from the faith when the whole world is burning down in the tribulation.
 - b. Luke 18:1-8 - **1** And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. **2** He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. **3** And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' **4** For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, **5** yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" **6** And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. **7** And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? **8** I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, **will he find faith on earth?"**
 - i. Things will be so challenging for all people before Jesus returns, He is asking if anyone will endure to the end in the obedience of faith.
 - c. We must persist in faithfulness and obedience to God in assured hope of eternity with Him.
 - i. Matthew 24:9-13 - **9** "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. **10** And then **many will fall away** [from the faith] and **betray one another and hate one another.** **11** And many false prophets will arise and **lead many astray** [from the faith]. **12** And because lawlessness will be increased, **the love of many will grow cold.** **13** But the one who **endures to the end will be saved.**
4. The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats: Sheep who have obeyed Jesus' commands to show mercy to those who can never repay you will be rewarded with eternal life. Goats who have not demonstrated the obedience of faith will be cast out.

- a. Matthew 25:31-46 - 31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then **he will sit on his glorious throne** [to judge]. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and **he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats**. 33 **And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left**. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, '**Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world**'. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?' 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?' 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' 40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' 41 **"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels**. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' 45 Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46 **And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."**
 - i. Sheep are submissive and follow the voice of their shepherd.
 - ii. Goats are rebellious, kicking, and dragging and going their own way.
- b. Whether you are a sheep or a goat is determined by whether you have lived in the obedience of faith.
 - i. Reminder: Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

E. Judgment on All Who Do Not Obey the Gospel of God's Son

1. Whoever does not believe Jesus is condemned already. It is the mercy of God that He continues to send messengers to proclaim the Gospel and give people the opportunity to believe, repent, and be saved. Those messengers are we who believe Him and follow Him.
 - a. John 3:16-19 - 16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but **whoever does not believe is condemned already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.
 - b. Luke 24:46-47 - 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.
 - c. John 20:21 - 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

- d. Matthew 28:19-20 - 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
2. Those who do not obey the Gospel will suffer eternal destruction.
- a. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 - 7 and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels **8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** 9 **They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,** 10 when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.
- i. Obedience to the Gospel means the obedience of faith that Jesus is who He says He is.
- b. 1 Peter 4:17 - 17 For it is time for **judgment to begin at the household of God;** and if it begins with us, what will be **the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?**
- i. Those within the household of God will also be judged for their obedience.
 - ii. Just like Israel thought they were secure from the day of the Lord because they were God's people, people claiming to be "believers" should not be arrogant about the day of the Lord.
 - iii. How much more dreadful for those who have not heeded God's warning to obey Jesus?
- c. Hebrews 10:26-27, 30-31 - 26 **For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth,** there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but **a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.** ... 30 For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, **"The Lord will judge his people."** 31 **It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**
- i. Reminder: "If you hand causes you to sin, cut it off." Obedience to the Gospel means living a life of repentance from sin and faithfulness to God.
3. The wrath of God is reserved for the "sons of disobedience" and "children of wrath" – those who have not believed and obeyed the Gospel.
- a. Ephesians 5:6 - 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the **wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**
- b. Ephesians 2:1-3 - 1 And you were dead in the **trespasses and sins** 2 in which you once walked, **following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience--** 3 among whom we all once lived in the **passions of our flesh,** carrying out the **desires of the body and the mind,** and were by nature **children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.**
- c. We are either sons of Belial, the devil, in rebellion against God; or sons of God out of obedience to Him.
4. Those who repented and believed God's Son will stand with God in the judgment to condemn those who did not believe.

- a. Matthew 12:41-42 - 41 **The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it**, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. 42 **The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it**, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.
- b. Matthew 19:27-28 - 27 Then Peter said in reply, "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" 28 Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, **in the new world**, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, **you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**
- c. Revelation 20:4 - 4 **Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed.** Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

F. The Outcome of the Obedience of Faith

1. The outcome of one man's disobedience & another man's obedience.
 - a. Adam lived in paradise and had been given authority over all creation. The only thing forbidden was to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 - i. He gave way to the temptation of lust, desire, and pride.
 - ii. He faithlessly disobeyed God, trying to attain better life in this world. (i.e. "You will be like God.")
 - iii. For this, he lost Paradise. He was banished and restricted from God's dwelling place and was subjected to thorns thistles, sweat and toil.
 - iv. He and all his descendants were subjected to the serpent's rule of tyranny.
 - v. He spent his days groaning in hope of redemption.
 - b. Jesus was born in a manger into the squalor of this fallen world, thousands of years after creation had been subjected to futility and satan's rule.
 - i. He lived a perfect life, without sin. He totally submitted Himself in obedience to God, delivering the message God had given Him, and waiting for God's perfect timing in all situations.
 - ii. He faithfully obeyed God, even unto death. Though He was God, He did not use divine power to attain better life in this world. He gave up His life in this world to fulfill God's purpose and out of love for others over Himself.
 - iii. For this, He gained eternity in Paradise with God, and gained the position of authority over all creation for all time.
 - iv. He and His followers are free from the evil one's subjection, in order to live freely for God and enjoy God's blessings for eternity.
 - v. He has been glorified forever and awaits the day when God will put all enemies under His feet, including death.
 - c. Romans 5:18-19 - 18 Therefore, as **one trespass led to condemnation** for all men, so **one act of righteousness leads to justification** and life for all men. 19 For as **by the one man's disobedience** the many were made sinners, so **by the one man's obedience** the many will be made righteous.

2. Our obedience matters. Running our race for eternal rewards.
 - a. All of us have a personal, individual choice to choose God and live for Him. We have the opportunity to REVERSE the choice of our ancestor, Adam, and receive the blessing of restored fellowship with God and eternal life dwelling with Him.
 - b. The obedience of faith is determined in the secret place of prayer. We have free will to submit ourselves to God or choose our own way.
 - i. Faith is in the heart.
 01. Not in the mouth. (The word of faith is in the mouth, but with the heart one believes.)
 02. Not the head/mind, mental ascent. (Love the Lord with your mind, but faith is in the heart.)
 - ii. What we do with our actions reveals what is truly in our heart.
 01. God knows if we are obeying Him or not, no matter what it looks like to others.
 02. Ultimately, we will give account to Him for that.
 - iii. Trials make obedience more challenging, but God uses them to test our resolve in the obedience of faith.
 - c. The only thing that matters is: Did you do what God wanted you to do with this life that He has given you?
 - i. David: "Fulfilled the purpose of God in his generation."
 - ii. Paul: "My life worth nothing unless I finish my race..."; "I have finished the race..."
 - iii. Jesus: "I have glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work you gave me..."
 - d. Live by the obedience of faith, no matter the cost of denying yourself the pleasures of this world. Endure in maintaining an eternal focus by continually look to Jesus' example in order to receive the outcome of your obedience: an eternal reward.
 - i. Hebrews 12:1-2 - 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also **lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us**, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 - 24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one **receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.** 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But **I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.**
 01. The Apostle Paul lived a disciplined life so that even though he had preached to the masses, he would not be disqualified from eternal life and his eternal rewards.
 - iii. 2 Timothy 2:5 - 5 An athlete is not crowned unless he **competes according to the rules.**
 01. We cannot go our own way like a stubborn goat and expect to receive salvation and rewards. It does not work that way.
3. The Outcome of One Bride's Disobedience & Another Bride's Obedience
 - a. Eve was made out of Adam and for Adam, to be Adam's helper in their work for God. She dwelt in a perfect world, in the Garden of God without fear, shame, or oppression, enjoying perfect peace and fellowship with God.

- i. She was deceived by the false teaching of the serpent and disobeyed God's command due to the allurements of being wise and attaining a better life. ("Desirable to make one wise, aka prosper.")
 - ii. She blamed the serpent for deceiving her, admitting her own rebellion against God.
 - iii. For this, she lost Paradise. She was restricted from God's dwelling place and was subjected to pain in bringing up her children. Her first son murdered his brother.
 - iv. She spent the rest of her days subjected to futility in this world, groaning in hope of redemption, and longing for the days when she had been in the Garden of Eden.
 - v. She most likely wished that she had never disobeyed God.

- b. The Bride of Christ was made out of Christ and for Him, to be His helper in His work for God. The Bride of Christ lives in the squalor, brokenness, darkness, and evil of this world, a place full of violence, wickedness, oppression, and lies that is ruled by the evil one. (It will only get worse before Jesus returns.)
 - i. The true Bride will remain faithful and will not be deceived by false teachers and prophets making promises of a better life in this world. (Many more deceivers will come before Jesus returns.)
 - ii. She will not bow her knee to the pressures of this world but will stand in faith, boldly proclaiming Jesus, even unto death.
 - iii. For this, she will gain Paradise for all eternity. She will be welcomed into eternal dwellings, receive eternal rewards, and dwell with God in the world to come forever. There will be no mourning, sickness, crying, or pain.
 - iv. She will spend the rest of her days rejoicing in the Lamb, praising God for His salvation, and enjoying the abundance and fullness of eternal LIFE.

- c. Revelation 19:6-9 - 6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for **the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready** [through the obedience of faith]; 8 it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"-- **for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.** 9 And the angel said to me, "**Write this: Blessed [happy] are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.**" And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."



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