

As I sit at my desk writing this letter, I am in awe of the ways in which our Lord communicates with us. Before writing your letter every month, I sit quietly in prayer with an open heart and mind and listen for His words. Some months they come through loud and clear, while in others, they are harder to discern. During my prayer time today, the hymn "Since Jesus Came into My Heart" took over my thoughts and was all I could concentrate on.

What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought  
Since Jesus came into my heart!  
I have light in my soul for which long I have sought,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!

Since Jesus came into my heart,  
Since Jesus came into my heart,  
Floods of joy o'er my soul like the sea billows roll,  
Since Jesus came into my heart.

These words bring me so much joy! You can't sing these words with a frown on your face because, from the first note, Jesus instantly floods your soul with joy. Many churches have switched from the old hymns to the more contemporary "praise and worship" songs, and I miss them. I have an "old soul" that feels the presence of God more strongly when I sing traditional hymns. It is not that these new songs are any less pleasing to our Lord; it is only that I feel less connected to them. The most important thing is that we lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving to Him.

Since we are celebrating our 50th year, I would like to share a portion of Dr. Hash's letter from May 2007.

*Dear Friends,*

*On this Mother's Day we need to be reminded of our Lord's concern for His Mother. Some of the last words spoken by Jesus as He was being crucified were to designate the care of His mother to the Apostle John. We also set aside a special day each year to honor our mothers. I, for one, thank God for giving me a godly mother who greatly influenced me in the ways of the Lord. She not only made sure we attended church every Sunday but always went with us! The Foundation of Christianity she provided for my daily life has brought about the ministry of Bible Pathway, which has touched millions in the past 34 years.*

*As Christians we know that God is synonymous with love (John 3:16). In America the word "mother" is often synonymous with "love" –the love of a godly mother. We especially honor them this month.*  
– John A. Hash

Thank you for standing with Bible Pathway for the past 50 years and continuing to stand with us as we look forward to the next 50.

*Jennifer*

***And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven (II Kings 2:11).***

The Bible does not offer us any history of Elijah. We know nothing of his childhood or the people who helped shape the man he grew into. We don't know if, like Samuel, he had felt the calling of the Lord since his birth or if his circumstances more resembled Saul of Tarsus, a man who would grow to adulthood without any proper understanding of the Word. We do know, however, that he offered up a lifetime's worth of dedicated service to the Lord in the two decades of his life that we are shown.

The first written account of his ministry occurred during the reign of Ahab, and the last happened during the beginning of the rule of Jehoram (also known as Joram). During this time, Elijah went toe to toe with powerful kings (I Kings 17:1), was marked for death by evil queens (19:1), and endured periods of discouragement and deep depression (19:4). Yet no matter how bad things got, he never lost faith in the Lord. From the first moment to the last, Elijah served the Lord with the quiet confidence of a man secure in the love of God.

***And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal (II Kings 2:1).*** Elijah is one of only two men in the history of the world that was taken into the presence of God without ever suffering physical death. The first was Enoch (Gen. 5:24), the great-great-great-great grandson of Adam. God's Word does not tell us 'why' this happened, just that it was the will of God and that Elijah, as he had in all other things, peacefully surrendered himself to that will.

In the prophet Elijah, we are given the perfect role model of serving the Lord with all our heart, mind, and soul (Matt. 22:37). ***He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God (Mic. 6:8)?*** Elijah consorted with kings. He facilitated great miracles for

the Lord. His very presence changed the direction of history on more than one occasion. Yet Elijah never once believed himself to be anything more significant than a humble servant of God. He rose to meet the challenge of every task set before him, but he did so with the innate understanding that he was only the vessel – that the work being performed was all because of the power of the living God.

Without ego, Elijah lived his life, and, without ego, he approached its end. Elijah never once confused his part in God's plan with God's plan in its entirety. When the Lord determined that Elijah's time on this earth was done, Elijah accepted that fact without fear or concern. He knew he needed God, but he never fell into the trap of believing that God needed him. He knew that God's plan would continue to unfold just as it was supposed to, with or without him there to 'lend a hand.' His love of and trust in God enabled him to see the world through God's eyes and be at peace.

***Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*** (John 14:27).

**Thought For The Day:** *Only a prideful soul would expect, in their lifetime, to see God's plan to its fruition, but only a fool would not prepare for that eventuality.*

**Christ Revealed:** In the taking up of Elijah in the whirlwind and the dropping of his mantle – a symbol of the presence and power of God that remained with His faithful servant (II Kings 2:8-15).

**Word Studies:** 1:8 **girt with** = wearing; **girdle of leather about his loins** = garment around his waist; 2:19 **naught** = polluted, bad; 2:24 **tare** = mauled or mangled; 3:9 **fetched a compass** = circled around; made a roundabout march

**Pray for Staff:** Jennifer Palafox • **Government Officials:** Rep. Matthew Cartwright (PA) • **Country:** Malaysia (29,628,392) Southeast Asia • Major Languages: Bahasa Malaysia, English, Iban, Kadazan, Chinese • All Christian witness to Muslims is illegal • 61.3% Muslim; 19.8% Buddhist; 9.2% Christian; 6.3% Hindu; 1.3% Confucianism/ Taoism/ Traditional Chinese; 1.5% Unknown; 0.6% None • **Prayer Suggestion:** Let the Lord have all your worries and cares; He is always thinking about you and things that concern you (I Pet. 5:7).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 4.

***And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper (II Kings 5:10-11).***

Today's reading provides us with a welcome spiritual refreshment break. Instead of studying another lesson on the ungodly behavior of the kings, God's Word provides us with the comforting reassurance of God's presence in all situations. Through the miracles of Elisha, we are allowed to witness the glory of God as He meets the needs of His creation. ***But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*** (Phil. 4:19).

First, we see how God provided for the impoverished widow by increasing her supply of precious oil (II Kings 4:1-7). Next, we read of the double miracles received by the faithful Shunammite woman. God opened her womb and allowed her to conceive, and He later raised her son from the dead (4:8-37). This account leads into two instances in which God, through Elisha, miraculously fed the hungry (4:38-44). Finally, we read of the most well-known of Elisha's miracles, the healing of Naaman the leper.

This miracle stands apart from the others because of the principal players involved. Naaman was not a follower of God; Naaman was not even an Israelite. Yet he was so desperate for relief that he was willing to try anything. When he approached Elisha, he did so because of the man's reputation for miracles, not because he expected anything from God. So when he received Elisha's message, Naaman was confused and angered. How could washing in a dirty river cure his incurable disease? ***Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage*** (5:12). He had sought out Elisha because he had been told of the might and power of the prophet of Israel, yet nothing was happening. Naaman

expected the pomp and pageantry he was used to with the "priests" of the religions he had known since childhood, but Elisha had not even troubled himself to meet Naaman face to face. How could this help him at all? Naaman did not understand that the power of God was not dependent on human actions.

Many of us are now in the same position that Naaman found himself in, only instead of facing Elisha, we are arguing with Jesus Christ. We know our past sins; we know how guilty we are. How can we possibly be forgiven just because we ask to be? What is the catch? How do we make amends? How do we pay our debt? The answer is simple. We can't pay for our sins. Jesus already did that. We either accept His gift and wash ourselves clean in His innocent blood, or we turn away with our burden. No ritual or complicated ceremony can free us. The only thing standing between us and a clean slate is our acceptance of Jesus as our Lord and Savior. No matter how many different ways we attempt to approach the problem, the solution will always remain the same.

***Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me*** (John 14:6).

**Thought For The Day:** *The world has us believe that a sense of self-determination is the most necessary quality for getting ahead; often, this merely imposes our chosen destination over the one God has set.*

**Christ Revealed:** By the meal that took the poison out of the pot (II Kings 4:40-41). Meal, made of crushed grain, speaks of Christ, ***who was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised*** (crushed) ***for our iniquities*** (Is. 53:5), thereby removing the poison of sin from us.

**Word Studies:** 4:3 **borrow not a few** = get as many as you can; 4:6 **stayed** = ceased flowing; 4:10 **candlestick** = oil lamp; 4:27 **vexed** = deeply distressed; 4:29 **Gird up thy loins** = Fasten your loose, flowing garments with a belt.

**Pray for Staff:** Tiffany Parisi • **Government Official:** Rep. Peter Welch (VT), Gov. Eric Holcomb (IN) **Country:** Maldives (393,988) Indian Ocean • Major Languages: Dhivehi, English • Christian witnessing is banned • Muslim (Official) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Pray each day for the Lord to protect you from evil (I Pet. 5:8).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 5.

**Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day. But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and the king sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him? And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer (II Kings 6:31-33)?**

Although Ahab and his ungodly son Ahaziah were dead, the newest king had done little to restore the nation's relationship with the Lord. **And he wrought evil in the sight of the Lord; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom** (II Kings 3:2-3). Jehoram (also called Joram, younger brother to Ahaziah, was a morally ambivalent king; his chief concern was maintaining his position and reputation as 'King' of God's chosen people. To this end, he did not make an enemy of God's chosen prophet, Elisha, as had his father Ahab of the prophet Elijah, but instead decided to keep him close and seek out his counsel whenever he believed it would serve his purposes (5:9; 6:9,21). This public face may have fooled his subjects into thinking they were following a righteous king, but it did nothing to improve his standing in **the sight of the Lord**. Under Jehoram's rule, God's name was frequently invoked, yet His Word was ignored.

When trouble befell the nation of Israel in the form of a siege of Samaria laid down by Ben-hadad, king of Syria, the Israelite's lack of true faith became glaringly apparent. They seemed to draw no correlation between their ignorance of God's Word and the current crisis, even though God had repeatedly warned: **But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice**

***of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee*** (Deut. 28:15). Instead of joining together and entreating God, the population turned on one another. Price gouging was rampant as resources dwindled (6:25), and people committed unspeakable atrocities in their animalistic fight for survival (6:28-29). Worst of all, their king did nothing to aid in their struggles. He disavowed all responsibility and placed the blame for the situation squarely on God, saying: ***Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?***

How often are similar scenarios played out amongst self-proclaimed 'Christians' of today? It is all too easy, when trouble strikes, to assume the role of 'innocent victim' lashing out at our peers and God in an attempt to assign blame and distance ourselves from any hint of responsibility or guilt. Yet, in refusing to look inward, we frequently miss the message that God is urgently attempting to convey.

***And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth*** (Heb. 12:5-6).

**Thought For The Day:** *Human Nature leads us to look to our own needs and desires before the needs and desires of others. It is this instinct that we must find it in ourselves to reject.*

**Christ Portrayed:** By Elisha, who wept when he realized what Hazael would do to Israel and its people (II Kings 8:11-12). We are reminded of Jesus as He wept over Jerusalem: ***O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye would not!*** (Matt. 23:37).

**Word Studies:** 6:1 **strait** = small, too confined; 6:30 **within** = next to, underneath; 7:5 **utmost part** = borders; 8:11 **settled his countenance** = stared intensely; 8:26 **daughter** = granddaughter.

**Pray for Staff:** Gilbert Palafoxi • **Government Officials:** Sen. Jim Risch (ID), Sen. Ron Wyden (OR) • **Country:** Mali (15,968,882) West Africa • Major Languages: French, Bambara, Peul/Foulfoulbe • Violent extremist occupy Northern two thirds of country; Religious freedom where gov't retained control • 94.8% Muslim; 2.4% Christian; 2% Animist; 0.5% None; 0.3% Unspecified • **Prayer Suggestion:** Thank God in prayer for His faithfulness to His Word and His desire that all come to repentance (II Pet. 3:9).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 6.



***And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead: And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber; Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not (II Kings 9:1-3).***

***And when he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain. And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel (II Kings 9:5-6).*** Without preparation or warning, Jehu was ***anointed king over Israel***. One minute he was relaxing with his peers, a soldier amongst soldiers, and the next, he was being charged to rule ***over Israel*** and serve as executioner to the house of Ahab. ***And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel (9:7-8).***

For many, this might have been overwhelming. A stranger had just come up to Jehu and instructed him to commit treason by rising up to overthrow the sitting king of Israel. Were he to fail in his attempt, his death would be inevitable. Jehu, however, didn't hesitate. In the words of the nameless messenger, Jehu recognized the voice of God. In faith, he responded to the calling of his Lord and placed his life in His hands. He was to become the instrument of the Lord's vengeance, and he was not afraid. ***Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work;***



***and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the LORD*** (Is. 54:16-17).

Answering a call to action from God is not always an easy undertaking. Often, as in the case of Jehu, it means altogether abandoning the life that you have been living up to that point to embrace the mission God has for you. Whatever future you have envisioned must be exchanged for the unknown future God has planned. That can be a scary prospect, but if you are willing to take the leap of faith, it can also be the singularly most rewarding thing you will ever experience.

***But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches*** (I Cor. 7:17).

**Thought For The Day:** *Instead of being resentful that God is 'forcing' you to abandon part of your life, try being grateful that He cares enough to guide you away from sin.*

**Christ Portrayed:** By Elisha, who sent one of the sons of the prophets with oil to anoint Jehu (II Kings 9:1-6). Oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit, and the Lord sent the Holy Spirit to anoint believers (John 14:16-17; 16:13; Acts 1:8; compare I Sam. 16:13). ***The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth*** (lives) ***in you*** (I John 2:27).

**Word Studies:** 9:23 **treachery** = treason; 9:30 **tired her head** = adorned her hair; 10:3 **Look even out the best and meetest** = Select the most capable.

**Pray for Staff:** Ryan McCrary • **Government Official:** Rep. Zach Nunn (IA), Rep. Ronnie Jackson (TX), Rep. Greg Casar (TX), Rep. Becca Balint (VT) • **Country:** Malta (411,277) Mediterranean Sea • **Major Languages:** Maltese, English • **Religious Freedom** • 98% Roman Catholic; 2% Other (Protestant, Buddhist, Baha'i, Indigenous, 6,000 Muslims, 100 Jews) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Rejoice that Jesus' blood has cleansed you from sin (I John 1:7,9).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 7.

***And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet (II Kings 13:20-21).***

***So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him (I Kings 19:19).*** From the moment he responded to the summons of Elijah, Elisha had been a faithful servant of God. Initially, he learned at the feet of Elijah, ministering to the elder prophet and receiving instruction in the Word of God (19:21). When the time came for Elijah to be called to God, Elisha requested and received a ***double portion of thy (Elijah's) spirit*** (God's anointing upon Elijah). ***And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me (II Kings 2:9).***

Scripture provides us with many examples of Elisha's gift of ***spirit***. Empowered by God, he spoke the Lord's truth before kings and commoners alike (6:24-7:20; 8:7-15; 13:14-19), trusting wholly in God and never fearing earthly retribution. Through him, God performed miracles great and small (2:14, 18-22, 23-35; 3:16-25; 4:1-44; 5:1-19, 25-27; 6:1-23). Elisha's very presence amongst his people gave them an affirmation of their Covenant relationship with God. It proved the Lord's continued interest in their daily lives and the power that lay with Him alone.

God did not provide us with a detailed record of the latter half of Elisha's ministry, but we are given no reason to believe that it differed much from the first. At the time of his final illness and subsequent death, he was still much beloved by the people and honored as a man of God. ***Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and***

**said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof** (13:14). Elisha continued to work for God, providing godly counsel and prophecy even up to the moment of his physical death.

**And Elisha died, and they buried him.** Many would expect this to be the end of Elisha's story and God's earthly use for this extraordinary prophet, but God was not done. **And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.** Throughout his ministry, Elisha performed his miracles in an understated manner designed to give all the glory to God. He wanted the recipients to understand that God alone was their benefactor. It is fitting, then, that God chose to use the body of Elisha one last time to showcase His power and announce His presence.

**But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible** (Matt. 19:26).

**Though For The Day:** *When we allow God to speak for and direct us in all things, we give the world an actual demonstration of His Will.*

**Christ Portrayed:** By Jehoiada, the priest who protected Joash and, in holy judgment, had Athaliah put to death (II Kings 11:4-16). Christ keeps us safe to fulfill His will and will return to judge all who **obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ** (II Thess. 1:8).

**Word Studies:** 11:7 **two parts** = two companies; 11:8 **compass** = sur-round; 12:5 **breaches** = damaged places; 12:11 **laid it out** = paid it to them; 13:6 **the grove** = place to worship the goddess Asherah (Ashtoreth).

**Pray for Government Officials:** Gov. Mike Dunleavy (AK) • **Country:** Marshall Islands (69,747) North Pacific Ocean • Major Languages: Marshallese, English • Religious Freedom • 54.8% Protestant; 25.8% Assembly of God; 8.4% Roman Catholic, 2.8% Bukot Nan Jesus; 2.1% Mormon; 3.6% Other Christian; 1% Other; 1.5% None • **Prayer Suggestion:** Confess and repent of any known sin (I John 1:9).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 8.

***For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. And the Lord said not that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash (II Kings 14:26-27).***

Our God is merciful. Since the split from the southern kingdom of Judah, Israel had been a nation in decline. Her kings had ranged from overtly evil to weak and foolish, and Israel had suffered greatly. ***The Lord saw the affliction of Israel***, and ***He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash***. Under the guiding hand of God, ***he (Jeroboam) restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He spake by the hand of His servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher (14:25).***

Jeroboam II ruled Israel for 41 years. Under his leadership, the people enjoyed levels of peace, prosperity, and political prestige that had not been seen in that country since the days of David and Solomon. Unfortunately, however, this period of national prosperity did not bring with it a wave of national righteousness. Jeroboam's military prowess far exceeded his desire to do the will of the Lord (14:24). The king followed the dictates of his heart, and the people followed the ways of their king. As a result, immorality and idolatry flourished.

The Israelites appeared to believe that their prosperity was a sign that God approved of their current lifestyle, and they did not heed the warnings of His prophets that He sent to minister to them. Hosea and Amos spoke out against the spiritual bankruptcy, religious perversion, and moral wickedness that were the hallmarks of Jeroboam's reign (Hos. 1:1; 6:4-10; 10:1-15; Amos 1:1; 2:6-8; 3:13-5:27), but the people turned a deaf ear to their words. They lived in a world of peace and plenty, and they could not fathom a time when ***the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword (Amos 7:9).***

Today, we live in a land of relative peace and prosperity, which claims to be “one nation, under God.” As a nation, we have significantly benefited from the Lord’s blessings. Still, just as was the case with Jeroboam and the citizens of Israel, many have mistaken the love and mercy of God for a blanket ‘seal of approval.’ Instead of delving into the richness of God’s Word and allowing Him to shape their lives after His will, they boldly proclaim to know His will without even bothering to consult Him on it. They back up their claims in the same way the ancient Israelites did. They point to their social, material, and political successes and say, “God is happy with me.”

Success that has been achieved at the cost of spiritual neglect is not success at all; it is failure of the worst kind. In His permissive will, God allows us to experience these hollow victories to test our loyalty and humility before Him. But rest assured, any worldly success that does not have God at its core is nothing more than an illusion. And like all illusions, it will eventually fade into nothingness, revealing the cold, hard truth of a wasted life.

***For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself*** (Gal. 6:3).

**Thought For The Day:** *We live to seek God’s blessing, not the other way around.*

**Christ Revealed:** When the Lord struck King Azariah with leprosy and thrust him out from being king (II Kings 15:5-7). This foreshadows the time when Christ shall reign upon the earth and all who have ignored or refused His merciful gift of salvation shall be **cast into the lake of fire** (Rev. 20:15).

**Word Studies:** 14:10 **lifted thee up** = made you proud; 14:12 **put to the worse** = defeated; 14:25 **sea of the plain** = the Dead Sea; 15:5 **a several house** = a separated house; 15:20 **exact** = assessed, taxed.

**Pray for Staff:** Judy McCrary • **Government Official:** Rep. Anna Paulina Luna (FL) • **Country:** Mauritania (3,437,610) West Africa on the North Atlantic Ocean • Major Language: Arabic • Islam sole religion of state and citizens • 100% Muslim; Other (Small amount of foreigners - Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jew) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Go to God in prayer with a heart and life that are keeping His Commandments and He will answer you (I John 3:22).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 9.

**Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God. And they rejected His statutes, and His covenant that He made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them** (II Kings 17:13-15).

Since the division of the unified tribes of Israel into two separate nations, the northern kingdom of Israel had traveled a dark and dangerous path. Not one of her kings had chosen to live fully for God, and none were considered righteous or upright in His eyes. Over the centuries, the Israelites' dependence on their godless kings grew, and their understanding of the Word of God faded. Despite the ministrations of Godly prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, Amos, and Hosea, the people of Israel fell further and further away from God. **And they rejected His statutes, and His covenant that He made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them.**

It was during the reign of Hoshea, son of Elah, that the breaking point was reached. God watched as once again a king that ostensibly served in His name offered allegiance and tribute to another (II Kings 17:3), and His anger became full. In the time of Moses, long before the fledgling nation even began to set its roots in the Promised Land, God had offered them a warning and a promise: **And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known** (Deut. 11:28). **The Lord**

***shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone*** (28:36). Israel had refused to heed the warning, and the time had arrived for the promise to be fulfilled. ***Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only*** (II Kings 17-18).

Although the history of God's chosen people continues in God's Word through the eventual exile and return of the nation of Judah (the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and many of the Levites - later referred to collectively as Jews), the recorded history of the ten tribes that comprised the Northern Kingdom of Israel ends with their capture by the Assyrians. The Lord had promised them a paradise on earth; He only asked that they be faithful to Him in return. Ultimately, that was the one thing they refused to do. They willfully and repeatedly broke their covenant with God; He regretfully allowed them to suffer their chosen consequences.

***But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death*** (Rev. 21:8).

**Thought For The Day:** *The further we choose to live 'above' other people, the further we live from God.*

**Christ Revealed:** Through the original Brasen (brass) Altar made by Solomon (II Kings 16:14; II Chr. 4:1). The Brasen Altar is a type of the cross on which Christ, our whole Burnt Offering, offered Himself to God (Heb. 9:14). Unlike the necessary daily sacrifices offered by the priests on the Brasen Altar, this **He did once** (once for all), on the cross, **when He offered up Himself** (7:27).

**Word Studies:** 16:11 **against King Ahaz** = before King Ahaz arrived; 16:13 **meat offering** = meal or grain offering or unleavened bread, oil, and a portion of incense

**Pray for Government Officials:** Rep. Ted Deutch (FL), Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (MO), Rep. Matt Gaetz (FL) Rep. Valerie Foushee (NC) • **Country:** Mauritius (1,322,238) Indian Ocean • Major Languages: Creole, Bhojpuri, French, English • Limited Religious Freedom • 48% Hindu; 23.6% Roman Catholic; 16.6% Muslim; 8.6% Protestant; 2.5% Other; 0.3% Unspecified; 0.4% None • **Prayer Suggestion:** Ask the Lord to fill you with love for the unlovable (I John 4:7-8).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 10



**And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth (II Kings 19:15).**

**Hezekiah prayed.** Although there is much that we can learn from Scripture about the life and reign of this righteous king, all that we genuinely need to know is summed up in those two words. Unlike his father before him, Hezekiah was a devoted servant of God. **He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses** (II Kings 18:5-6). Because he **trusted** and **clave to** the Lord, he was determined to stay in constant contact with Him. Through that contact (prayer), Hezekiah could discern the Lord's will in every situation he encountered.

Two of Hezekiah's most heartfelt prayers are recorded in today's reading. The first is the prayer of a devout king pleading with God for the safety of an unworthy nation (19:15-19). The second is the prayer of a desperate man seeking divine intervention on a personal level (20:2-3). While the words of each prayer are eloquent and expressive, it is the response of God in each instance that we should pay the most attention to. **Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard (19:20). Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of My people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD (20:5).**

That **which thou hast prayed, I have heard.** God's reply reaffirmed the relationship that He has established with us, His creation. He knows our needs, wants, wishes, and desires, even before we voice them (Matt. 6:8), but by bringing them to Him in prayer, we acknowledge that we are dependent on Him for

their fulfillment. For God's children, prayer is as necessary as breathing. God has a detailed, unchanging plan for this world, but our role in that plan can most certainly change. Through prayer, we are able to stay in constant contact with the Lord. By keeping the lines of communication open, we can stay in sync with God and ensure that we hold to the best possible path he has laid for us. When we are scared or in need, as Hezekiah was, we first need to take it to God. That does not guarantee that we will get the outcome we want, but it does assure us that we will get the support we need. Regardless of the outcome, it will also allow us to know with certainty that we are staying on the path He has marked.

***Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*** (Phil. 4:6-7).

**Thought For The Day:** *It is the nature of mankind to be discontent, but to find fault or disappointment in the gifts God has given us reveals the depths of our sinful pride.*

**Christ Portrayed:** By Hezekiah, who was faithful in leading the Kingdom of Judah back to God and His Word (II Kings 18:1-6) – a foreshadowing of the words of Jesus to the Pharisees in His attempt to awaken them to their need to see themselves as sinners and recognize Him as their Savior (Mark 2:17).

**Word Studies:** 18:6 **clave** = clung, was devoted to; 18:17 **Tartan** = the title of Assyria's general, commander in chief; **Rabsaris** = the chief financial official; **Rabshakeh** = the chief officer, or possibly chief cup-bearer; 18:31 **by a present** = by paying tribute;

**Pray for Staff:** Tiffany Parisi • **Government Officials:** Rep. Vernon Buchanan (FL), Rep. John Moolenaar (MI) Rep. Dale Strong (AL) • **Country:** Mexico (118,818,228) North America • Major Language: Spanish • Religious Freedom • 82.7% Catholic; 1.6% Protestant; 1.4% Jehovah's Witnesses; 5% Other Evangelical; 1.9% Other; 4.7% None; 2.7% Unspecified • **Prayer Suggestion:** If we ask anything agreeing with His will, He both hears and answers (I John 5:14-15).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 11.

***And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes*** (II Kings 22:10-11).

Following the death of Hezekiah, the nation of Judah was sent into a tailspin. At the age of 12, his son Manasseh ascended to the throne. From the moment he assumed power, Manasseh made it his mission to undo all the spiritual reform his father had brought about in Judah. His evil ways were without equal in the history of the southern kingdom; he was considered to be just as bad, or worse, than the despicable king Ahab of Israel (II Kings 21:3). Inexplicably, instead of rebelling against their ungodly king, the people of Judah followed their leader into the realm of total spiritual apostasy. ***But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel*** (21:9). During this period, the Book of the Law became lost. Perhaps a faithful priest who didn't want it to be destroyed hid it away for protection, or maybe it was shoved to the side, ignored and forgotten by a faithless people. Whatever the reason, this all-important document disappeared.

After 57 years devoted to idolatry and pagan worship (55 under Manasseh and two under his son, Amon), the leadership of Judah fell onto the shoulders of an eight-year-old boy, Josiah. ***And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left*** (22:2). Although he would have been no more than a puppet king in his earliest years, by the time he was 16, Josiah had begun to seek out God. At the age of 20, he began to purge the land of all things pertaining to idol worship (II Chr. 34:3-7), and at age 26, he began to restore the Lord's Temple. During that restoration, Hilkiah, the high priest, found the Book of the Law scrolls hidden in the Temple. After hearing the scroll's words, Josiah was devastated; he realized how sinful Judah had become. He also understood that, even though he had been trying his best,

he had still been living outside God's will.

***So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*** (Rom. 10:17). Without the Word of God, we are lost. ***Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me*** (John 14:6). The only way that we can receive salvation is through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the only way that we can indeed come to know Him is through the precious written record that He has provided for us. ***Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me*** (John 5:39). While it is essential for our spiritual growth that we worship and fellowship with other Christians, we must never allow that to take the place of our prayerful reading and studying of God's Word.

***And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*** (II Tim. 3:15-17).

**Thought For The Day:** *To be led astray is to be directed away from the light; the deepening darkness should make the error apparent.*

**Christ Portrayed:** By the prophets (II Kings 21:10). ***God, who . . . spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son*** (Heb. 1:1-2).

**Word Studies:** 21:6 **observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits** = practiced witchcraft, fortune-telling, devil worship, black magic; 21:12 **ears shall tingle** = will be astonished with horror; 23:17 **title** = monument, grave marker.

**Pray for Staff:** Ryan McCrary • **Country:** Micronesia, Federated States of (106,104) North Pacific Ocean • **Major Language:** English • **Religious Freedom** • 52.7% Roman Catholic; 41.7% Protestant; 3.8% Other; 1.8% None/Unspecified • **Prayer Suggestion:** Ask the Lord to give you mercy and compassion for others (Jude 1:21-22).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 12.

**N**otwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of His great wrath, wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked Him withal. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there (II Kings 23:26-27).

**And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him** (II Kings 23:25). Josiah had loved the Lord with all his heart, mind, and soul, and he had endeavored to turn the hearts of the people back to the will of God. Unfortunately, his actions were too little, too late. While God recognized, praised, and rewarded Josiah's faithfulness (II Chr. 34:27-28), the Lord perceived that the nation was merely paying lip service to the whims of her king. He knew that underneath their façade of obedience lay hardened hearts that had no real investment in His Word. **Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched** (II Kings 22:16-17).

Less than 23 years after the death of Josiah, the southern kingdom of Judah fell to the Babylonians. Jerusalem, the beloved city of David, lay in ruins. In the shadow of her breached defensive walls stood what remained of the Temple of the Lord. Vandalized, looted, and burned (25:9, 13-15), it served as a poignant reminder of the promises of God and the Covenant that His people had so blatantly refused to honor (I Kings 9:3-9).

**He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination** (Prov. 28:9). The nation of Judah

was destroyed, not by the conquering Babylonians, but by her indifference to the God that had first brought her into existence. They had been invincible as long as they had acknowledged and worshiped the Lord. Yet, once their worship ceased, they had become indefensible. In the face of His people's apostasy, God's Spirit no longer had a reason to remain (Ezek. 10:18; 11:23). Without God's Spirit, His nation ceased to exist.

God's judgment is never delivered capriciously or without warning. By the time a person has reached the point of experiencing His wrath, they are guaranteed to have a string of bad choices littering the path behind them, and their heart has been willfully shuttered against His loving presence. God will reveal Himself in all His terrible glory to those who have left Him with no other way to reach them. ***For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God*** (Rom. 14:11).

***What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles*** (Rom. 9:22-24)?

**Thought For The Day:** *God hears the words in our hearts, we cannot deceive Him with our mouths.*

**Christ Revealed:** Through the Passover (II Kings 23:21-23), which, as a type, foreshadowed Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Passover Lamb, who delivers us from spiritual death through His sacrificial death. ***I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death*** (Rev. 1:18).

**Word Studies:** 25:12 **husbandmen** = farmers; 25:16 **without weight** = beyond measure; 25:27 **lift up the head** = release from prison.

**Pray for Staff:** Gilbert Palafox • **Government Officials:** Rep. John Curtis (UT), Rep. Pete Stauber (MN), Rep. Mike Kelly (PA), Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (MS) • **Country:** Moldova (3,619,925) Southeastern Europe • Major Languages: Moldovan, Russian, Gagauz • Limited Religious Freedom • 98% Eastern Orthodox; 1.5% Jewish; 0.5% Other (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Baha'i, Molokan, Krishna) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Pray in such a manner that others would be encouraged to praise and glorify God also (Jude 1:24-25).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 13.

***The sons of Abraham; Isaac, and Ishmael. These are their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth; then Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, Mishma, and Dumah, Massa, Hadad, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael. Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan; Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Ephher, and Henoah, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these are the sons of Keturah. And Abraham begat Isaac. The sons of Isaac; Esau and Israel. The sons of Esau; Eliphaz, Reuel, and Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah (I Chr. 1:28-35).***

***For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth*** (Deut. 7:6). The identity of God's chosen people has been firmly established by His Word. From the initial calling of Abram (Abraham) (Gen. 12:1-3) passed by birthright through Isaac and down to Jacob (Israel) to the establishment of the nation of Israel in the homeland God had promised (Josh. 21:43-45), our focus has been narrowed to this one subset of creation. Yet just because He directed our attention to what we needed to learn doesn't mean God was likewise limited. The first chapter of I Chronicles reminds us of God's status as Lord and Creator of all.

***And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation*** (Gen. 17:20). After covering God's rescue of Ishmael and his mother Hagar from their desert exile and His establishment of them in the wilderness of Paran (Gen. 21:14-21), Scripture turns our attention back towards Isaac and the furthering of God's covenant with Abraham. Ishmael and his sons are mentioned briefly again following the death of Abraham, but then they disappear from the narrative. Knowing how their lives unfold is not necessary to understand God's will for us. Yet as God's remnant emerged from their 70-year



exile, the Chronicler included Ishmael and his descendants (as well as Abraham's sons through Keturah and Esau and his descendants) in his recorded genealogy. Why?

The Chronicler was grounding the returning Israelites in the broader truth of God's creation by including those outside of the Abrahamic Covenant in his recitation. Although Israel had been chosen to reflect the Lord's light (Is. 49:6) and to lay the foundation for God's final, glorious Covenant of grace (Is. 11:1-10), God still held sway over all of His creation. Every man, woman, and child in every nation on earth was there because He put them there. God's promises, blessings, and curses were not limited to a select people or land but rather were His to impart freely to whomever and wherever He pleased. Yet out of all of His creation and options, He had chosen them, and He was choosing them again. In this list of names, the Chronicler simultaneously humbled and exalted the returning exiles by reminding them of the limitless power and authority of God whom they served.

***And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy*** (Ex. 33:19).

**Thought For The Day:** *God's plan includes us all, whether we choose to respect it or not.*

**Christ Portrayed:** By the first Adam (I Chr. 1:1). Christ is the ***last Adam***. We have eternal life because ***the last Adam was made a quickening*** (life-giving) ***Spirit*** (I Cor. 15:45,47).

**Word Studies:** 1:6 **sons of** = descendants of; 1:10 **begat** = became the father of; 2:21 **threescore** = sixty.

**Pray for Staff:** Jennifer Palafox • **Country:** Monaco (30,500) Southeastern France • Major Languages: French, English, Italian, Monegasque • Religious Freedom • 90% Roman Catholic; 10% Other (Protestant, Jew, Muslim) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Keep the Word of God and pray to Him who has given you an open door into His presence (Rev. 3:8).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 14.

***And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them. And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day (I Chr. 5: 25-26).***

As the genealogical lists continue, we see Israel's history emerging succinctly but compellingly. The Chronicler assumes that his readers have a working knowledge of the information he is recounting (as do we, from our studies of Genesis through II Kings), so his goal is to “jog their memories” and cause them to look at old facts in new ways. In chapters four and five, he compares and contrasts the histories of two of the tribes of Israel. The first described is Simon, whose modest allotment of land was within Judah on the south and included Beersheba and Ziklag, the city from which David secretly raided his enemies while on the run from King Saul (Josh. 19:1-9; I Sam. 28:6-12). Though they are amongst the smallest of the tribes, the Chronicler admires the way that they obeyed the commands of God by clearing their land of the pagans. Their genealogy ends by saying: ***And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped, and dwelt there unto this day*** (I Chr. 4:43).

They are compared to the once mighty tribe of Ruben, descendants of the firstborn son of Israel. Our attention is captured immediately by the fact that Ruben, although the eldest, forfeited his birthright through his sexual sin. ***Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright*** (5:1). Next, we are reminded of the cavalier way his descendants treated their inheritance from God. Instead of crossing the Jordan River, the Reubenites chose to live in the fertile lands on the east side of the Jordan (5:6), outside the promised land and

far from the place of worship (Num. 32). Although they made their decision based on what they thought would bring them the greater success, they soon found themselves forgetting God. They transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them. Because of this, they were among the first tribes to be conquered and taken as slaves to Assyria.

The Reubenites provide us with a classic example of people who are so involved in the things of the world that God and His Word are not given first consideration. They were willing to settle for less than His best to receive material gain and satisfy their ambitions and pleasures. Many today view their relationship with God in the same light. Their needs and desires come first and foremost. They claim they want to follow God, but they have a list of things they must accomplish before they believe they can wholeheartedly do so. Many of these misguided individuals' time on earth will be over before they ever finish their list. They will die unsaved because they never "got around" to God.

***Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*** (I Cor. 15:58).

**Thought For The Day:** *God's love is more precious than anything in this world, and it's free.*

**Christ Revealed:** Through the genealogy of David (I Chr. 3:1-24). Christ the Son of God was also called the Son of David: ***The Book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David*** (Matt. 1:1; Luke 3:23-38; Rom. 1:3).

**Word Studies:** 3:9 **concubines** = a woman legitimately married to a man but inferior to the regular wife and excluded with her children from the heritage (Gen. 25:6).

**Pray for Government Officials:** Gov. Jared Polls(CO) • **Country:** Mongolia (2,912,192) East-Central Asia • Major Languages: Khalkha Mongol, Turkic, Russian • Restricted Religious Freedom • 90% Buddhist; 5% Muslim; 3% Shamanist; 2% Christian (Protestant, Mormon, Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Praise the Lord for His redeeming love (Rev. 5:9).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 15.

**The sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the sons of Kohath; Amram, Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel. And the children of Amram; Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam. The sons also of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar** (I Chr. 6:1-3).

Chapter six is given wholly over to the identification of the descendants of Levi. **And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine** (Num. 3:12). Here are listed the men that God set aside to serve Him perpetually and to minister to the spiritual needs of His people (Num. 18:1-7). One might expect that all men that were subjects of such a high calling would be righteous men of strong moral character, but an in-depth examination of the lives of many of these men reveals a painful, universal truth. No matter how strong the call of God is, free will means that we can choose to ignore it and follow our own paths. **He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations** (Is. 66:4).

From Aaron, the first high priest, straight through until the time of the Babylonian captivity, the names of the priests are carefully documented. We are reminded of the devotion with which Aaron undertook his duties for God, as well as the careless approach taken by his two eldest sons, Nadab and Abihu, which led to their untimely deaths (Lev. 10:1-2; Num. 3:4). Further on, we come across Samuel, a godly judge, priest and prophet, and his sons, Joel (Vashni)(I Sam. 8:2; I Chr. 6:33) and Abiah, who denied their holy calling by accepting bribes and extorting the people (I Sam. 8:3).

What a strange mixture of the sacred and the profane! How discouraging it is to discover worldly scoundrels only one generation removed from devout men of God. Every one of these men began their lives with the same heaven-sent opportunity,

yet many of them squandered their gifts and turned their backs on the Lord. Why?

The sons of Levi represented a sacred office. They were required to live in complete, submissive obedience to God – anything less was unacceptable. When these men attempted to blend their desire to be accepted in the world with their duties to God, the resulting compromise destroyed their usefulness to Him. From that point on, they walked in the way of the world, sometimes without even realizing that they had strayed from His path.

***Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful*** (I Cor. 4:2). Christians today have the tremendous privilege, as well as the grave responsibility, of representing the Lord and presenting themselves in all things as faithful servants of Christ. Every man, woman, and child born into this world has been presented with the same opportunity: ***And He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me*** (Luke 9:23). Only by doing so, without worldly compromise or exception, will we be able to ensure that our feet stay securely planted on the path of God.

***And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*** (I Thess. 5:23).

**Thought For The Day:** *Heeding any call other than God's will invariably lead us deeper into the world; always be mindful not to block your route back.*

**Christ Revealed:** By the ***cities of . . . refuge*** (I Chr. 6:57, also 67,71- 72,78,80). For a person to have protection from the avenger of blood, he had to flee to a city of refuge. God provided His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ to be our Refuge from His judgment against our sin. (Compare John 3:14-18; 10:24-30; Gal. 2:16; 3:1-14; Heb. 10:1-18; I John 2:2; Rev. 1:5.) When, by faith, in obedience to His Word, we come to Christ, He becomes our Refuge (Heb. 6:18-20).

**Word Studies:** 6:32 **waited on** = performed service in; 6:66 **residue** = balance; 6:74 **suburbs** = pasturelands; 7:23 **it went evil with** = tragedy had happened to his family;

**Pray for Staff:** Jennifer Palafox • **Government Officials:** Sen. Thomas Cotton (AR), Rep. Michael Cloud (TX) • **Country:** Montenegro (653,474) Southeastern Europe • Major Languages: Serbian, Montenegrin, Bosnian, Albanian • Restricted Religious Freedom • 74.2% Orthodox; 17.7% Muslim; 3.5% Catholic; 0.6% Other; 3% Unspecified; 1% Atheist • **Prayer Suggestion:** Lift up your prayers to the Lord as incense before God (Rev. 8:3-4).

**Optional Reading:** Romans 16

***So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies; and, behold, they were written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah, who were carried away to Babylon for their transgression*** (I Chr. 9:1).

The Books of I and II Chronicles were written to bring hope to a downtrodden people. They cover much of the same historical period as the Books of I and II Kings, but with one notable difference. Where I and II Kings diligently recorded the history of all of Israel for the edification of future generations, God's chronicler was focused on the immediate needs of his people as they emerged from Babylonian exile. For 70 years, they had lived as strangers in a strange land. ***Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished*** (Jer. 29:5-6). So much time had passed that most returning had never even seen their homeland. These people desperately needed to understand their identity as God's chosen people and their unbreakable connection to the land He had given them. To that end, the chronicler focused on the religious history of the southern kingdom of Judah, the city of Jerusalem, and the Temple of God as it related to the Davidic Covenant established by God.

In today's reading, we cover the last of the genealogical record as documented by God's Chronicler. Chapter 8 provides us with a listing of the tribe of Benjamin, while chapter 9 details those who had been called to various responsibilities in service to the Lord. ***All these which were chosen to be porters in the gates were two hundred and twelve. These were reckoned by their genealogy in their villages, whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain in their set office*** (I Chr. 9:22-23). Far from being a dry historical record, this chapter is meant to celebrate the godly spirit of the laymen, priests, and Levites that had willingly answered God's call and returned to the city of God to humbly take up their position in His service

once again. And their brethren, heads of the house of their fathers, a thousand and seven hundred and threescore; very able men for the work of the service of the house of God (9:13).

Whatever the capacity in which we are called, no greater honor can be bestowed upon any man, woman, or child than the honor of being accepted in the service of God. The honor brings with it grave responsibility, but it also imbues us with the most incredible sense of belonging we will ever know. As we answer the call and take our place in the body of Christ, we find ourselves spiritually linked to all those who have come before. Through the eyes of family, the chronicler's words take on new meaning as we, too, seek to thoroughly understand our identity as one of God's chosen people. ***And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*** (Gal. 3:29).

***So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness*** (Rom. 12:5-8).

**Thought For The Day:** *The shackles that bind us strongest to the world are the things we most believe we cannot live without.*

**Christ Revealed:** By Jerusalem, which means "foundation of peace" (I Chr. 9:3). Christ is the only Foundation of Peace upon which man can stand before God. Jesus said: ***My peace I give unto you*** (John 14:27; II Cor. 5:18; Eph. 2:14).

**Word Studies:** 8:31 **Zacher** = Zechariah (not the prophet); 9:21 **porter** = gatekeeper of the entrance way; 9:22 **set office** = trustworthy position; 9:23 **by wards** = as guards.

**Pray for Bible Pathway Printer:** Pollock Printing, Nashville, Tennessee • **Government Officials:** Rep. Gary Palmer (AL)) • **Country:** Montserrat (5,189) Caribbean Sea • Major Language: English • Religious Freedom • Protestant; Roman Catholic • **Prayer Suggestion:** Believe that what God promises, He will bring to pass (Gen. 15:1-6 & 21:1-3).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 1.



***And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart. And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets. And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God. And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called Perez-uzza to this day. And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me (I Chr. 13:7-12)?***

***Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name (Ps. 103:1).*** God's Word leaves no room for doubt. David loved God with all he was, and God returned that love tenfold. ***And when He had removed him, He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also He gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfil all My will (Acts 13:22).*** Despite his great love for the Lord, however, David was still fallible. Here in today's reading, we are given a closer look at one of the times that David slipped and allowed himself to trust in human initiative instead of waiting on the guidance of God.

After decades of waiting, David had finally been accepted by all the tribes as king over all of Israel, and in his joy, he first and foremost wanted to acknowledge God's presence and give Him his rightful praise. ***And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us: And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul (I Chr. 13:2-3).*** So overcome was

he with his desire that he never once stopped to consult God about his plan to move the ark to Jerusalem. ***When Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark... and He (God) smote him,*** David was horrified. He didn't understand what had happened or why God so obviously disapproved. ***And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?***

Have you ever approached a situation with the best intentions, given your absolute best effort, and still watched as it blew up in your face? Like David, you might have pulled back in confusion and fear, wondering what had gone wrong. The fact is, our 'best effort' is worthless unless it is fully aligned with the will of God. It does not matter what our intentions are or how pure our motivations might be; if we do not first take the time to pray and search out the Lord's guidance in His holy Word, then we run the risk of acting outside of His will and thus failing at our task before it has even begun.

***Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths*** (Prov. 3:5-6).

**Thought For The Day:** *Failure is a human constant. The ability to retain hope throughout it, however, demonstrates strong faith.*

**Christ Portrayed:** By David, the anointed king (1 Chr. 11:3). Christ is the Anointed One who will soon reign forever as ***KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS*** (Rev. 19:16).

**Word Studies:** 11:16 **hold** = stronghold; 12:1 **close** = restricted in his movements; in hiding; 12:17 **knit** = joined, united; 12:19 **fell . . . to David** = shifted allegiance to David.

**Pray for Country:** Morocco (32,649,130) Northwest Coast of Africa • Major Languages: Arabic, Tamazight, French • Government very hostile to Christians and missions • 99% Sunni Muslim; 1% Other (Christian, Jew, Baha'i, Shia Muslim) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Have faith that God always keeps His promises (Gen. 17:16 & 21:2-3).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 2.

***And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever. And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had prepared for it (I Chr. 15:1-3).***

Yesterday we discussed David's first disastrous attempt to bring the ark of God into his capital city. We read how he had it proudly loaded on a new cart drawn by oxen (in violation of the Law of God (Ex. 25:13-15; Num. 4:15; 7:9) and how celebration had quickly turned to mourning when Uzzah had reached out to steady the ark with his bare hand and was struck dead in response to that sacrilegious act (II Sam. 6:1-8; I Chr. 13:9-10). We noted David's confusion and fear over what had happened and how he had temporarily abandoned his plan to bring the ark into his city. ***So David brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite*** (I Chr. 13:13).

In today's reading, we discover one of David's most impressive character traits. Unlike many individuals occupying positions of power, David was willing and able to learn from his mistakes. When he left the ark at ***the house of Obed-edom the Gittite***, he didn't abandon it as had Saul before him; rather, he prayed to God and searched His Word, seeking to understand the reason behind Uzzah's death. He learned that by acting in haste on his own desires instead of first consulting the Lord, he had unwittingly offered God less than total obedience, which in turn had led to tragedy.

For his second attempt, David prepared a place for the ark of God and made certain that all who would be involved in the transfer understood their God-appointed duties. ***Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen.*** It was evident from his directions to his people that David had thoroughly familiarized himself with God's Word before the second move. ***And the children of the***

***Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD (15:15).***

Because this transfer was done according to the word of the Lord, the Ark's arrival in Jerusalem was a cause for great celebration. David proclaimed to the world: ***Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon His name, make known His deeds among the people. Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him, talk ye of all His wondrous works. Glory ye in His holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD (16:8-10).*** David was not singing and dancing in joy and pride at his personal accomplishment; David was celebrating the wondrous, all-encompassing presence of God!

David's willingness to admit his mistake, humble himself before God, and try again once he understood God's directions turned tragedy into triumph. No matter how many mistakes we have made or how far off of God's path we have traveled, God is still waiting to provide us with the directions we need to succeed.

***Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return (Jer. 8:4)?***

**Thought For The Day:** *A mistake is any action taken without first seeking God's consideration.*

**Christ Revealed:** Through David's fame and exaltation (I Chr. 14:17). God highly exalted Christ, our Redeemer, and gave ***Him a Name which is above every name*** (Phil. 2:9-11).

**Word Studies:** 14:13 **spread themselves abroad** = made a raid, invaded.

**Pray for Staff:** Judy McCrary • **Government Officials:** Rep. Dwight Evans (PA), Rep. Lois Frankel (FL); • **Country:** Mozambique (24,096,669) Eastern Coast of Africa • **Major Languages:** Emakhuwa, Portuguese, Xichangana • **Religious Freedom** • 28.4% Catholic; 27.7% Protestant; 18% Muslim; 18.7% None; 7.2% Other • **Prayer Suggestion:** Pray in faith that God will bless your family (Gen. 17:18-20).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 3.

***And David said, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father shewed kindness to me. And David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. So the servants of David came into the land of the children of Ammon to Hanun, to comfort him. But the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanun, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? are not his servants come unto thee for to search, and to overthrow, and to spy out the land? Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved them, and cut off their garments in the midst hard by their buttocks, and sent them away (I Chr. 19:2-4).***

How amazing is the Word of God! Although the words on the page never change, we can read the same passage year in and year out and never receive a duplicate lesson. God has so much to teach us and so much wisdom to share that even if we devoted every minute of every day to prayerfully studying His Word, we would still not learn every lesson He has provided. In chapter 19 of today's reading, we once again read of the 'misunderstanding' that occurred in the land of Ammon upon the death of her king, Nahash. The narrative here in I Chronicles is nearly identical to that of II Samuel chapter 10. In it, we learn of the kindness of David (19:2,5) and the godly strategy of Joab and Abishai (19:10-13). We are also presented with a classic example of how quickly a situation can go bad when someone chooses to act before gathering all the facts.

When David sent his messengers to meet with the newly crowned Ammonite king, his only motive was courteous sympathy. Scripture tells us that David was repaying kindness with kindness. In today's society, David would have most likely sent flowers and a card, but at that time, it was customary to send a personal envoy. Hanun, however, was suspicious of David's motives. That, in and of itself, was not an inappropriate response considering the history of enmity between the two countries. Had Hanun met with the messengers, limited their access to his kingdom, and quickly sent them on their way, no one could have faulted him. Unfortunately, Hanun was a rash

and impetuous man. Instead of meeting with David's men to determine their motives, he jumped to conclusions and subjected the men to utter humiliation. Before it was over, Hanun's paranoia ignited a full-scale war.

All of us have been guilty of jumping to conclusions at one time or another. We focus on one portion of the larger picture and make a snap judgment. Often, as Hanun did, we choose to go on the offensive based on that judgment. In the blink of an eye, friendships and reputations are destroyed. Once something has been said or done, it can't be taken back. ***An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression. A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit*** (Prov. 29:22-23). God cautions us again and again throughout His word to always gather all the facts before taking action. Think about how much pain we could avoid if we would just take His advice.

***Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*** (James 1:19-20).

**Thought For The Day:** *We don't have to worry about being misled by misrepresentations of God's Truth if we take the time to read His Word for ourselves.*

**Christ Portrayed:** By David, the shepherd-king (I Chr. 17:7; comp. Matt. 1:1-2; Rom. 1:3), symbolic of Christ ***as the Good Shepherd*** (John 10:11) ***and King of saints*** (all believers) (Rev. 15:3).

**Word Studies:** 17:7 **sheepcote** = pasturelands; 18:4 **houghed** = crippled by cutting leg tendons; 19:4 **hard by** = close to; 19:6 **odious** = detestable, offensive.

**Pray for Staff:** Gilbert Palafox • **Country:** Myanmar (formerly Burma) (55,167,330) Southeast Asia • Major Languages: Burmese, Ethnic Languages • Restricted Religious Freedom • 89% Buddhist; 3% Baptist; 1% Roman Catholic; 4% Muslim (Sunni); 1% Animist; 2% Other (Baha'i, Jewish, Cao Dai) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Remember that nothing is too hard for the Lord (Gen. 18:14).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 4.

***And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings; and brass in abundance without weight; Also cedar trees in abundance: for the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David. And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death (I Chr. 22:2-5).***

Above all else, David wished to be in the presence of God. ***One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple*** (Ps. 27:4). David's love for God was the foundation on which his life was fashioned. His desire to build a permanent temple for God sprang from this love. ***Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building*** (I Chr. 28:2). The temple David wanted to build would have stood as an outward symbol of his love for, and dedication to, his Lord.

***Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in: For I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another*** (17:4-5). God's compassionate but firm 'no' must have been difficult for David to hear, but he accepted it with the same equanimity and grace as he had all of the Lord's directives. To David, God's will would always supersede his own.

Had David's desire to build a temple been rooted in anything less than a sincere desire to give to God, then learning that the



honor would go to someone else would likely have been the end of it. Since, in the eyes of the world, the glory was to be Solomon's, it would stand to reason that the responsibility and effort should be Solomon's as well. But David was not motivated by personal glory or fame. He was not seeking worldly accolades, so he was not moved to jealousy that Solomon's name, not his, would be associated with the completed temple. David's focus was on offering his best to God. ***The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical...I will therefore now make preparation for it.***

Working for God often means working behind the scenes, with little or no worldly recognition. It means seeing and filling a need without expecting anything in return except to bring glory to God. From a worldly perspective, it may appear that we are not living up to our full potential, but knowing that we are living up to the expectations of God makes worldly approval irrelevant.

***And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ*** (Col. 3:23-24).

**Thought For The Day:** *Those whose service to God shines the brightest in the eyes of the world do not stand higher in His eyes than those who go unnoticed.*

**Christ Revealed:** Through the altar David built to sacrifice unto the Lord so that Israel might be restored to a right relationship with God (1 Chr. 21:18,26). Only through Christ can we be restored to a right relationship with God. ***Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*** (Rom. 3:24).

**Word Studies:** 21:13 **a great strait** = deep distress; 21:15 **repented Him of the evil** = felt compassion due to man's repentance and intercession; 22:3 **without weight** = beyond calculation; 23:1 **old and full of days** = reached old age

**Pray for Staff:** Kevin Jennings • **Country:** Namibia (2,182,852) Southwest Africa • Major Languages: Afrikaans, German, English • Religious Freedom • 90% Christian; 10% Traditional Beliefs/Other (Muslim, Jewish, Baha'i) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Sing praises to the Lord (Ex. 15:1-19).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 5.

**N**ow these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service. And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar; and thus were they divided. Among the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar according to the house of their fathers. Thus were they divided by lot, one sort with another; for the governors of the sanctuary, and governors of the house of God, were of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar (I Chr. 24:1-5).

**And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons** (Ex. 28:1). When the Lord first established the priesthood for His chosen people, division of labor was easy. Aaron as high priest, with his four sons under him, saw to the fulfillment of sacrificial law and the formalities of tabernacle worship. The sudden deaths of Nadab and Abihu following their offering of strange fire before God (Lev. 10:1-2) cut the number of priests available for service from five to three. Together they managed the Levites, ministered to the 12 tribes, and oversaw the implementation of sacrificial law.

With each passing generation, Aaron's male descendants multiplied until the pool of eligible priests far exceeded the number necessary for the day-to-day management of the tabernacle and the implementation of sacrificial law. David's solution, undertaken in consultation with a representative from both the branches of the priestly line (**Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar**), was to divide the descendants of Aaron by household and then determine the **chief men...according to the house of their fathers**. From there, he drew lots to determine their duties in the tabernacle

and the order in which each household would serve. This rotating schedule of service would continue in some form up until the time of Christ. ***There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth... And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord*** (Luke 1:5,8-9).

This list would have been of particular importance to the Chronicler's original audience, the remnant of God's people who had just returned from exile. As they worked towards rebuilding their lives and restoring Godly order, they drew heavily from their knowledge of the past to ensure that they moved forward in a way that would bring glory and honor to God.

***But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many*** (I Cor. 12:11-13).

**Thought For The Day:** *When working on God's schedule, we do not "put in extra hours" or "work late"; we do what we are called to.*

**Christ Revealed:** Through the Temple treasures (I Chr. 26:20-28). ***Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*** (Col. 2:2- 3). In Christ are treasures of wisdom, knowledge, and riches to supply all a believer needs (Phil. 4:19).

**Word Studies:** 24:2 **executed** = served in; 24:5 **divided by lot** = lots were cast to determine the will of God (Prov. 16:33); 24:19 **orderings** = schedules; 25:5 **lift up the horn** = sound the trumpet.

**Pray for Staff:** Ryan McCrary • **Government Official:** Rep. Greg Steube (FL) • **Country:** Nauru (9,434) Central Pacific Ocean • Major Languages: Nauruan, English • Religious Freedom • 45.8% Protestant; 33.2% Roman Catholic; 14.1% Other (Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness) 4.5% None; 2.4% Unspecified • **Prayer Suggestion:** Beseech the Lord in intercessory prayer for others when you have questions (Ex. 32:11).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 6.

***Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead*** (I Chr. 29:26-28).

David had lived a truly extraordinary life. Under his leadership, all the disparate tribes of Israel had united under a common goal (II Sam. 5:1-3). Together they had reclaimed most of the land God had given to their forefathers in fulfillment of His covenant with Abraham. From his early days as a shepherd in his father's fields to the last months of his reign as the much-beloved king ***over all Israel***, David had lived with God at his side. ***I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower*** (Ps. 18:1-2).

As he came to the close of his life, David drew even closer to God. He rejoiced in the Lord from the deepest reaches of his soul and encouraged all of Israel to do the same. ***Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be Thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as head above all*** (I Chr. 29:10-11). David, much like Moses centuries before, was not concerned that his earthly life was coming to an end. His trust in God was absolute. All of David's concern was for the people he would be leaving behind. It was to that end that David offered his final prayer. ***And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep Thy commandments, Thy testimonies, and Thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision*** (29:19). Even as he moved to entrust the people of Israel to Solomon, he entrusted Solomon to God.

David's love and support of Solomon were absolute, but he

knew that his young son needed more than parental love to grow and flourish in the role God had set before him. He needed the support of God, and it was for this that David prayed. Although our children will most likely never be called to be king, they have the same need for godly guidance and support as Solomon. No matter how much we have to give, it will never be enough by itself. Therefore, let us pray as David prayed and ask God to light a spark of faith within them so they might hold fast to Him and His Word.

***For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God (Eph. 3:14-19).***

**Thought For The Day:** *God's love for us is beyond our understanding; its closest reflection on earth is found in the bond between parent and child.*

**Christ Revealed:** Through the gold offered for the Temple by David from his personal wealth (I Chr. 29:3-5). Gold is the purest metal (Rev. 21:21) and represents the preciousness and great worth of Christ. ***He is pure*** (undefiled) (I John 3:3).

**Word Studies:** 27:2 **course** = division; 28:19 **works** = details; 29:1 **tender** = in- experienced; 29:3 **proper good** = personal treasure; 29:15 **none abiding** = soon gone; 29:19 **palace** = Temple.

**Pray for Staff:** Judy McCrary • **Government Officials:** Gov. John Carney (DE), Sen. Mike Crapo (ID) • **Country:** Nepal (30,430,267) a mountain-ringed Himalayan state between Tibet and India • Major Languages: Nepali, Maithali • Limited Religious Freedom • 80.6% Hindu; 10.7% Buddhist; 4.2% Muslim; 3.6% Kirant; 0.9% Other (Mundhum, Christian, Jainism, Jewish, Sikh) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Intercede for others (Ex. 32:31-32).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 7.

***And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge My people, over whom I have made thee king: Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like (II Chr. 1:11-12).***

Solomon, David's beloved son and heir, is a larger-than-life historical figure. Outside of Jesus Himself, there has never been another man to walk the face of the earth with more wisdom than Solomon. We read here of the moment God bestowed that great gift upon him, and many of us are amazed. Solomon asked, ***Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great*** (II Chr. 1:10), and God answered, granting the request while also giving so much more. ***Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee.***

Why did God bestow such great gifts on this young, unproven king? Was it because of His great love for David, his father? No, that is not the way the Lord works. ***I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings*** (Jer. 17:10). This blessing was not on the perpetual House of David (II Sam. 7:16), but on Solomon alone. It was given because Solomon's heart was open to the will of the Lord. ***And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us*** (I John 5:14).

The answer really is that simple. Solomon needed wisdom, so he asked the Lord for it. God was pleased with the request; therefore, He granted it. The other blessings, the ***riches, and wealth, and honour***, were not sought by Solomon, but they were necessary tools that Solomon would use effectively in the construction of God's Temple. God knew what Solomon

needed even before Solomon himself was aware of it (Matt. 6:7-8), and God provided for that need.

All across the world today, God is still meeting the needs of His people. Humble prayers are prayed, and God hears every word. Blessings of spiritual strength, wisdom, renewed faith, and healing are poured out daily upon the lives of His precious children, sometimes in answer to conscious prayer and other times in response to the groaning of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26-27). It is a mistake to think of the blessing of Solomon as a 'one-time deal' or an 'Old Testament miracle' that is impossible today. Our living, loving God provided for the needs of Solomon, and He is ready and willing to provide for us as well.

***Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen*** (Heb. 13:20-21).

**Thought For The Day:** *The greatest of men are merely a showcase for the grandeur of God.*

**Christ Revealed:** By the ***thousand burnt offerings*** of Solomon (II Chr. 1:6). We can be thankful that the one perfect offering of Christ on the cross did away with the need for many and continual individual offerings.

**Word Studies:** 2:2 **told out** = assigned; 2:7 **cunning** = skilled; **can skill to grave** = has skill to engrave; 2:14 **find out every device** = execute any design; 2:16 **floats** = rafts; 3:1 **affinity** = alliance by marriage to Pharaoh's daughter

**Pray for Country:** Netherlands (16,805,037) Northwestern Europe • Major Languages: Dutch, Frisian • Religious Freedom • 30% Catholic; 20% Protestant; 5.8% Muslim; 2.2% Other (Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist); 42% None • **Prayer Suggestion:** Ask God to show you His ways (Ex. 33:13).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 8.



**N**ow it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel. But the Lord said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart: Notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house; but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name (II Chr. 6:7-9).

David's fervent wish had been to build a permanent Temple for the Lord in Jerusalem, but that had not been God's will. **But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight** (I Chr. 22:8). The Lord instead promised him that the task would fall to his son Solomon, who was destined to be a king of peace. David acquiesced to the will of God, but he still gathered many of the materials that Solomon would need. Upon taking the throne, Solomon turned his father's dream into reality. The completed Temple offered a permanent location for God to meet with His people and accept their sacrifices. The spirit of the Lord now had an earthly home. **Then said Solomon, The Lord hath said that He would dwell in the thick darkness. But I have built an house of habitation for Thee, and a place for Thy dwelling for ever** (II Chr. 6:1-2).

As soon as the Temple was completed, Solomon called for a day of national celebration. The Lord had given them many reasons to rejoice. They were at last living freely in the land of promise, all of their enemies having been vanquished by the hand of God. The Temple of the Lord stood in their midst as a shining example of their many blessings. Overcome with emotion, the entire nation joined as one to offer praise.

The Lord's response to the devotion of His people was powerful. **It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For He is good;**

***for His mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God*** (II Chr. 5:13-14). The Lord still works in the same way today. Prayer and praise are what allow us to feel the presence of God. If we offer both to Him, we will soon see the Holy Ghost at work in our lives.

The Israelites needed the Temple to come into God's presence, but we have no such limitations today. Once we are reborn into the body of Christ, we are never outside of His presence. Jesus has paid our sin debt and washed us clean, allowing us the freedom of living with Him. We have become the Temple. The Holy Spirit now dwells inside the heart of every believer, and it is through this guiding presence that the Lord calls us to repentance and into service.

***Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*** (I Cor. 3:16)?

**Thought For The Day:** *If our greatest wish is to further God's will, we will never be disappointed in what He has in store.*

**Christ Revealed:** Through Solomon's prayer to God (II Chr. 6:14). Jesus is God: ***I and My Father are One*** (John 10:30; 17:22; 1:1; I John 5:7-8).

**Word Studies:** 4:2: **molten sea** = large metal, round basin; 4:22 **censers** = in cense burners; 6:10 **room** = throne of Israel; 6:24 **be put to the worse** = are defeated

**Pray for Government Officials:** Sen. Lisa Murkowski (AK), Rep. John P. Sarbanes (MD), Rep. Sharice Davids (KS) Rep. Brandon Williams (NY), Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA) • **Country:** New Caledonia (264,022) Southwest Pacific Ocean • Major Languages: French, 33 Melanesian-Polynesian dialects • Religious Freedom • 60% Roman Catholic; 30% Protestant; 10% Other (Other Christian, Muslim, Baha'i) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Bow before the Lord in a godly reverence as you pray and worship (Ex. 34:8).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 9.

***If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people; If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (II Chr. 7:13-14).***

***Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the House (II Chr. 7:1).*** Following the Temple's dedication, the Lord made His pleasure at the obedience of His people well known. As He had done with the initial sacrifices at the Brazen altar following the dedication of the Tabernacle (Lev. 9:24), God caused ***the fire*** (that) ***came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices.***

Although God was pleased with the actions of Solomon and the Israelites, He knew that their obedience would falter in the future. In a solemn acknowledgment of this, the Lord again appeared to Solomon by night: ***If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*** This profound statement of grace is just as applicable to today's Christians as it was to its original audience. ***If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*** (I John 1:9). God's words to Solomon provide a permanent guide for spiritual revival and renewal.

The first directive is to ***humble themselves***. To humble ourselves, we must admit our sins to ourselves and confess them to God. This includes more than just acknowledging sin; we must have sorrow over the sin, a genuine attitude of repentance, and a firm commitment towards becoming obedient to His Word. He alone can and does offer forgiveness and cleansing from all sin to all who will humble themselves. ***But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with***

***another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin*** (I John 1:7).

Next, God says we must **pray** and **seek** (His) **face**. To walk in God's ways, we must first learn what He expects of us. We do this through careful reading and studying of His holy Word. Without a thorough knowledge of the Word of God, we are no match for the Devil, who fanatically seeks to deceive us and destroy our effectiveness to accomplish the will of God (I Pet. 5:8).

Whether we are turning our hearts towards the Lord for the first time or have already experienced His love and are guilty of backsliding into a life of active sin, God has promised that all who approach our Savior with a humble, seeking heart will find Him. It does not matter what evils have marked our paths up to that point; what matters is that we are willing to link our lives with His from that moment going forward into eternity.

***That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*** (Rom. 10:9-10).

**Thought For The Day:** *We turn to God when there is nowhere else to turn, not because He is our last resort but because we realize there was never another option.*

**Christ Revealed:** Through the glory of Solomon's kingdom (II Chr. 9:1-28). Even though Solomon had a rich and glorious kingdom, it cannot begin to compare to Christ's coming Kingdom. ***The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it*** (Rev. 22:1-5).

**Word Studies:** 7:11 **prosperously effected** = successfully accomplished all that God had planned for him to do, 7:14 **seek My Face** = seek My will through My Word; 8:5 **nether** = lower; 8:16 **perfected** = completed.

**Pray for Staff:** Tiffany Parisi • **Government Official:** Rep. Dina Titus (NV) • **Country:** New Zealand (4,365,113) two large islands Southeast of Australia • **Major Languages:** English, Maori • **Religious Freedom** • 38.6% Protestant; 12.6% Roman Catholic; 1.6% Maori Christian; 1.6% Hindu; 1.3% Buddhist; 2.2% Other Religions; 32.2% None; 9.9% Other/Unidentified • **Prayer Suggestion:** Ask for the Lord's blessings and peace upon His children (Num. 6:24-27).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 10.

*And Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, being mighty men of valour. And Abijah stood up upon mount Zemaraim, which is in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel; Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt (II Chr. 13:3-5).*

*Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah. Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father. Nevertheless for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem (I Kings 15:1-4).*

Abijah (also known as Abijam) was neither a good man nor a particularly effective king. He perpetuated the sins of his father, Rehoboam, and his grandfather, Solomon. He focused more on reclaiming what he believed to be rightfully his than he did on nurturing and supporting that which God had given him to protect. But here, in chapter thirteen of II Chronicles, we are given a glimpse at the type of man Abijah could have been had he ever fully humbled his heart before God.

Abijah reigned over Judah for three years, and for the entirety of his reign, Judah was at war with Israel (15:6). Abijah was deeply offended by the secession of the ten northern tribes during the time of his father (II Chr. 13:6-7), and believed it was both his right and his responsibility to restore the nation to its former glory. Scripture is clear on Abijah's overall spiritual weakness, but today's reading casts him in a somewhat more positive light. Prior to the start of a battle in which the men of Judah were overwhelmingly outnumbered, Abijah stood on **mount Zemaraim** and claimed the promises of God. His speech motivated his men, so much so that they placed their

complete trust in God. ***But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them. And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle was before and behind: and they cried unto the LORD, and the priests sounded with the trumpets. Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah*** (II Chr. 13:13-15). ***Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the LORD God of their fathers*** (13:18).

Abijah believed in the existence of God. He knew God's Word enough to quote it and claim the parts relevant to his mission, and, at times, his apparent faith was sufficiently visible to spark an expression of genuine faith in others. Had Abijah taken that final step and humbled his heart before God, had he set aside his ambition and pledged himself to seek God's guidance and follow His directions, he would have become the man of God he mistakenly already believed himself to be.

***And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever*** (I John 2:16).

**Thought For The Day:** *It is possible to be introduced to God by those who do not fully embrace His Word. Their relationship with Him will forever be separate from the one we have created.*

**Christ Revealed:** Through the Golden Candlestick (Lampstand) (II Chr. 13:11). Jesus is ***the Light of the world*** (John 9:5).

**Word Studies:** 10:4 **yoke grievous** = heavy, severe burdens; 10:10 **loins** = waist; 11:12 **every several** = each separate.

**Pray for Staff:** Ryan McCrary • **Government Officials:** Rep. Doug Lamborn (CO), Rep. Steve Cohen (TN) • **Country:** Nicaragua (5,788,531) Central America • Major Languages: Spanish, English • Limited Religious Freedom • 58.5% Roman Catholic; 23.2% Protestant; 0.9% Jehovah's Witness; 1.7% Other (Jew, Mormon, Muslim); 15.7% None • **Prayer Suggestion:** Thank God for His mercy (Num. 12:11-14).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 11.

**Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us; because we have sought the Lord our God, we have sought Him, and He hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered** (II Chr. 14:7).

When Asa assumed the throne of Judah, he immediately aligned his leadership with the will of God. He began to rid the land of relics of pagan worship, and he encouraged his people to turn to the Lord. As a result of his righteous actions, the Lord blessed Asa and the kingdom of Judah with a period of peace. **If ye walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them** (Lev. 26:3) **I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land** (26:6). Instead of taking that peaceful time for granted, Asa used it to fortify his nation. He built up his towns and improved their defenses. He reminded his people that this period of peace and prosperity came from the Lord and urged them to take full advantage of it to prepare for whatever hardships might befall them.

Much of the spiritual failures that the Israelites suffered over the centuries occurred not during times of trouble but during times of peace. Moses himself had warned them not to become complacent in their prosperity, **Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage** (Deut. 8:11-14), but the passing of time proved that his words had fallen on deaf ears. We, too, have an issue with keeping our focus on God in the good times. It is not so much that we consciously choose to turn our backs on Him;



it is more that we forget that we need Him. When we reach a point where we think that we 'have it made,' we relax and lower our guard against subtle worldly influence.

When life is good, we spend less time in prayer. We figure we don't need anything, so why seem greedy? When everything is going great, we spend less time searching God's Word for guidance. We are on the right path, so why keep searching? The thing is, prayer is more than asking for help. God wants to celebrate with us, too. By staying in constant contact with Him, we are reminded daily of where our blessings come from. As for seeking guidance in the Lord's Word, it is crucial for us to do so in times of prosperity because it is in those times that His path may be harder for us to see. ***And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*** (Matt. 19:24). No matter how fantastic of a life that we have, we need to remember our ultimate goal.

***But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him*** (I Cor. 2:9).

**Thought For The Day:** *If times are bad, who can we seek guidance from to see them through? If times are good, who can we thank for leading us to them?*

**Christ Revealed:** Through the rest that God gave Judah (II Chr. 14:7). Jesus pleads: **Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest** (Matt. 11:28).

**Word Studies:** 14:15 **tents of cattle** = tents of the cattle herders; 15:5 **vexations** = disturbances, troubles, turmoil; 15:16 **mother** = grandmother; **stamped it** = crushed it to dust; 16:14 **sepulchres** = tombs; 17:12 **waxed great exceedingly** = became increasingly powerful; **castles** = fortresses, strongholds.

**Pray for Staff:** Jennifer Palafox • **Government Officials:** Sen. Amy Klobuchar (MN) • **Country:** Niger (16,899,327) West-Central Africa • **Major Languages:** French, Hausa, Djerma • **Christian evangelism is limited** • 80% Muslim; 20% Other (Protestant, Baha'i, Roman Catholic, Indigenous Beliefs) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Intercede in prayer for others (Num. 14:13-19).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 12.

***And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you (II Chr. 20:15-17).***

***It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle (II Chr. 20:1).*** The Moabites and the Ammonites were descendants of Lot through his drunken incestuous relations with his daughters (Gen. 19) and had historically been enemies of Israel since the nation's conception. As they joined forces and rose up against Jehoshaphat, the king viewed the massive army with trepidation. But instead of giving way to his fear and frantically scrambling to mount a defense, Jehoshaphat remembered that he did not have to face his enemies alone. In faith, he called to the people of Judah to join him as he turned to God for help and guidance. ***And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD (II Chr. 20:4). And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children (20:13).***

When faced with a difficult situation, it is human nature for us to look within ourselves for a solution. Our first thought is frequently, "Oh no, what can I do?" It is generally only when we cannot answer that question that we turn outside of ourselves to seek help. This instinct was likely well developed in Jehoshaphat, who, as a king, needed to appear unshakably in control before his people and enemies alike. Yet Jehoshaphat chose to turn to God first before doing anything else. He understood that his strength came from God and that the most significant thing he

could do for his people in their time of need was to encourage them to avail themselves of the same source of strength.

What came next was miraculous and amazing to witness. After claiming the battle for Himself, the Lord proceeded to remove the threat to Jehoshaphat and Judah in the most unexpected way. Instead of allowing them to continue to plot against Judah, God set the enemy camp at its own throat. ***For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped*** (20:23-24).

Because of Jehoshaphat's total and complete trust in Him, God spared the nation of Judah without a single drop of their blood being shed. The God that worked this miracle is the same God active in the world today. Just think how simpler our lives could be if we would only trust in Him to the same extent that Jehoshaphat did.

***Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God*** (Ps. 20:7).

**Thought For The Day:** *Put whatever opposition you face up against God, and you will see how trivial it really is.*

**Christ Portrayed:** By Micaiah, who told the Truth even though it was unpopular with his listeners (II Chr. 18:12-27). We are reminded of Christ when He spoke the unpopular Truth to the Pharisees (Matt. 12:1-14). Jesus responded: **Now ye seek to kill Me, a Man that hath told you the Truth, which I have heard of God** (John 8:40).

**Word Studies:** 18:1 **joined affinity** = allied himself by the marriage of his son to Ahab's daughter; 18:9 **a void place** = an open area near the city entrance; 18:15 **adjure** = command under oath; 18:33 **at a venture** = randomly without aim

**Pray for Government Officials:** Rep. Janice Schakowsky (IL) • **Country:** Nigeria (174,507,539) Western Africa • Major Languages: English, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani, 500 Indigenous Dialects • Government permits all types of religious activity; Boko Haram growing violence in North against Christian and Muslim • 50% Muslim (largely Sunni); 40% Christian; 10% Indigenous • **Prayer Suggestion:** Intercede in prayer for others (Num. 21:7).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 1.

**Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony, and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king (II Chr. 23:11). And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the LORD's people (II Chr. 23:16).**

During times in our lives when things seem to be the darkest, God always finds a way to make His presence known. Throughout the seven years that encompassed the reigns of Ahaziah and Athaliah, the nation of Judah experienced exceptionally dark times. **He (Ahaziah) also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother (Athaliah) was his counsellor to do wickedly (22:3).** The worship of Baal spread across the land (23:17), and the Temple of God was neglected and vandalized (24:7). It was during this time that Jehoiada became high priest (24:6).

In a nation bent on evil, a priest of God wielded very little power. Yet Jehoiada trusted wholly in the Lord. When his wife, Jehoshabeath (Jehosheba), saved the infant Joash from the murderous rampage of his grandmother, Athaliah (22:11), Jehoiada hid the child in the Temple for six years, raising him side by side with his son, Zechariah, and teaching him the Word of the Lord. When Joash reached the age of seven, Jehoiada was moved by God to act. He sought the support of military leaders (23:1) and spread the news of the living heir to the throne of David (23:3). The revolt he led against the evil queen Athaliah was successful, and the throne was returned to the rightful heir of David.

**And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the LORD's people.** With the noted exception of Samuel, Scripture does not provide us with records of any priest that could be considered the spiritual equal of Jehoiada. As high priest, he returned the nation to the Laws of God, repaired the Temple, and destroyed the center of Baal worship in Judah. We are given clear and convincing evidence of how one man's faith in God

transformed a nation. ***And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you*** (Luke 17:6).

Sadly, there is a second, less uplifting lesson to be learned from today's reading. Following Jehoiada's death, Joash turned from the ways of God to the worldly counsel of men (23:17-18). Although he had been raised in a godly household, he had never taken the all-important step of seeking a personal relationship with the Lord. Thus when his adopted father died, so too did his faith.

Even the best role model on earth is useless if we refuse to follow their example. Joash revered Jehoiada but never learned to trust in the Word of God. The truth soon became blurred without the man to lead him, and he ceased to understand the Lord's will. When we neglect to read and study the Bible prayerfully, the same thing happens within us. Only through daily exposure to His Word can we keep it fresh and new in our minds and hearts. To obtain spiritual strength and stability for the years ahead, we must internalize His Word and resolve to utilize the teachings within as the basis for our life.

***But He (Jesus) said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it*** (Luke 11:28).

**Thought For the Day:** *Faith is always a choice; We cannot be forced or carried unaware into it. We all must come to our own decision to follow God.*

**Chris Portrayed:** By Jehoiada, the high priest, who faithfully hid and protected Joash (II Chr. 23:1-11). Jesus is our High Priest (Heb. 5:5-10), and we are **hid with Christ in God** (Col. 3:3).

**Word Studies:** 21:9 **compassed him in** = surrounded him; 21:19 **of sore diseases** = in severe suffering; **no burning for him** = no funeral fire to honor him; 22:10 **seed royal** = royal offspring of the house of David.

**Pray for In Memory of:** Dr. John Hash • **Government Officials:** Rep. Scott Perry (PA), Rep. Jennifer Wexton (VA), Rep. Alma Adams (NC) • **Country:** Niue (1,229) South Pacific Ocean • **Major Languages:** English, Niuen • **Religious Freedom:** 61.1% Ekalesia Niue; 8.8% Mormon; 7.2% Catholic; 2.4% Jehovah's Witnesses; 1.4% Seventh Day Adventist; 8.4% Other; 8.7% Unspecified; 1.9% None • **Prayer Suggestion:** Ask for the blessings of God upon your family and home (II Sam. 7:29).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 14.

***And Joash the king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth-shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, four hundred cubits. And he took all the gold and the silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obed-edom, and the treasures of the king's house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria (II Chr. 25:23-24).***

King Amaziah of Judah had come well prepared to the throne of David. His childhood had been spent under the godly influence of his father, Joash (also known as Jehoash), and his uncle, the high priest Jehoiada. Although Joash's faith had faded in the later years of his reign, he had been guided by the will of God during Amaziah's formative years. Amaziah, then, was well-versed in the ways of the Lord. ***Amaziah was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart (II Chronicles 25:1-2).***

Despite the advantages of his godly upbringing, Amaziah soon proved no more spiritually stable than his father. The Lord gave him a great victory over the children of Seir (Edomites) (II Chr. 25:11-12; II Kings 14:7), but Amaziah internalized all the credit. He was impressed with the fighting spirit of his vanquished enemies, so he appropriated their gods, setting up shrines to their idols and worshipping them. ***Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them (II Chr. 25:14).*** In a blink, Amaziah turned from a godly ruler to an arrogant, self-absorbed king in the manner of pagan kings.

Yielding to the temptation of pride can lead to utter ruin faster than almost any other sin committable by man. ***Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall (Prov. 16:18).*** Pride turns our attention inward and strips

us of our ability to process godly love, replacing it with a cold, mocking love of self. In Amaziah's case, pride brought with it a feeling of invincibility that caused him to challenge king Jehoash of Israel without first seeking the blessing of God. Jehoash gently rebuked the younger man and attempted to get him to see the foolishness of his actions, but Amaziah was so caught up in himself that he refused to back down. The ensuing battle ended in humiliation for the king and disaster for the nation of Judah.

When we place our faith in the world and our abilities instead of God, we set ourselves up to fail. Whenever we think of ourselves as smarter, stronger, or better than our peers, we should stop and look in the mirror. Do we really have that great of an advantage, or do we see only what we want to see? Excessive pride can cloud our judgment and cause us to commit to a course of action that is neither wise nor God-led. The Lord encourages us to be confident in our abilities and decisive in our actions, but only after we have first taken the time to be prayerful, humble, and receptive to His will.

***Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up*** (James 4:10).

**Thought For The Day:** *To interpret God's will as a chance for personal gain only prevents us from sharing in His victories.*

**Christ Portrayed:** By Azariah the high priest who stood between King Uzziah and the Altar, because there was only one proper way to approach the Lord God of Israel and that was through the service of the priests (II Chr. 26:17-18). **Jesus, our great High Priest (Heb. 4:14), is The Only Way for anyone to come to God. Jesus saith unto him, I am The Way, The Truth, and The Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me** (John 14:6).

**Word Studies:** 25:21 **saw one another in the face** = faced each other in battle; 26:10 **husbandry** = farming.

**Pray for Staff:** Jennifer Palafox • **Government Officials:** Sen. Marco Rubio (FL), **Country:** Northern Mariana Islands (51,170) North Pacific Ocean • Major Languages: Philippine Languages, Chinese, Chamorro, English • Religious Freedom • Christian (Roman Catholic majority; Traditional Beliefs and Taboos) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Ask the Lord to give you discernment and an understanding heart (I Kings 3:9).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 15.



***So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem. Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, even unto heaven (II Chronicles 30:26-27).***

Judah was in the midst of a national revival. Hezekiah walked confidently in the ways of God. Once he assumed the throne, the righteousness of God began to return to Judah. He made sure that all of the altars to the false gods and all of the groves and idols were destroyed. The evil actions of his father, Ahaz, had enticed many to serve other gods, and he sought to rectify that terrible action. He knew that the worship of other gods was the sin that continually proved to be his nation's undoing, and he was determined to steer them back to the Lord. ***But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the LORD that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction*** (II Pet. 2:1).

Hezekiah boldly moved to lead people back to the Lord by reinstating national observance of the Passover. In support of that declaration, he sent out messengers through Judah and Israel to announce the celebration. ***So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel*** (as counted in the time of David – both the northern and southern kingdoms), ***from Beer-sheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written*** (II Chr. 30:5). Though many from the ten tribes of Israel openly ridiculed Hezekiah's plan (30:10), others humbly traveled to Judah in celebration of what God had done for their ancestors (30:11). For many of these pilgrims, it may have been the first time they had ever joined together in fellowship with other believers. Their humbling of themselves before the Lord was not enough to heal their nation, burdened with continuous ungodly leadership. Still, it offered personal

revival to those who had come. ***Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble*** (I Pet. 5:5).

It was a day without parallel, the like of which had not been seen among the people of God in hundreds of years. Scripture records that so many sacrifices were brought forth that the Levites had to assist the priests in the preparation process. The Lord heard the prayers and praises of His people, and all that were there shared in His blessings.

Centuries later, the Passover celebration would forever take on a new and deeper meaning in the hearts and minds of God's faithful when Jesus the Messiah was crucified as the last, perfect Passover sacrifice. Just as the blood of the innocent lamb saved the Hebrew people from the destroyer in Egypt (Ex. 12-23), His blood redeems us, washes away our sins, and frees us from the power of death.

***Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*** (I Pet. 1:18-19).

**Thought For The Day:** *No showing of faith, no matter how slight, is beneath the notice of God or unworthy of our time.*

**Christ Portrayed:** By King Hezekiah who offered an intercessory prayer for **every one That prepareth his heart to seek God** (II Chr. 30:18-19). Jesus Christ our King, now seated **at the right hand of God**, intercedes in prayer for all who continue to seek Him (Rom. 8:34). **Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God** (Col. 3:1).

**Word Studies:** 28:3 Hinnom (Gehenna – translated as “hell” in the New Testament); 28:10 **keep under** = make slaves; 28:15 **shod them** = gave them sandals;

**Pray for Staff:** Gilbert Palafox • **Government Officials:** Sen. Jerry Moran (KS), • **Country:** Norway (5,085,582) Northern Europe • Major Languages: Norwegian, Sami, Finnish • Religious Freedom • 85.7% Evangelical Lutheran; 1% Other Pentecostal; 1% Roman Catholic; 2.4% Other Christian; 1.8% Muslim; 8.1% Other • **Prayer Suggestion:** Ask the Lord to bring our nation to repentance (I Kings 8:33-36).

**Optional Reading:** I Corinthians 16.

**N**ow when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities (II Chr. 31:1).

In yesterday's reading, we covered the great spiritual revival that swept through the Israelites under the leadership of Hezekiah. **So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written** (II Chr. 30:5). **And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the LORD** (30:21). **And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced** (30:25).

Today, we see that revival in action. Buoyed by their communion with God and their time of fellowship with other believers, the people returned to their homes and cities **and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars**. These actions were not just limited to the citizens of Judah. Men of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh from the beleaguered northern kingdom of Israel were likewise inspired to act. At Passover, they verbally committed to turning their hearts back toward God. Now, they were taking the physical steps needed to remove the temptations and tools of sin from their daily lives.

The boost we get from joining with other believers in prayer, worship, and praise is of incalculable value. Its importance should never be underestimated, but it is only a first step. If

we stop there, if we conceptualize the Word in our hearts and minds but never transform it into concrete action, then true faith is never given the opportunity to take root and grow. Our relationship with God is not something we can compartmentalize and bring out only when we are in the company of like-minded people. It must be the foundation upon which our life is built, or it is nothing but an illusion.

***Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you*** (Phil. 4:9). Hear, see, do. Take the stirrings of the Spirit in your heart and use them to transform the world around you, starting by getting your own house in order.

***Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it*** (Matt. 7:24-27).

**Thought For The Day:** *We can be inspired by the faith of others and let it kindle our own to a blaze, but if our faith can only be stoked by the belief of others, it will surely burn out.*

**Chrst Revealed:** By Hezekiah's offering of **the king's portion** (share) **of his substance for the Burnt Offerings** (II Chr. 31:3). Burnt Offerings were wholly consumed, symbolic of total surrender, and offered as **a sweet savour** to the Lord (Lev. 8:28; Num. 15:3). God offered His King's portion in Christ Jesus who, in total surrender on the cross, was wholly consumed, even unto death. **Christ . . . hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour** (Eph. 5:2).

**Word Studies:** 31:10 **store** = abundance; 31:14 **oblations** = free will offerings; 31:16 **courses** = assigned tasks; 31:18 **set office** = appointed office; 31:19 **every several city** = every city; 32:6 **comfortably** = encouragingly

**Pray for Country:** Oman (3,154,134) Southeastern coast of Arabia • Major Languages: Arabic, English, Baluchi, Urdu, Indian Dialects • Fewer restrictions on Christian activity than most of its neighbors • 75% Ibadhi Muslim; 25% Other (Sunni and Shia Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh, Baha'i) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Kneel in a humble spirit of reverence as you pray to the Lord (I Kings 8:54).

**Optional Reading:** II Corinthians 17

***Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem (II Chr. 36:2). Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God (II Chr. 36:5). Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD (II Chr. 36:9). Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD (II Chr. 36:11-12).***

Keeping up with who was king during Judah's last troubled days is like trying to make sense of a lively game of musical chairs. Following the death of Josiah, kings cycled through at a rapid pace. First came Jehoahaz, Josiah's fourth-born son (I Chr. 3:15), who ruled for three months. He was captured by the Egyptian pharaoh, who then named his elder brother, Eliakim (whom the pharaoh renamed Jehoiakim), king in his stead. Jehoiakim reigned for 11 years before he died and was replaced by his son, Jehoiachin. Jehoiachin lasted only three months before being taken captive by the king of Babylon, who then set Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle and the third-born son of Josiah, on the throne (II Kings 24:17). Mattaniah was renamed Zedekiah, and he ruled for 11 years before being removed in disgrace by the king of Babylon.

Without a detailed list, keeping up with these constantly changing names and faces is next to impossible. Who they were, though, is much less important than what they were not. Although each of them had grown up under the reign of Josiah, not one of them had become a servant of God. Under their leadership, God's judgment finally fell upon Judah. In a move very reminiscent of what had already occurred in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, she turned her back on God, and, in turn, God granted her the 'freedom' from His restrictive presence

that she so obviously desired. ***Therefore He brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: He gave them all into his hand*** (II Chronicles 36:17).

When we rebel against God, we quickly discover that chaos takes over our lives. Without His guiding hand and protective presence, the world presses in from all sides. God's restrictions are there for a reason. His laws are designed to keep us spiritually, emotionally, and physically safe. Without them, human society becomes an 'every man for himself' situation in which the strong decimate the weak. This is the state of the world that we now live in. We are denying God on an international level, and the consequences of our sinful choices are reverberating around the globe. While these consequences are frightening, the good news is that God is still here. Our self-imposed exile does not have to last forever. He will take in anyone who turns to Him and accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior, remove their confusion, and fill them with a renewed sense of purpose and hope. It is our choice, but we must make it before it is too late.

***Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*** (Heb. 4:16).

**Thought For The Day:** *Rebellion against God is rebellion against the air we breathe, finding fault with what we need to live.*

**Christ Revealed:** Through the messengers of God who were rejected by His people (II Chr. 36:15-16; compare Is. 53:3; Mark 9:12). Jesus **came unto His own** (His own people), **and His own received Him not** (John 1:11; also Matt. 21:42; Mark 8:31; 12:10; Luke 9:22; 17:25; 20:17).

**Word Studies:** 35:13 **sod** = boiled; 36:3 **put him down** = deposed him; **condemned** = taxed; demanded tribute; 36:10 **brother** = uncle; 36:15 **rising up betimes** = early every morning.

**Pray for Government Officials:** Rep. Larry Bucshon (IN), Del. Madeleine Bordallo (Guam) • **Country:** Pakistan (193,238,868) Southern Asia • Major Languages: Punjabi, Sindhi, Urdu, English • There is no freedom to convert Muslims to Christ. Pakistan is an Islamic republic • 96.4% Muslim; 3.6% Other (Christian, Hindu, Parsi/Zoroastrian, Baha'i, Sikh, Buddhist, Kalasha, Kihal, Jain) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Bless the Lord that His Word is absolutely trustworthy (I Kings 8:56).

**Optional Reading:** II Corinthians 2.



Dear Bible lover,

A family lived in a small house with modest furnishings that were anything but lavish . . . except for one treasured possession. On the coffee table was an antique Oriental vase which had been handed down from one generation to another.

One day the mother heard a scream and rushed into the living room to find her little boy with his hand trapped inside the priceless heirloom. The more he tried to remove his hand, the more frantic he became. It wouldn't budge.



Soon the father arrived home, and together with his wife they tried a tug of war to dislodge the boy's hand . . . without success. Then they called the family doctor who suggested using a lubricant. But still no headway.

There seemed to be only one way to solve the dilemma. Reluctantly, the father got his hammer and was about to break the vase and set the boy free. Looking up at his father, the lad then asked, "Dad, would it help if I let go of the penny?"

As he opened his little fist, the coin hit the bottom of the vase and his hand was removed as easily as it had entered!

What does this have to do with Bible Pathway?

The priceless treasure represents the Word of God. The child is the Christian, and the coin and the open hand are the power of our giving.

As you and I release our temporal possessions, we can accomplish great and eternal things for God. We can turn loose the Word of God and see lives changed.

Right now Bible Pathway faces an unprecedented opportunity to help the largest single group of unreached people in the world to take hold of the priceless gift of God's Word.

Turn now to the center spread of this *Pathway* and discover how you can have a share in this miracle of giving.

Yours for reaching untold millions for Christ,

John A. Hash