

2021 BIBLE DISCOVERY GUIDE

MARCH

JOSHUA — 1 KINGS



Inside the Guide

Welcome	3
How to use this Guide	4
Spotlight on Apologetics	5
Spotlight on Humanity	6
March Devotional	7
About Bible Discovery	40
Contact	40

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MARCH 2021

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possible.*

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MARCH 2021

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The History

The Bible records much of the early history of the earth, the history of the people of Israel, and the earliest history of the Christian Church. Today, we live about 2000 years after the time of Jesus Christ's earthly ministry. He was crucified, a fate shared by many, and He was resurrected, a fate that will one day be experienced by all who follow Him! Because of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God knows exactly what we face in terms of human temptation and sin. He will not leave us here forever, Christ's return is not only certain, but imminent.

It is critical that we know this now. We are in an unprecedented time with the continued rise of the virus, Covid-19. We have never before faced such challenges. Yet, God has purposed for us to be here right now in this time! And the LORD never wastes time. So, I propose that we need to read the Bible to know its history, learning from God how to act and react how He would want us to.

The Bible is the most important book of all time. We should learn what God wants from us and how to

submit our troubles to Him. "Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

(2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18).

Keep in mind that the LORD is working! We should work with Him by knowing who He really is and who we are in relation. Our citizenship is in heaven, but our work is here on earth. The LORD heals and helps us, but this home is not our permanent place. Let us read on, learn and apply God's teaching to our lives.



Rod Hembree, Th.D, DE.



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MARCH 2021

How to use this Guide

Make the most of your devotional time with our Guide to the Bible in a year. Each Guide provides valuable context and theological insight to help strengthen your faith and dig deeper into the richness of God's Word every day.

The following three tips will help you make the most of your daily Bible reading and Guide:



SPOTLIGHT ON...

In every Guide, you'll find a section with specific highlights from the perspectives of history, apologetics, theology, and more. These viewpoints provide a holistic context from which to view the month's Bible reading, giving us a greater understanding of the Word, and equipping us to grasp the impact of the Bible in these important fields.



DAILY READING

The readings are in traditional order, with a date corresponding to the Hebrew calendar. Each reading consists of a daily insight and a focus on three major takeaways from the day's Bible passage. Challenge yourself to meditate on the *Discovering The Truth* and *Today's Prayer* sections as you go about your day.



WATCH THE DAILY SHOW

Catch our companion TV series for even more valuable insight and theological discussion, hosted daily by the Hembree family. Join Rod, Janice, Ryan and Corie in this thirty-minute devotional show that will change the way you see and read the Bible. Visit **BibleDiscoveryTv.com** to watch our show online or to find a TV channel in your area.



Lost Boy

by Ryan Hembree



Although the Bible claims to be the inerrant Word of God, it seems to be confused over who Samuel's firstborn son was. While 1 Samuel 8:2 says it was Joel, 1 Chronicles 6:28 claims that it was Vashni. So, who was it? The answer to this conundrum is no great mystery.

Samuel's firstborn son was indeed Joel as 1 Samuel 8:2 records. And, in fact, both the Syriac and Arabic texts of 1 Chronicles 6:28 also confirm this. However, the problem comes about because, "In some

CAREFUL TEXTUAL ANALYSIS REVEALS THAT THE SCRIBAL ERRORS WITHIN THE BIBLE ARE ALL MINOR...AND DO NOT ALTER ANY BIBLICAL DOCTRINE WHATSOEVER.

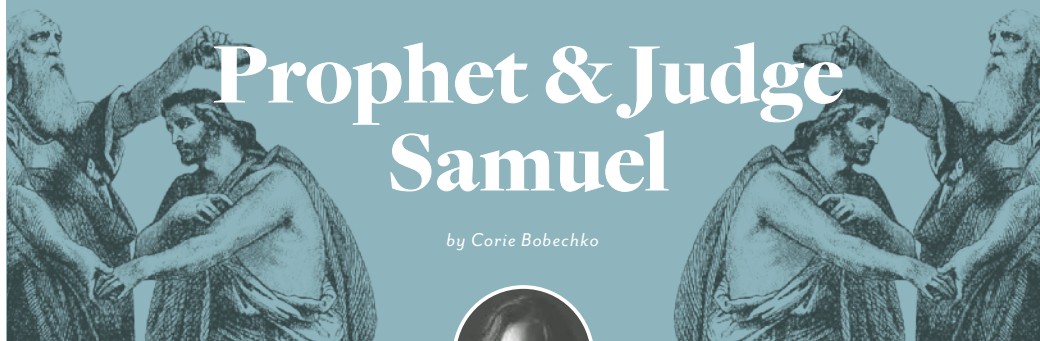
manuscripts, the name was dropped from 1 Chronicles 6:28 due to a copyist error, and a Hebrew word denoting 'the second' (son) was taken as the proper name 'Vashni' as rendered in KJV translation. But there is full agreement between these two verses in the original manuscripts."

In regard to such transmissional errors the late Old Testament, scholar Gleason Archer remarked that it is, of course, "beyond the capability of anyone to avoid any and every slip of the pen in copying page after page from any book—sacred or secular" especially when working with a damaged or faded manuscript.

And as would be the case with any other work of literature, a mistake in the copy of that manuscript is not the same as a mistake in the original manuscript. That

being said, careful textual analysis reveals that the scribal errors within the Bible are all minor (mostly involving numbers and names) and do not alter any Biblical doctrine whatsoever.

As Dr. Mark Bird confirms, "we can have a high degree of certainty regarding the actual wording of the original text for the vast majority of passages in both the Old and New Testaments, and many translations provide a careful representation of the biblical text." ■



Prophet & Judge Samuel

by Corie Bobeckko



Samuel was alive during the time period of the Judges and personally saw to the transition into that of the Kings of Israel, where he was responsible for anointing the first two kings, Saul and David (1 SAMUEL 9; 16). It is believed that Samuel started writing 1st and 2nd Samuel before he died, and authored a sizeable portion of its material, hence why the two books are named after him. The beginning of Samuel's life is recorded in some detail due to his importance in Israel's history.

Recorded in 1 Samuel 1-3, we learn of his father Elkanah, who was a Levite (1 CHRONICLES 6:25-27), even though his family was from the territory of Ephraim (1 SAMUEL 1:1), and he lived in the city of Ramah in the territory of Benjamin (1 SAMUEL 1:19). Elkanah's wife, Hannah, prayed for a child and promised to dedicate him to God. She named her son Samuel because in Hebrew it sounds like the phrase, "requested from God".

Samuel was raised as a Nazirite (1 SAMUEL 1:11, SEE ALSO NUMBERS 6), and while still very young he was brought to live with the High Priest Eli, in the city of Shiloh, where the Tent Tabernacle was set up.

Under Eli's guidance Samuel was taught priestly duties, but unlike the other priests of the time, God is said to have revealed Himself to Samuel at a very young age, who then prophesied to all of Israel, apparently a very rare thing in those days (1 SAMUEL 3:1; 4:1).

During Samuel's life the Philistines oppressed Israel. They successfully stole the Ark of the Covenant (for a time) and destroyed Shiloh, which we can assume is why Samuel is then said to have lived in the city of Ramah, the home of his parents (1 SAMUEL 7:7). He was anything but stationary, however. The Bible is clear that this prophet of God was also the acting Judge of Israel (1 SAMUEL 7:15-16) who travelled to three locations in the country every year in order to provide access for all: Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah.

Apparently, Samuel was also a married man. The Bible records that he had attempted to prepare for the future of Israel by appointing his sons, Joel and Abijah, judges over Israel. But they were corrupt, prompting the Israelites, in the face of the enemy Philistines, to demand a king. ■



2021 BIBLE DISCOVERY GUIDE

MARCH

JOSHUA — 1 KINGS



God's Limitations

JOSHUA 16-19

DISCOVERING THE WORD

There are ways in which God holds us responsible for things happening around us. We do not live on an island where we don't affect others, or the other way around. Especially in a democracy, which strongly promotes privatization and individualism, we always affect others around us. This makes us responsible for how we think, behave and interact. And as Christians, our responsibility only intensifies through prayer. Thoughtful prayer changes intent, which changes behaviour and how we engage with each other. Therefore, our responsibility is magnified in prayer and action. You cannot separate the two. Prayer is a request for God's strength and power in order to do the things that He commanded us. When the LORD sets up Israel in their new land, He puts in place lines of property and responsibility that different tribes were responsible for. At what point do we no longer take charge over those things and do nothing? In other words, when did God say: don't be responsible?

DISCOVERING GOD – JOSHUA 16:1-10

– 1 –

God sets limitations for us. We should be responsible for what God assigns to us.

(v. 1-4)

– 2 –

God sets us in cities and places to pray and care for those around us. We must love God and show His love to our neighbours.

(v. 5-9)

– 3 –

The Israelites did not conquer all who were strangers and evil in the land. We must allow God to help us fulfill our responsibilities.

(v. 10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

What we do is dependent upon where we are in time. The early Church experienced much persecution in their humble beginnings. But as the Church grew and overtook the place of influence in the Roman Empire, their responsibilities changed.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, THANK YOU FOR WHERE YOU HAVE PLACED ME. HELP ME TO LOVE AND SEEK YOU FIRST, AS I SERVE AND CARE FOR ALL YOU HAVE ASSIGNED ME TO.

God's Power

JOSHUA 20-24

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Joshua assigned the land to the people of Israel, which is what God commanded. Some of these assignments were made a year before when Moses was alive. But the LORD promised the people and He planned to fulfill the covenant He made. This was the beginning of the nation's land history. No longer were they to eat from the miracle food from heaven that God provided, no longer did they depend totally on the work of God alone, they could now do what God had commanded them in their own work.

This is what the LORD speaks to us in each generation; we must fulfill His commands and do His work in order to make sure the next generation knows who God is. Without the LORD and acknowledging what He has done for us, we are lost and become a people in despair.

DISCOVERING GOD – JOSHUA 22:1-9

– 1 –

God gives us His commands and we are to *always* follow them.

Without the LORD we are lost, and trouble finds us.

(v. 1-6)

– 2 –

The LORD rewards us in many ways when we live according to His commands. We must love and seek the LORD with all our heart, strength, mind and soul. (v. 7-8)

– 3 –

God says what He does and does what He says.

God is always true to His Word.

(v. 9)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

There are things that we are troubled with now in our day-to-day life in which we've never been troubled with before. But when we give our heart and life to follow the LORD God, He teaches us through His Word how to avoid the sin that continually knocks at our door.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO TAKE THE BIBLE, LEARN FROM IT AND APPLY IT IN MY EVERYDAY LIFE.

The Ways We Learn

JUDGES 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The Hebrew title *Shophetim* means Judges, and can also mean governors or rulers. I believe that there were a total of thirteen of these moral leaders the book of Judges highlights. Samuel was not born a Levite but an Ephrathite, yet he ended up in the Tent Tabernacle with the duties of a Levite. I consider him to be the thirteenth judge of Israel. It was Samuel who anointed King Saul, which was a mistake that the elders of Israel made, and Samuel told them, but they got the king they wanted. Samuel also anointed David, who became king after Saul finally failed. Most Biblical scholars read the book of Judges as a political book before the kings. Many people simply read the book as a couch for heroes, but I like to read the book as a record of Israel's descent into darkness before God. In other words, it is about the people of God falling into sin over and over again, and God's response to them.

DISCOVERING GOD — JUDGES 3:1-11

— 1 —

When we lose the real history of the human race, we lose the reality of sin. When you turn away from sin and aim for Jesus, He helps you.

(v. 1-4)

— 2 —

The decline of man continues, if the LORD is not active in our lives. God makes ways for us to live and grow, to confront sin and identify with God for His help. (v. 5-6)

— 3 —

Sometimes God's ways seem unusual when we come to Him for help. But when we recognize Him and do His commands, He is always there to help and heal us. (v. 7-11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

When we can admit that we are people who are in desperate need and have fallen to sin, and we pray to God, He recognizes our failure and steps in to help. Psalm 107:20 says: "He sent His WORD and healed them and delivered them from their destructions."

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO LEARN HOW TO REPENT. TEACH ME YOUR WAYS AND SHOW ME YOUR PATHS.

A Powerful Mother

JUDGES 4-6

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Judges 4 tells an under-reported story in ancient Israel. The judge and prophetess Deborah led Israel out of the hands of King Hazor. For twenty years, Hazor had dominated and subjugated Israel. The last time they were oppressed like this was during the time of Judge Ehud. Deborah was active in this time and sent for Barak, a military commander in ancient Israel. God had commanded him to take 10,000 men from the tribe of Naphtali to deal with Hazor's military muscle. But Barak refused to go without Deborah, to which she said, "The LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman!" Sisera was the military commander attacking Israel by the hand of King Hazor. Women were the heroes of Israel, and God used them in a mighty way.

DISCOVERING GOD – JUDGES 5:1-7

– 1 –

God is glorified when His leaders lead. The LORD has commanded us to lead in our relationships and take responsibility for them.

(v. 1-2)

– 2 –

The LORD is praised when we do His will and work. Many are called but few will go. We must be ready and go!

(v. 3)

– 3 –

Women are powerful and called by God. The LORD raises up those He has called to leadership for His Kingdom.

(v. 4-7)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The Bible is not a book that casts women out. On the contrary, it is God's Word that tells the truth about how we are all called and commanded to serve the LORD. We must be ready to respond to Him, because God is the Commander!

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I MUST HEAR FROM YOU.
HELP ME TO READ AND HEED
WHAT YOU'VE SAID IN YOUR WORD,
THE BIBLE.

Gideon

JUDGES 7-9

DISCOVERING THE WORD

As we study through the Bible we can see the level at which Israel fails God continue to grow. They fall at least seven times in the narrative of the book of Judges. Gideon was the fifth judge highlighted in these evil times. His call was unexpected, although, even he himself did not anticipate that God had placed the future of Israel's success on him. But even though he was an amazing judge, others did not expect him to win or do anything of value for Israel. In today's Scripture we see what happened, and this is tragic, since many men perished because they did not believe or understand how God worked in, and through, His called ones. Gideon was on pursuit to take down the Midianites and their leaders, but the leaders of Ephraim sharply criticized him. Gideon returned the challenge and they backed off. Then the men of Succoth, which Gideon and his men ask for water and something to eat was denied. The way the tribes were isolating and not helping each other is evidence of how far they were from God.

DISCOVERING GOD – JUDGES 8:1-9

– 1 –

The tribes of Israel were competitive, not complementary. The LORD has called us to win the world, not to compete with each other.

(v. 1-3)

– 2 –

Gideon promised to deliver devastating results to those who did not help him. We must keep our ways and work focused toward God.

(v. 4-7)

– 3 –

Destruction continues as Gideon brings deliverance to Israel. We should respond to the call God has placed on our life, rather than the advice of others. (v. 8-9)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The Bible is tried-and-true. When we read it and listen to what it says, the Holy Spirit speaks to our heart about how to interpret what God is saying to us. We must not read the Bible casually, or in our own way, but learn what and why it tells us.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO LISTEN TO
WHAT YOU ARE SAYING TO ME
THROUGH YOUR WORD.**

The Way We Work

JUDGES 10–13

DISCOVERING THE WORD

God does not view our life situations like we see them. He knows exactly how it starts, where it's going, and everything you're going through in the present sense, that we would be foolish not to listen to the LORD. But, often, we see the way things are, or seem to be, and make our decisions upon emotion. The LORD shows us that when we pray and consider what God sees and says, there is a good reason for it. This is wisdom!

Today is one example of how the LORD demonstrates the wisdom of His actions against the wisdom of the elders of Israel's tribes. Remember that the reason Israel is not doing well is because they turned away from God. They stopped listening. Moses gave Israel the law but he always intervened with God on their behalf. This means of intervening is very important. God does not speak to us exclusively through His law, of binary dos and don'ts, He also intercedes and interprets it.

DISCOVERING GOD – JUDGES 11:1–11

– 1 –

Jephthah was a man of valor but was rejected by his family. God's plan includes family, but often because of circumstances, they resist Him.

(v. 1–3)

– 2 –

Jephthah presents a good question to the elders.

We must keep our minds focused on God and what He says about our life.

(v. 4–7)

– 3 –

Jephthah was a strong, mighty warrior and judge in Israel.

We must let the LORD heal and help us, in all our circumstances.

(v. 8–11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Jephthah made many mistakes when he was judge over Israel. These mistakes compounded because he did not repent of his previous life. Unlike Joseph, Jephthah was hard and callous. When God calls us, we should be pliable and workable.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE WHEN I RESPOND TO YOUR CALLING.

Weaknesses of Strong Men

JUDGES 14–17

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Times and seasons can affect the way we see, hear and understand who God is. Depending on what you expect, change may not necessarily be a good thing. We are in a time, right now, that seems unique and difficult, and for some of us it probably is. Whether it is a national crisis or personal problem; who knows what to expect each day? During the time of the Judges, the nation of Israel was also going through a time that seemed unique and difficult to them as well. There were thirteen judges that God chose before the kings emerged. Samson, the twelfth Judge of Israel, was a man God used to deliver Israel from the Philistines. He was called to be a leader from the time he was conceived until the time of his death. Samson did not truly fulfill the call that God had on his life; he was the only judge to, essentially, commit suicide. Both strong and powerful, Samson was designed to take down the rule of the Philistines. But it was the woman he gave his hardened heart to, a Philistine prostitute, who troubled him the most.

DISCOVERING GOD – JUDGES 15:1–11

– 1 –

Samson was taken advantage of because of his own lust. It is wise to follow God's plan for our life and not our own desires.
(v. 1–2)

– 2 –

Samson's wife and father-in-law were killed by the enemy. Revenge is not true justice.
(v. 3–7)

– 3 –

Revenge swung back and forth. Hate never conquers hate.
(v. 8–11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

We do not remedy violence and hate with more violence and hate. This is one of the hardest things we will have to learn because it goes against our sinful human nature. In Romans 12, God reminds us that we are not to be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO SOLVE PROBLEMS AND LIVE MY LIFE YOUR WAY.

A Civil War

JUDGES 18–21

DISCOVERING THE WORD

When evil is out in the open, it's easy to fight against it. But when evil is hidden in plain sight and rises on the inside – of society and our soul – it is very difficult to identify and even easier to ignore. The nation slowly splits and fights against itself. If left unresolved, a civil war breaks out.

This is the kind of evil that took place in the time of the Judges. A man from the tribe of Levi took a concubine as a wife, visited a city in the tribe of Benjamin, and men surrounded him, abused his wife and killed her. He was so hardened and shocked that he cut her into 12 pieces and sent them to the nation. This began an internal struggle that brought about the truth of what was happening at that time. The people now had to deal with it. They had to confront the evil head on.

DISCOVERING GOD – JUDGES 20:1–14

– 1 –

The Levite confronts Israel about their wicked evil. Evil is terrible, we should run away from it.

(v. 1–7)

– 2 –

Sides were formed and lines were set up for destruction. A time of confrontation will come, but that is dictated by Jesus Christ, not us.

(v. 8–11)

– 3 –

Civil war arose because Israel fought against itself over evil. There is no unity when evil is present.

(v. 12–14)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Evil is devastating and causes us to fight each other. The LORD Jesus Christ teaches us to love each other and to flee from evil. We do not have the ability to live together in peace without the LORD in our life.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP US TO HEAR YOU
AND BE OBEDIENT TO YOUR
WORD AND WAYS.**

Naomi & Ruth

RUTH 1-4

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The book of Ruth takes place during the time of the Judges in Israel. It is a true story about a Jewish woman named Naomi and a Moabite woman named Ruth, great-grandmother of King David. The narrative begins with Naomi, her husband and two sons leaving Israel to go to the land of Moab to avoid a famine. Over the course of time, Naomi's husband and her two sons die, leaving Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, widows. In her grief and disappointment, Naomi tries to get Orpah and Ruth to return to their own families, since she believes that there is no future she can offer them. While all three women struggle with the idea of leaving one another, Orpah reluctantly agrees, but Ruth will not hear of it. Ruth vows to take care of her mother-in-law that nothing but death would part them, and together they return to Bethlehem. Ruth stands as a testimony of God's faithfulness and love for all people, even for the Gentiles during the Old Testament times, and sets an example for us.

DISCOVERING GOD — RUTH 3:1-15

— 1 —

Ruth follows Naomi's advice and proposes to Boaz. God will help us to follow Him, even though we may break cultural ideals.

(v. 1-5)

— 2 —

Ruth was recognized and rewarded for who she was. When we follow the leading of the LORD, we are recognized for our faith.

(v. 6-11)

— 3 —

Ruth was rewarded for her faithfulness to God as a Moabite woman.

The LORD keeps us close to His covenant promises when we follow Him.

(v. 12-15)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Rest and peace is the result of following the One true God. When we do our best to follow the LORD, He is always faithful. There is never a time when God is not faithful. When we learn to trust in the LORD, He keeps us close to Him.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, THANK YOU FOR YOUR GREAT FAITHFULNESS! HELP ME TO TRUST IN YOU WITH EVERYTHING I DO.

The Call of God

I SAMUEL 1-4

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Israel had fallen so far from the LORD that there was no way they could hear the word of God or understand a revelation from Him. These were the days when the prophet Samuel was born, a time when darkness fell across Israel. A time when the nation became horribly dark like the other nations around them, which they had originally defeated through God's strength and purpose. Samuel was a young boy when God called him. He would grow up to be the final judge of Israel and anoint the first two kings. Israel wanted to be like the other nations. It wasn't about God anymore, or His call, it was about perception. And so, Israel appointed Saul king because he looked the part. But God anointed David king because he was called for the part. Even when we refuse His call, God never leaves us out to dry.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 SAMUEL 3:1-14

– 1 –

Samuel was not a Levite, but served in the temple as a faithful follower of God. While Eli's sons were corrupt, Samuel was not. (v. 1)

– 2 –

Samuel did not recognize the call of God, but recognized that he was being called. As believers, we must recognize the voice of God. (v. 2-9)

– 3 –

There is a cost to ignoring the call of God on our lives. God has called every Christian and we must do what the LORD says. (v. 10-14)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

When we come to know Jesus Christ as our LORD and Saviour, our sins are forgiven, we are rescued from hell. Then, we are given an assignment: Tell everyone the gospel of Jesus Christ and what He has done for us – how He has saved us, healed us, and given us eternal life. Praise God!

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I MUST TELL OTHERS ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE DONE FOR ME. THANK YOU, JESUS!

Save Us from Evil

1 SAMUEL 5-8

DISCOVERING THE WORD

We often think that we can be free from evil if we simply resist it. We believe that we have the energy and strength to fight our way out. The truth is that evil is not defeated by our work but by God's power.

Israel had fallen away from God's truth which led to a defeat in battle and the devastating loss of the Ark of the Covenant. Despite Israel's waywardness, God allowed the Philistines to feel His power through the ark and so, they returned it to Israel. The ark was kept for twenty years in the house of Abinadab and the Israelites were inspired to turn back to God and His power to save. Samuel led the way to victory, like the other judges of Israel's history. He called the Israelites to abandon their false gods and return to the LORD with all of their hearts. Due to his leadership in difficult times, Samuel is considered to be the thirteenth and final judge of Israel.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 SAMUEL 7:1-8

– 1 –

Israel lamented in hopes that God would take them back. When we cry

out to God, He is willing to take us back.

(v. 1-2)

– 2 –

Israel must get rid of their false gods and prepare their hearts for the LORD.

God requires our whole heart; we must be faithful and focused only on Him.

(v. 3-4)

– 3 –

Israel repented of their sins and came back to God. We must repent,

turn away from sin, and turn wholeheartedly toward God.

(v. 5-8)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

When we come to recognize our sin, God is ready to take us back and forgive us for our failed covenant with Him. Jesus Christ is LORD! We should remember that He is the only way, truth and light, no one comes to God except through Him!

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I NEED AND DESIRE YOU AS MY LORD AND SAVIOUR. I REPENT FROM MY SIN AND SET MY LIFE TO FOLLOW YOU. HELP ME TO DO THAT EVERY DAY.

King Saul's First War

1 SAMUEL 9-12

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The people of Israel had chosen their first king, and it would not be long before they would need his leadership. Messengers arrived at Gibeah, King Saul's hometown and Israel's first capital city, with a crisis: The Ammonites had invaded and barricaded Jabesh Gilead, efforts at peace had resulted in a horrific demand by the Ammonite leader Nahash. Rather than taxes or tribute, Nahash was after humiliation and domination; he wanted to gouge out the right eye of all Jabesh Gilead's citizens. Instead of agreeing, a call for Saul's help would be the first test of his merit. Saul was enraged by the news. He successfully drew together the men of Israel and led them to defeat the Ammonites in battle. This story is significant because it shows how Saul solidified his leadership in Israel. Saul had many strengths, but would he rely on God's strength to overcome his human weaknesses?

DISCOVERING GOD — 1 SAMUEL 11:1-11

— 1 —

The enemy always makes a deal that costs too much. The cost of sin is death.

(v. 1-3)

— 2 —

Saul was enraged and gathered a united army to fight the enemy. We stand united in Christ Jesus our LORD, Commander of the spiritual battle against the enemy of our soul. (v. 4-7)

— 3 —

Saul confronts the Ammonites with the reality of God's power. We can confront the works of satan with God's power.

(v. 8-11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

God has given us the ability to succeed in confrontations with evil, through Jesus Christ. However, we must be fully committed to following and serving the LORD.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I REALIZE THAT I CAN CHOOSE TO DO YOUR WILL. HELP ME TO MOVE FORWARD IN YOUR PLANS AND NOT MINE.

Do What God Says

1 SAMUEL 13-16

DISCOVERING THE WORD

There is a real difference between showing mercy and supporting bad behaviour. Allowing someone to cheat on their commitments is very different than having mercy on a troubled soul. Sin is dangerous, it can kill us and it can change the way that we think. It is so serious that Jesus sacrificed Himself to set us free. The gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ is that there is now a realized hope! God has not changed His mind about the dangers of sin, rather He changes us through Jesus. Accepting the sacrifice of Christ and installing Him as our King, our LORD, begins a journey that transforms our souls. Sin loses its hold in the lives of Christians. Jesus has experienced the human condition; He has experienced temptation and can help us through in a very real way. God does not support our bad behaviour, He gives us the opportunity to come to Him and be transformed.

DISCOVERING GOD — 1 SAMUEL 15:1-9

— 1 —

God was using Saul to fulfill His commitment, before Saul was ever king. The will of God is so much more than we can understand.

(v. 1-3)

— 2 —

Saul carried out the work of God's hand. Doing God's work is more than we can see. We must follow Him.

(v. 4-7)

— 3 —

Saul did not complete God's work. We must be careful to follow God and obey His voice to completion.

(v. 8-9)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

As a Christian, it can be easy for us not to finish what God has started. As we follow the LORD and He speaks to our heart, we must then do what He has told us according to His Word. We must do God's will, God's way.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO LEARN AND DO THINGS AS YOU HAVE SAID IN YOUR WAY.

A Distressing Spirit

1 SAMUEL 17-19

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Salvation and true change requires us to fully yield our lives to God. We may wish to prolong this process as long as possible, but the truth is that when God comes to us, we have a choice to make right then and there. Salvation is also not something that we can create in others, we do the work of sharing the gospel, but it is the Holy Spirit alone who works to change hearts. We also don't always think about the spiritual world in this process, but the Bible is clear in describing a spiritual world that seeks to stop God's will. There will be a time in the future when demonic powers will have no power, God will judge and rule forever. For now, when we look back to King Saul we see a distressing spirit that tormented him. That spirit was given access because of Saul's jealousy, and ultimately because of his rejection of God.

DISCOVERING GOD — 1 SAMUEL 19:1-10

— 1 —

Jonathan loved God, and was a good friend of David. God has people where we do not expect them to be, and provides salvation.

(v. 1-3)

— 2 —

Saul made a vow not to threaten David's life again. When we make a promise to the LORD, we must keep it.

(v. 4-7)

— 3 —

Saul did not keep the vow he had made about David's life. We must not go back on our word to the LORD. The Holy Spirit is with us and helps us.

(v. 8-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Our lives are filled with all kinds of evil. However, the LORD is stronger than evil and can help us to make things right. This is called the work of sanctification. Sanctification takes deliberate action on our part, as we continuously yield to God and His Word.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I NEED TO YIELD MY WILL TO YOU! HELP ME TO FOCUS ON YOUR WILL AND WAYS.

Conspiracies

1 SAMUEL 20–23

DISCOVERING THE WORD

It is hard to understand what God is doing and how He is moving when our minds are bent away from Him. When we stop focusing on God, we can easily get lost in our own ideas; we can get trapped in conspiracy theories that seem to threaten what we have. If satan, the enemy of our soul, can distract our minds with conspiracies and intrigues, then he has succeeded in making us ineffective. Apart from God's truth, we lose our way. God will set our minds free from pointless chatter and useless worries, when we focus our minds on Him. Saul's mind was consumed with jealousy of David and the fear of losing the kingship. Saul had long ago stopped following God and started trusting in himself. Now, everything was a struggle, Saul wanted to keep the power that he believed was rightfully his. Eventually and tragically, he would meet death in battle against enemies that David would overcome with God's help.

DISCOVERING GOD — 1 SAMUEL 22:1–8

– 1 –

Men, tired of the conspiracy theories of Saul, came to David. Our minds are limited in what we can process. We must follow God and know His Word. (v. 1–2)

– 2 –

David listened to God's prophet. We must listen and follow the Word of God first, in our lives. (v. 3–5)

– 3 –

Saul's mind was preoccupied with jealousy against David. Remember, the people of God do not fight against each other. (v. 6–8)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

We need to keep our hearts tuned to God. Being disgruntled with each other and fighting over ideas of men rather than focusing on the gospel of Christ will lead to our failure. We need to learn to accept each other because of our salvation, and work together to build the Kingdom of God.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO KEEP MY MIND AND MY HEART FIXED ON YOU AND YOUR WORD.

Calling Out To the King

1 SAMUEL 24–28

DISCOVERING THE WORD

David understood the weight of God's anointing. Today, we see that as we read 1 Samuel 26. The word anointed means *set apart* or *made to be different*. Saul was chosen by God to serve Him as the first king of Israel, not to spend his time chasing after David in a jealous rage. David knew the difference. David realized and understood that God's anointing and plan for the nation should be honoured by all. This was one of the differences between David and Saul. David had also been anointed by Samuel to be king, only he had to wait for God's appointed timing. This testing and training time was intense but David did well in it. This time also demonstrated to those around David the reasons that God had anointed him in the first place. Israel was not to be a nation like other nations, they were to be different. David could have easily justified murdering Saul, he could've put an end to the dangerous and misguided intrigues of the king but instead he showed restraint. David was determined to let the LORD take care of Saul.

DISCOVERING GOD — 1 SAMUEL 26:1–16

– 1 –

David asked who would have the courage to accompany him into the camp where Saul lay. We also must have courage to do what God says.

(v. 1–6)

– 2 –

David understood that he was not there to kill Saul. God provides for us in difficult circumstances. We must know and trust what God tells us to do, at all times. (v. 7–12)

– 3 –

Saul's mind was occupied with jealousy. David wanted to honour God. When we honour God above the circumstance, He takes care of us.

(v. 13–16)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

We often value our own understanding above all else. We think we know what needs to be done to resolve a difficult decision, so we pray and ask God for a way to do that. Instead, we should consider what God is saying to us. Do we need to resolve it the way we think? Let's pay attention to God's Word, consider what He is doing in our lives and pray for clarity.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO HEAR YOU
AND TO KNOW YOUR WAYS.**

Saul's Tragic End

1 SAMUEL 29-31

DISCOVERING THE WORD

A king that would rather die than be taken captive is a proud man. You cannot understand your earthly circumstances, until you realize your heavenly dwelling. God had made Saul's path to Him and heaven clear, but unfortunately, Saul avoided it. The end happened on Mount Gilboa. In 1 Samuel 31, we learn of the demise of the first king of Israel. King Saul, the people's choice, was full of pride, fear and jealousy at the end of his life. He was still a young man, but throughout his life Saul proved that he did not believe that God would treat him well if he yielded to the LORD. There are many people like that in today's world – a world that is turned upside down because of sin. "Missing the mark" is a definition of one of the words used for sin. When we miss the mark, we fail to realize that God desires to heal us and help us – this failure is demonstrated in the tragic life of Saul.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 SAMUEL 31:1-10

– 1 –

Rather than surrender to the Philistines, Saul kills himself. His three sons died as well – the tragic end of a family.

(v. 1-6)

– 2 –

There was a massive retreat of Israel, and the Philistines took over. We should never give up, but put our trust in the LORD.

(v. 7)

– 3 –

The Philistines perceived Saul's death as a victory for their gods. The enemy sees our defeat as his win. We must always follow and obey God, He is the Victor!

(v. 8-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

To serve God means that we worship Him and give our lives to do what is right according to His righteousness. God will move our efforts in the right direction when we choose to serve Him. We must never seek our own way of doing things but live according to the way God tells us to in His Word.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO LIVE FOR YOU
BY LISTENING AND FOLLOWING
YOUR COMMANDS.**

Grief & Trouble

2 SAMUEL 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

There is much grief in the world, whether you look at the present day or into the ancient past. In 2 Samuel 3, we learn of a great grief in the lives of Saul's daughter Michal, and her husband David. The Bible had earlier highlighted the love that Michal had for David, and the celebratory marriage between their two families. Michal had been instrumental in saving David's life from her father. In the absence of David's presence, to get him where it hurt and to disassociate David from the royal family, King Saul took Michal and remarried her to another man (1 SAM. 25:44). Sometime later, and after himself moving on to unlawful marriages, David demands the return of Michal. The cultural wrongs of Israel in these early days seem to be countless and yet, God still spoke to and through men and women of those days. Grief is an emotion we were not supposed to experience in God's original plan for humanity, but it is something we brought and bring into our lives with the sins that we chose.

DISCOVERING GOD – 2 SAMUEL 3:1-16

– 1 –

David had six wives in his early days.

God did not give many wives to David, but allowed that violation to speak to him.

(v. 1-5)

– 2 –

Abner was the head of Saul's army and took advantage after Saul's death.

We should never take advantage of anyone.

God will make things right if we wait on Him. (v. 6-11)

– 3 –

Things were terribly wrong when Saul was king.

The wrongs were being made right through much grief and terror.

(v. 12-16)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

When we avoid God's ways and do things our way there is much grief and trouble. When we submit to God's will and do things His way from the beginning, things flow much better for everyone.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I WANT TO HEAR AND OBEY YOUR WORD EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE. HELP ME TO KEEP MY HEART TURNED TOWARD YOU.

The Image of God

2 SAMUEL 4-7

DISCOVERING THE WORD

2 Samuel 6 records the movement of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. It had been kept at the city of Kiriath Jearim for many years. Before this, the Israelites had misused the ark; they took it into battle with them and it was lost to the Philistines for a time. Now that it had been back in Israelite hands for a while, David decided that he would move the ark to be closer to him in the new capital city. Though David was a man of God, even he was not paying attention to God's law. God had given instructions through Moses on how to handle and transport the ark. The people tried to honour God in their own way by using a new cart to transport and by leading the way with a great celebration. But when we ignore the ways of God, our good intentions don't matter. The law of God was to be followed by His covenant people. David's failed attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem was because he did not consider how God desired the ark to be moved.

DISCOVERING GOD — 2 SAMUEL 6:1-15

— 1 —

David made the mistake of mishandling the ark of God.

God and His Word must always be respected and obeyed.

(v. 1-8)

— 2 —

God blessed those who respected the ark.

When we respect God and honour His presence, we are blessed.

(v. 9-11)

— 3 —

There was great joy once David learned how to handle the ark of God.

We must always handle the things of God with care and concern.

(v. 12-15)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

It can be easy to misunderstand the things of God, and even God Himself. We need to carefully consider the words of God through the Scriptures, and the work of God through Jesus Christ. God has ways for us that we must move in. In the truth of God, there is great freedom for us!

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I RESPECT AND HONOUR YOU, AND I GIVE MY LIFE TO WORSHIP YOU. YOU ARE LORD OF EVERYTHING.

David Remembers

2 SAMUEL 8–12

DISCOVERING THE WORD

2 Samuel 9 records when David honoured his commitment to Jonathan, Saul's son. The two men were great friends. David even owed Jonathan his life, as when Saul had attempted to kill David, Jonathan told him to run away. Jonathan died on Mount Gilboa in the same battle that had claimed the lives of his father and brothers. Now, David remembered his commitment of friendship to Jonathan as recorded in 1 Samuel 20:41-42, and looked for any of Jonathan's relatives. The whole chapter of 2 Samuel 9, is dedicated to Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan. Mephibosheth had been crippled as a boy. This accident occurred because of the death of Saul and Jonathan, and the kingship of David. Mephibosheth's nurse was trying to take him to a place that would be safer for a boy who could potentially claim Saul's throne. In today's reading, David continues to right the wrongs that had happened between Saul and himself.

DISCOVERING GOD – 2 SAMUEL 9:1–13

– 1 –

David stirs up a confrontation between the family of Saul and himself. Mephibosheth took the position of a servant, as he should have.

(v. 1-6)

– 2 –

Jonathan's kindness to David was honoured for his son's benefit. When we do the right thing, it helps those around us, even when we are gone.

(v. 7-8)

– 3 –

As long as David was in power, Mephibosheth had peace and was helped. When we follow God, He gives us His peace and provision.

(v. 9-13)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Even in the persecuted Church, the idea of following the One True Creator is a powerful weapon against the devil. When we commit to follow God, He looks after us. If we suffer, we suffer with the help and grace of the Holy Spirit within us. It is better to suffer with the Holy Spirit than to live in the bondage of the enemy.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I TRUST IN THE WORK OF YOUR HOLY SPIRIT IN MY LIFE. TEACH ME YOUR WAYS AND SHOW ME YOUR PATHS.

Treason

2 SAMUEL 13–15

DISCOVERING THE WORD

King David had a really dysfunctional family. First, he had married seven women. This was never God's plan, but this was how many kingdoms were built. Kings with many wives had many children. Then, they would give their daughters to other kings in arranged marriages as a strategy to form new alliances. Again, this was the wrong way to do things, but this was the culture of establishing a successful kingdom.

King David, too, had many children from different women. His third son was Absalom, son of Maacah, the daughter of King Talmi of Geshur. In other words, Absalom's grandfather was the king of another nation. This family dynamic caused big problems. Absalom's sister, Tamar, was raped by one of David's other sons from another wife, and David never really punished him. David's inaction brought a hate in Absalom's heart; his father was unjust, unfit to be king. It ultimately sparked Absalom's conspiracy to overthrow his father.

DISCOVERING GOD — 2 SAMUEL 15:1–12

– 1 –

David's inaction to punish Amnon brought trouble through Absalom. God's law and order helps us to live together peacefully.

(v. 1–6)

– 2 –

Absalom planned his conspiracy well to establish his kingship in advance. We have our plans, but the LORD must have the final word in our lives. (v. 7–9)

– 3 –

Even when it looks as if we have lost, trust in the LORD! Living in repentance before God is always best.

(v. 10–12)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

When our plans fail, we have a choice: we can blame God or we can repent. Perhaps we didn't seek His direction first, or maybe we thought He'd join our plans if we just went ahead without seeking His direction or His Word. When we have a relationship with the LORD, He protects us when we listen and follow Him.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I MUST ALWAYS STAY UNDER YOUR PROTECTION, HELP ME NOT TO MOVE AWAY FROM YOU.

Tragedy

2 SAMUEL 16-19

DISCOVERING THE WORD

David's final confrontation with his son Absalom is, perhaps, one of the great tragedies in the Bible. Absalom staged a coup against his father David. So, they met for battle. 2 Samuel 18 records the end of this rebellion and Absalom's final moments. David told the men to be gentle with Absalom. But as Absalom's long, stylish hair got caught in a tree, Joab dealt the deadly blow. Even still, Absalom's undoing was not by the hands of David or his men, it was his pride. It was as if God set up Absalom to get caught in the tree and then left it to the men to see how they would deal with him as he hung there. Interestingly, the Bible also says that the LORD holds the man cursed who hangs upon a tree ([DEUTERONOMY 21:23](#)), which is how both Absalom and Jesus Christ died. Many times in the Bible, the LORD sets people up to see how they will choose to deal with others. Yet, the mercy of the LORD is beyond our understanding that He should come in the flesh and hang on a tree like a cursed man to take our sins away. We should listen to Him.

DISCOVERING GOD — 2 SAMUEL 18:1-15

— 1 —

David was more important to his people as a commander than a warrior. We are important to the LORD and powerful when we pray.

(v. 1-4)

— 2 —

David told the warriors to deal gently with his son.

When confronting others we should do so as Galatians 6 tells us — gently and carefully.

(v. 5)

— 3 —

Joab was a brutal man. The weight of David's kingship was heavy and troubling in many ways.

We must always and only follow the LORD's directions. (v. 6-15)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Sometimes we make our own life more difficult than it needs to be. We cause trouble by our actions and reactions. However, if we repent and follow the LORD with all our heart and do what He commands us, then things become much easier through His help.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO FOLLOW YOU AND DO THE THINGS YOU COMMAND!

The Power of God

2 SAMUEL 20–22

DISCOVERING THE WORD

In 2 Samuel 22, David sings a psalm to God for us all – He is our rock, fortress, deliverer, refuge, shield, Saviour. All of these qualities describe the fullness of God’s unwavering protection and faithfulness over our lives, especially when he says, “The LORD is my rock” (v.2). Bedrock, for instance, is the foundation of the earth, so to speak; nothing is more secure, stable and unmovable than it. In fact, bedrock is so hard at times that if a tool hits against it, the tool will just shatter. There are also times when evil might seem overwhelming, unstoppable even. Like David’s situation, it might feel as though evil is surrounding you from all sides. But unlike our unstable, changing world, God is stronger: “Then the earth shook and trembled, the foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken.” (v.8) God cannot be shaken. God does not tremble. And if God is with us, who can stand against us? In these days of grace, we have a choice, but soon, in the future, there will be no choice. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is LORD.

DISCOVERING GOD – 2 SAMUEL 22:1–13

– 1 –

The LORD is the source of all our strength for salvation. No one comes to the Father God without coming to Jesus Christ, His Son.

(v. 1–4)

– 2 –

The LORD secures our salvation for eternity. If we confess our sin to Jesus, ask for His forgiveness and follow Him, we are promised the gift of eternal life.

(v. 5–7)

– 3 –

God is strong and unchangeable. The God of the Bible is the God of everything.

(v. 8–13)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

There are times when we think that we control our destiny. While we do to some extent, it is ultimately the LORD who supersedes over everything. Many refuse to believe that God can be so microscopic, yet so colossal! The LORD frequently does things we do not understand...after all, He is God!

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO HEAR YOU,
SEE YOU, AND FOLLOW YOU!**

Mighty Men

2 SAMUEL 23-24

DISCOVERING THE WORD

David's mighty men were the best soldiers in Israel, but they still needed someone to guide them. They needed a leader. God was preparing and training David to become king early on in his life, while he was still a shepherd. Like the mighty men, while they were an unstoppable force, their hearts were not like David's. As Christians, we are called to be shepherds, spiritual leaders to help guide people to the LORD. Like David, we should be aware that the things happening in our lives right now – the good, the bad, and the ugly – is preparation and training for God's greater purpose. That is, His purpose in our personal lives as well as our purpose in the greater narrative He's weaving together with all of mankind. We have been stitched into this tapestry of mighty prophets, warriors and kings, as well as lowly shepherds. All men are equal before God Almighty, all with one purpose to fulfill: to guide people to the LORD!

DISCOVERING GOD – 2 SAMUEL 23:8-12

– 1 –

The LORD makes us unusually strong and we become worthy. The Holy Spirit teaches us so that we can change for the better as we grow.

(v. 8)

– 2 –

The LORD changes situations around us when we are brave. If we trust the LORD, God is with us. The battle is the LORD's!

(v. 9-10)

– 3 –

God changes things that are impossible to change. If faced with the impossible, praise God! He makes possible the impossible for those who are obedient to Him. (v. 11-12)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Trouble comes when we think that we can do things on our own. God gives power to complete His will and ways through His Holy Spirit. But, too often, we try to do our things our way first. We must learn to hear God and follow Him.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, AS DAVID PRAYED: LEAD ME IN YOUR TRUTH AND TEACH ME. YOU ARE THE GOD OF MY SALVATION, ON YOU I WAIT ALL THE DAY (PS.25:5).

Solomon Begins Well

1 KINGS 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

In a human way, we educate ourselves for work to build our future, as a way to give ourselves purpose. But in the divine way, God gives us grace and wisdom to fulfill our purpose that He assigns for us to accomplish. Every person has an assignment from God to build our future. When I was in high school the guidance counsellor told me that I had to come up with a decision about what I was going to do with my career, so I could have a bright future. The question was: What did I want my future to look like? The problem is that most of us are given that choice, that question, but we're not able to make the proper decision. Because, well, we don't know the future! We don't know what God has planned for our lives. Some of us make up the answer. I believe that it is the LORD who gives the direction we need as we ready ourselves to grow into a future workspace, whatever that might be. God also loves it when we ask Him questions. Very few people ask God anything except when they're in trouble. But let's try something different. Ask God what He has assigned to you!

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 KINGS 3:1-14

– 1 –

Solomon made a mistake by marrying the Pharaoh's daughter. The LORD will tell us how to live before we go one step. Are we listening?

(v. 1-3)

– 2 –

The LORD is evident all around us. Do we recognize and know the LORD in our life?

(v. 4-5)

– 3 –

God gave Solomon what he asked for, and more. The blessings of the LORD are very good. There are times when He blesses us more than we expect.

(v. 6-14)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

God is good! He blesses us when we are obedient to Him. We should always be aware that when we are blessed by God, it is He who has blessed us. This has often been abused in the modern world.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I PRAISE YOUR NAME FOR WHO YOU ARE. YOU ARE GOOD ALL THE TIME!

Building Details

1 KINGS 4-7

DISCOVERING THE WORD

I always felt intimidated by the Bible because I had such respect for God, so I didn't really read it. Everything changed when I fully committed my heart to the LORD, I began to read the Bible regularly and it influenced everything. The Bible is no ordinary book – it is the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” There are passages in the Bible that are hard to understand, there are even numbers, listed details, and genealogies that we may be tempted to skip over. Remember though, there is no word or detail that is out of place or unnecessary in His Word. The books of Moses, history, poetry, music and prophecy are all relevant. In the book of 1 Kings, we begin to understand the details of what Solomon built and why he built it that way. The buildings that Solomon built were majestic, and so when God allowed them to be destroyed He was sending a clear message to the Israelites.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 KINGS 7:1-8

– 1 –

Solomon's work was beautiful but God later destroyed it.

God will remake the physical world at the end of time.

(v. 1-5)

– 2 –

God's judgments are displayed in the people of God, not a hall of justice.

We, the Church, are the people of God, not our buildings.

(v. 6-7)

– 3 –

Everything that Solomon made was eventually destroyed.

The things that God preserves are in people, not buildings or physical things.

(v. 8)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

God creates things that last forever in His people, not in places. Sin has brought us low, but when the LORD comes into our hearts He changes us and makes us new creatures. Only what God redeems will last for eternity.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I NEED TO CHANGE THE WAY I SEE THINGS IN THIS WORLD. HELP ME TO SEE WITH YOUR EYES.

Justice & Righteousness

1 KINGS 8-10

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The Old Testament is the Bible of the New Testament! The people who spoke of the Word of God in the New Testament were talking primarily of what we call the Old Testament today. The men who wrote the New Testament were called to report on God's activity and the life of Jesus Christ. Their writings became the New Testament or the new covenant of the Scripture. The book of Revelation was the last book of the New Testament to be written, though it would be accepted as Scripture earlier than some others.

A key theme that rises often in the Old Testament is that of justice (or fairness between men) and righteousness (or rightness with God). In fact, when the Queen of Sheba came to test Solomon she was very impressed and said, "Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness." (1 KINGS 10:9).

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 KINGS 10:1-9

– 1 –

The wisdom and understanding of Solomon impressed the Queen of Sheba. God will keep us in His wisdom, if we obey Him.
(v. 1-5)

– 2 –

The wisdom of God is greater than anyone, anywhere. We should always seek after the LORD and His wisdom.
(v. 6-7)

– 3 –

The Queen of Sheba knew that the LORD was behind this wisdom. When we display the wisdom of God in our lives, we can lead people to the LORD. (v. 8-9)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Just as the Queen of Sheba comes to verify the truth of King Solomon's fame and wisdom, so too do we learn of the witness we can have through God's giftings. There are many leaders, kings and economic giants in today's world, but who has the wisdom of God? When we possess divine wisdom, God creates a saving witness through us!

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I NEED YOUR WISDOM IN MY LIFE. HELP ME TO FOLLOW YOU IN OBEDIENCE.

The Sign

1 KINGS 11-13

DISCOVERING THE WORD

A man of God came from Judah to Bethel with a message and a sign from God. King Jeroboam had split the kingdom of Israel, breaking off ten tribes to the north and redirected their worship practices. Jeroboam's reason for this false worship was fear of his people being won back to Jerusalem's kingship because of the yearly Temple worship they were required to give in Jerusalem. Jeroboam's religious system had accessible high places, idols and appointed priests – a complete alternative to Solomon's Temple.

The message from the man of God included a prediction about a future king named Josiah who would kill and burn the bones of the priests on the very unauthorized altars they worshipped on. The sign of his message's truthfulness was that the altar would split apart and the ashes on it would be poured out. God's message got the attention of King Jeroboam, but the king responded the wrong way. His mistakes would last until that nation fell.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 KINGS 13:1-10

– 1 –

There are consequences when we resist God's commands. If we do not serve God in our personal lives, how can we expect Him to save us?

(v. 1-3)

– 2 –

God performed the sign that He promised. God always fulfills His Word. We should know it.

(v. 4-6)

– 3 –

King Jeroboam offered a reward that the man of God would not take. God's people do not do His will for money or rewards.

(v. 7-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

God does not change; He is the same yesterday, today and forever. When Jesus Christ came to earth, He fulfilled the law of God, forever changing the conditions of our salvation. There will soon come a time when the LORD will return to judge the people of earth for their disbelief and disobedience.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I NEED TO BE OBEDIENT TO YOUR WORD, PLEASE HELP ME.

The Word of God

1 KINGS 14-17

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The Word of God is sure, it is strong and unyielding. Here in the Old Testament, we see how God rose up prophets to be His witnesses and keep His covenant people accountable. Most often, the prophets were given messages of strong warning or judgment because the people were not keeping their covenant with God. Today, and in our recent past, there are many who have claimed to have the Word of God for individuals and nations, much like the Old Testament prophets. It is crucial for us to remember that today we have the example of Jesus Christ written for us in the New Testament. As Christ followers, we also have the Holy Spirit dwelling with us. We must look to God and His recorded words in the Bible as our authority first, weighing what others say against its timeless truths. We must resist the temptation to put man's words above God's. This is the very sin of Northern Israel that the prophet Jehu brings against Baasha the king of Israel. He had followed the ways of Jeroboam rather than God. We learn about it in 1 Kings 16.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 KINGS 16:1-10

– 1 –

God speaks through Jehu to communicate His intentions. The LORD has told us the things we should know and do in His Word.

(v. 1-4)

– 2 –

God's Word came against the household of Baasha. Sin often runs in the family, curses that can be confessed to God and broken by Him.

(v. 5-7)

– 3 –

God did what He said He would do to the household of Baasha. God punishes unrepentant rebellion.

(v. 8-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

In our culture, sin is not often labeled as bad. Often, we don't even recognize it. Part of God's salvation for us is the process of sanctification. In His great mercy, God teaches us about living for Him, convicting us of our sins step by step, leading us to the proper recognition of sin and its confession in our lives that leads to true change.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I CONFESS MY SIN TO YOU.
I ASK YOU TO HELP ME TO TURN
AWAY FROM SIN AND ALWAYS
TURN TOWARD YOU.

Israel vs. Syria

1 KINGS 18-20

DISCOVERING THE WORD

When the LORD is involved, things change! Ahab, who was not a good king, received God's help when Syria came against Israel. Ben-Hadad the king of Syria, with 32 other allied kings, seemed an unstoppable force. When Ben-Hadad threatened Northern Israel it looked as good as over, but surprisingly, a prophet of the true God spoke to Ahab. God promised to deliver Ahab and the Israelites, and even told Ahab how to go about the battle. Intriguingly, Ahab who famously led people away from God, actually did what God had said. It seems Ahab's faith and loyalties were ever shifting. Nevertheless, God was showing the Northern 10 tribes of Israel that He was still their God. This long and interesting story is recorded in 1 Kings 20. As we read it, remember that God is still alive and well. If we choose to follow His ways, He will rescue us.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 KINGS 20:1-15

– 1 –

Ahab was pushed too far by Ben-Hadad. He would not give in! There are times when we are pushed too far, and only God can get us out of our problem.

(v. 1-9)

– 2 –

When Ben-Hadad was resisted, he spoke too arrogantly. Humility is a beautiful thing in our lives. We should keep that a part of our disposition.

(v. 10-11)

– 3 –

God always sets the battle in order. We must come to the realization that God knows what He is doing, and He will do it.

(v. 12-15)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

For some of us, real life begins when we graduate from school. No more run-throughs or practices, our homework becomes real work! The problems that we encounter can feel insurmountable and impossible. As Christians, we have a King in our hearts who will help us through everything – let's remember to let Him.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I NEED YOU TODAY, AND RIGHT NOW. HELP ME TO NEVER FORGET ABOUT YOU!

God Knows

1 KINGS 21-22

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The LORD knows our actions and reactions, even when we try to hide. It's a strange fact that some people will consider what the Bible says, or what their pastor or Christian friends say, and will still choose to ignore God. They will still choose to believe that God either: does not see their actions, does not care, or will not bring judgment. The Bible clearly and in different ways, shows that God is all knowing, that He does care and that all will eventually answer to Him.

In 1 Kings 21, we read about a man who was murdered for his vineyard. It's a look at a selfish king who abuses his authority to get what he wants. Naboth refuses King Ahab's request for the vineyard because, according to God, the land is his inheritance and should remain in his family. Through a devious plan, Naboth is killed and Ahab acquires the land. Did God know what was happening? Did Ahab get away with murder?

DISCOVERING GOD — 1 KINGS 21:17-26

— 1 —

God was very aware of Ahab's past and present actions. Don't try to hide from God. He will forgive us when we come and confess our sin to Him.

(v. 17-19)

— 2 —

God condemned the wickedness of both Ahab and Jezebel. The LORD will judge everyone's actions and reactions. Come to Jesus Christ today for freedom of God's judgment. (v. 20-24)

— 3 —

People will influence us negatively, if we let them.

We are responsible for our actions and reactions.

Choose wisely!

(v. 25-26)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Let's take ownership of our actions and reactions. It's popular today to leave the responsibility to those in authority over us, but democracies are unique in that the governments are elected to serve us. We are responsible for them.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO KNOW HOW YOU WANT ME TO RESPOND TO ALL PEOPLE.

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