

Bread of Life

Devotional Guide

Luke 4:4 "And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

December 1, 2009

Dear Fellow Saints,

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." December is a month of celebration in honor of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. The world as a whole has lost the true focus of this special month. Unfortunately, activities, parties, and events have become merely social get-togethers without the mention of Christ's birth, the real meaning of the season.

As Christians, it is our duty to tell the world about Jesus. December is the perfect time to remind a lost neighbor, friend, or family member of Christ's birth over two-thousand years ago. I encourage you during this special month to make Christ a priority in your life. Let Him be the center of your conversations, the focus of your Christmas, and the source of your strength and fulfillment through personal devotions. May the Lord give you a blessed Christmas!

Merry Christmas!
Pastor Russ Merrin

This devotional is prepared and distributed as a ministry of:

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 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

“Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Luke 13:23-24

As Jesus traveled around teaching and doing good, people often challenged him with questions. On one occasion, an individual came to Jesus with this question: Will the number of people saved be few or many?

How would our society answer this question? Many would say that surely many if not most will be saved. A God of love would never send anyone to Hell, especially a person who tried to do good.

Notice Jesus’ response, however. He answered the man with a command. Strive to enter in at the narrow gate. In other words, don’t worry about everyone else. First, you need to make sure of your own salvation before God.

Still, Jesus did answer the original question by saying that many would seek to enter but would be unable. Apparently, the number of people saved would be few. Jesus goes on to indicate that there would be many people at the judgment who thought they were saved, but really were not.

Our realization of these facts should challenge us to examine ourselves, whether we are in the faith. How terrible it would be to find ourselves standing before God and hear him say, *“Depart from me; I never knew you.”*

~DJB

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

“2 Thessalonians 2:13 “But we are bound to give _____ always to God for you, brethren _____ of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Multiple Choice: Circle the correct answer.

1. Who said to Job, “Dost thou still retain thine integrity?” (Job 2:9)
A. Satan B. God
C. His wife D. His friend
2. What prophet said to Israel, “How long halt ye between two opinions?” (1 Kings 18:21)
A. Elijah B. Elisha
C. Jonah D. Nehemiah
3. Who said to Saul, “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?” (1 Samuel 15:22)
A. David B. Samuel
C. Jonathan D. The leader of his army

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“The Word of God became flesh. The Son of God became man. The Lord of All became a servant. The Righteous One was made sin. The Eternal One tasted death. The Risen One now lives in men. The Seated One is coming again.” ~Author Unknown

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love.” Ephesians 5:1-2

Take a trip for a moment, back in time, (forty years, twenty years, two years, or two weeks, depending on your age) back to the last time that you played “Follow the Leader.” Do you remember? Old, “what-his-name” from across the street or down the block was the leader, and he had you climbing over rocks and through the neighbour’s garden. When his hands went up, your hands went up. When he crawled, you crawled and, although it was a little awkward, you slashed through that mud puddle right behind him. As a child, it was simple, just do what the leader did. Oh, to be young again...it was so easy to follow, but, alas, we have grown up! For some reason, being a follower is not quite so easy.

The Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 5, exhorts us, in our attitude and thinking, to travel back to our childhood and simply follow God. Just like a child, playing “Follow the Leader,” we are called to follow God and in our following *“walk in love.”*

To be a follower, whether in the child’s game or in our Spiritual life, we must come to grips with three truths. 1. Until you recognize the leader is worthy of following, you will not follow. There were some kids in the neighbourhood that you did not recognize as the leader and you would not follow. Until you admit that God is a worthy leader, you will not follow Him. 2. Choose to follow. Even if you recognize a worthy leader, you must still make the choice to follow. 3. Following implied imitation. Recognize Christ as your leader, make a

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

choice to follow Him and imitate His behaviour. Be ye followers of God, as dear children. ~PO

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

“2 Thessalonians 2:13 “But we are bound to give _____ always to God for you, brethren _____ of the Lord, because God _____ from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blank: Fill in the blank to complete each quote.

1. The rich young ruler asked Jesus, “What _____ thing shall I do, that I may have _____ life?” (Matthew 19:16)
2. Jesus asked the Pharisees, “Can ye not discern the _____ of the times? (Matthew 16:3)
3. The Eunuch asked Philip in regards to accepting Christ, “How can I, except some man should _____ me?” (Acts 8:31)

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“True repentance starts with the recognition of the holiness of our God. We cannot rightly perceive the greatness of his goodness without apprehending the puniness of our own. Such a realization causes us to fall down in humility before God.” ~Bryan Chapell

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Put on the Armor

*“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”
Ephesians 6:11*

In ancient times, a soldier was only as good as the equipment he had. His only source of protection was his armor and his sword. In ancient warfare, there was not the option to carry out attacks from miles away like we can today. It was always up-close, in a large crowd with hand-to-hand combat, and you needed armor that could protect you from every side.

When I read these verses in Ephesians, I immediately thought of two groups people: football players and baseball catchers. In both sports, helmets protect the athletes from blows to the head and limits the possibility of a concussion. Shoulder pads protect their chest and shoulders—a breastplate, so to speak. Then, they have the hip, thigh and knee pads for leg protection, and finally, cleats to get traction and support their feet.

While this equipment provides players with physical protection, we, as Christian “warriors” need other protection as well. Ephesians tells us just as warriors (players) need protection, we Christians need armor to protect us from the outside forces that wish to harm us. ~AP

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

“2 Thessalonians 2:13 “But we are bound to give _____ always to God for you, brethren _____ of the Lord, because God _____ from the beginning _____ you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Short Answer: Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

- 1. Who offered the first excuse ever mentioned in the Bible? What was the excuse? (Genesis 3:12)

- 2. Moses gave three excuses for not wanting to go into Egypt. What were they? (Exodus 3:11; 4:1; 4:10)

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Our ever-changing culture needs the never-changing Christ Who alone can provide both the foundation and direction for Christian faith and practice as the church faces the challenges of a new era.” ~Daniel Akin



Morning: Daniel 1, 2

Evening: 1 John 2

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Sanctified

“And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.” Leviticus 8:30

The word sanctified has always intrigued me. This is the Webster's Dictionary definition: made holy, consecrated; set apart for sacred services. The word sanctified is used 60 times in the Bible.

When I think of the word sanctified, I immediately think of Aaron. Aaron was the son of Amram and Jochebed, and the older brother of Moses and Miriam. He was a Levite; he was appointed by Jehovah to be the interpreter for Moses. He is an example in the Old Testament of someone being set apart.

Now, in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect example of being sanctified. Jesus said, *“And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” John 17:19-21*

Since the word sanctify is used so often in the Bible, I think we would all agree it is important to the LORD. May we each set ourselves apart to be used by the Master for His honor and glory. ~KAT

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

“2 Thessalonians 2:13 “But we are bound to give _____ always to God for you, brethren _____ of the Lord, because God _____ from the beginning _____ you to _____ through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Multiple Choice: Circle the correct answer.

- Who was commanded to go hide himself by the brook Cherith? (1 Kings 17:1-7)
 - A. David
 - B. Gideon
 - C. Samuel
 - D. Elijah
- Who was ordered in a vision to minister to Saul? (Acts 9:1-16)
 - A. Ananias
 - B. Cornelius
 - C. Paul
 - D. John

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

In Christ we have:

- A love that can never be fathomed
- A life that can never die
- A righteousness that can never be tarnished
- A peace that can never be understood
- A rest that can never be disturbed
- A joy that can never be diminished
- A hope that can never be disappointed
- A glory that can never be clouded
- A light that can never be darkened
- A purity that can never be defiled
- A beauty that can never be marred
- A wisdom that can never be baffled
- Resources that can never be exhausted.

~Author Unknown



Morning: Daniel 3, 4

Evening: 1 John 3

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

The Breath of All Mankind

“Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.” Job 12:9-10

Breath, as defined by Dictionary.com, is, “Respiration, especially as necessary to life.” Very simply, in order to breathe, one must have breath. Here in Job 12:9, Job acknowledges that the Lord Jehovah has in His hand the breath of all mankind. God is the source of life. But, not only is He the source of human life, but He also has in His hand the soul of every living thing! The physical and the spiritual life of every living thing is in the Lord’s control. How foolish for us, as God’s children, to try to take problems into our own hands! Since God created mankind, He knows exactly how we operate and what we need.

First, He knows our physical needs. He knows what we need in order to survive, and He has promised to provide for each of our needs. *“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:19)

Secondly, God knows what we need spiritually that is why He sent His only Son as a sacrifice, to provide a way for mankind to go to heaven. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16) Not only did He take care of our eternal spiritual needs, but He takes care of us day by day spiritually. *“That he would grant you, according to the riches of*

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” (Ephesians 3:16)

We can rest assure that our physical and spiritual needs our met by our loving Creator!
~MFV

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

“2 Thessalonians 2:13 “But we are bound to give _____ always to God for you, brethren _____ of the Lord, because God _____ from the beginning _____ you to _____ through sanctification of the Spirit and _____ of the truth.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Multiple Choice: Circle the correct answer.

1. What physical ailment did the Lord strike the Philistines with after they captured the ark of God? (1 Samuel 5)

A. Leprosy	B. Blindness
C. Emerods	D. Uncontrollable (tumors) bleeding
2. Peter healed Aeneas from what physical problem? (Acts 9:33)

A. Leprosy	B. Palsy
C. Deafness	D. Sores

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me.” ~Robert Murray



Angels Proclaim: Christ is Coming

By David L. Westmeyer

***“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”
Luke 2:10***

As we get our hearts and minds ready for this Christmas season let us take a moment to remember the first words from the angels regarding the Savior’s arrival. Fear not! As the angels worked to prepare people for Christ’s coming, they greeted Mary, Joseph, and now the shepherds with a the phrase, “Fear not.” If you think about it, most of our fears are connected with problems that were created through Satan’s works. Now Christ is going to begin His work to undo and defeat Satan’s kingdom.

The first part of the angels’ message was

to resist fear. The second part of the message was to embrace joy. The message of good tidings and great joy was that the Savior, Christ the Lord was born. The Savior, Who was first prophesied about and promised when Adam and Eve brought sin into the world, had now come. That was the good news that the angels shared. The result of which should be great joy. If we are not careful, the Christmas season can become busy, tiring, and stressful. God intended it to be a time of great joy.

Finally, the message was intended for all people to enjoy. When the shepherds heard the good news, the first thing they did was to go and worship the new born Messiah. The second thing that that they did was to tell everyone. This Christmas be sure to embrace the joy of the Savior. Then, share that joy with others.♦

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 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

“Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.” Luke 15:1-5

Far too often we liken the lost sheep to the Christian who has drifted away, but this is not so, Jesus calls “lost people” “lost sheep.” (Matt.15:24) He likens lost people to lost sheep in Isaiah 53:6.

There was much more concern for the one who had gone astray than for the ninety and nine, even though they were in the wilderness. Notice the word “go” in Luke 15:5. He did not “invite” the lost sheep home, he went to “get” him; he “sought” him. This is a picture of personal soul winning. We are not only to invite sinners to come to our church and come to Christ; we are to go seek them and bring them to Christ. Notice how long he sought. *“Until he finds it.”* He continued seeking; he did not give up.

There is nothing as near to the heart of God as reaching unsaved people. This is why the church should continually seek the unsaved. The more we reach the lost, the more we will have all kinds of people coming to church. They may not be the kind of people who will keep the building clean or behave mannerly. The atmosphere may be a little uneasy, but

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

converting sinners is the goal! Remember, Jesus was interested in Mary Magdalene who was possessed of seven devils, a wicked Zacehaeus who was hated by all, and the thief on the cross. May we do likewise! ~OV

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

Luke 21:8 “And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False: Put a *T* in the blank if the statement is true and an *F* in the blank if the statement is false.

- ___ 1. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by God. (Gen. 19)
- ___ 2. Abraham entered into a pact with the king of Sodom. (Gen. 14:21-24)
- ___ 3. Abraham’s brothers were named Lot and Nahor. (Gen. 11:27)
- ___ 4. God changed Abram’s name to Abraham. (Gen. 17:5)

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“To be in Christ is the source of the Christian’s life; to be like Christ is the sum of His excellence; to be with Christ is the fullness of His joy.” ~Charles Hodge



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” Philippians 3:8

Whether you realize it or not, your priorities order your life. Some people prioritize money or success or family or power. Other people prioritize pleasure or possessions or relationships. These priorities may be conscious or subconscious. If you are not sure what your priorities are, the best way to find out is to examine how you spend your time and money. People invest in what they think is important.

God’s Word teaches us that we need to reorder our priorities. What was the Apostle Paul’s number one priority? You might think it was winning the lost or starting churches or teaching God’s Word. According to Philippians 3:8, however, we find that Paul’s greatest priority was simply to know Jesus.

Knowing Jesus more and more should be our highest priority as well. If we put our relationship with Jesus first, all our other priorities will fall into line. With Jesus first, we treat our families right. With Jesus first, we give an honest day’s work to our employer. With Jesus first, we put money and pleasure and possessions in their proper place. Jesus helps us to focus on what really matters and live our lives with the right priorities. From now on, would you make knowing Jesus your highest priority?

~DJB

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

Luke 21:8 “And he said, Take _____ that ye be not _____: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False: Put a *T* in the blank if the statement is true and an *F* in the blank if the statement is false.

- _____ 1. God commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous. (Joshua 1:9)
- _____ 2. Joshua and the Israelites circled Jericho 13 times. (Josh. 6:3-4)
- _____ 3. Joshua lived for 110 years. (Joshua 24:29)
- _____ 4. Joshua said, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 24:15

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity—hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory—because at the Father’s will Jesus became poor, and was born in a stable so that thirty years later He might hang on a cross.” ~J.I. Packer

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

*“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.”
Ephesians 5:3-4*

The word “saint,” used in Ephesians 5:3, is not a reference to “a person of elevated status due to excessive levels of holiness,” but rather, to, as verses 1-2 encourage, “one who follows God.” When describing a “saint” or follower of God, it would be highly unusual to use the terms, “fornicator,” “unclean,” “covetous,” “filthy,” or “foolish talker.” By attaching such words to the character of an individual, one will have greatly marred his “sainthood.” (No doubt, after reading the last two statements, a thought like, “Uh...yeah,” or “Ya think?” may have crossed your mind.) No one in their right mind, who is a fornicator could, simultaneously carry the title “saint.”

This is precisely what the Apostle Paul is saying. In a paraphrased statement, he says, “No one in their right mind would think that you are a follower of Christ if you are known for these ungodly actions, so...don’t do them!” But notice that the Apostle Paul does not make a long list of what to do and how to act which are contrary to such wicked behaviour. He simply says, *“but rather giving of thanks.”*

Paul connects the listed sins to an ungrateful heart. If we were thankful for the place God has us in our relationships, we would not be a fornicator. If we were thankful for the place God has us in our finances, we would not be covetous. If we were thankful for the place

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

God has us physically or mentally, we would not participate in foolish talking or jesting. So, be a “saint” and give God thanks for your life. ~PO

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

Luke 21:8 “And he said, Take _____ that ye be not _____: for _____ shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Matching: Match the person in Column 1 with the event in Column 2.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| _____ 1. Gideon | A. Was called to interpret dreams Daniel 2:19-23 |
| _____ 2. Daniel | B. Was called to replace Eli as high priest of Israel. 1 Samuel 3 |
| _____ 3. Samuel | C. Was called to defeat the Midianites. Judges 6:11-16 |

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“A believer may pass through much affliction, and yet secure very little blessing from it all. Abiding in Christ is the secret of securing all that the Father meant the chastisement to bring us.” ~Andrew Murray



Morning: Hosea

Evening: Jude

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

“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.” Proverbs 3:5-6

There’s a scene in the Disney movie, *Aladdin*, in which Jasmine is out on the balcony of her palace, and Aladdin is on his magic carpet, trying to get her to come with him and explore “A Whole New World.” The key line in the scene is when Aladdin says to Jasmine, “Do you trust me?” Jasmine agrees to trust Aladdin and is taken on the ride of her life!

That same type of trust is required from us as Christians when we decide to follow God. With God, belief alone is not enough; we must trust Him with our lives. Just believing in God is no good to us. We need to have faith in Him, and trust is the next step from faith.

We understand trust, right? As athletes, we trust our coaches to tell us what we need to know in order to compete. As Christians, then, we take that concept to a bigger scale, trusting God with our whole lives. We cannot pick and choose aspects of our lives in which to trust Him. It is the same for us in church ministry. We must trust God with our Sunday school class, services, visitors, tithes, and everything else involved in our ministry and in our lives in general. At times, we think we know better than God, but our own understanding is weak. If we rely on our own understanding, our lives will end in ruin. ~AP

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

Luke 21:8 “And he said, Take _____ that ye be not _____: for _____ shall come in my _____, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blank: Fill in the blank to complete each sentence.

1. The Book of Matthew presents Jesus as a _____ in Matthew 2:2.
2. The Book of Mark presents Jesus as a _____ in Mark 9:35.
3. The Book of Luke presents Jesus as the _____ in Luke 8:28
4. The Book of John presents Jesus as the _____ in John 3:13.
5. The Book of Revelation states that John was exiled to the isle of _____. Revelation 1:9
6. The Book of 1 John tells us, “If we confess our sins, He is _____ and _____ to _____ us our sins.” 1 John 1:9

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“I do not know when I am more perfectly happy than when I am weeping for sin at the foot of the cross.” ~C.H. Spurgeon



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Forsake the Foolish and Live

“Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.” Proverbs 9:6

I remember many times as a boy and as a teenager that this verse would have been a great source of encouragement. On several occasions I did not avoid foolishness, and as a result, I ended up getting hurt or hurting someone’s feelings unnecessarily. God is clearly giving us a standard to live by. Those who choose not to heed this command may very well end up in jail, on drugs, or dead.

Avoiding people that are foolish can also be in our best interest. At some point, we have all had that one friend who is continually trying to get us to do things that we know will only lead to trouble. Perhaps, it is a relationship that needs to be terminated. It is not wise for the believer to have, as their closest friends, those that would be contrary to the cause of Christ. They have said in their heart, “No God for me,” and the Bible calls them a fool for saying so. We should befriend them in hope of leading them to Christ but should cease engaging in the activities in which they are involved that would not please our Savior.

After we have made a choice to avoid foolishness, we need to seek out the wisdom of God’s Word and place ourselves on His chosen path for our lives. ~DJD

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

Luke 21:8 “And he said, Take _____ that ye be not _____: for _____ shall come in my _____, saying, I am Christ; and the time _____ near: go ye not therefore after them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill In: Fill in the number that completes the question.

1. How many shekels was Joseph sold to the Ishmaelites? Genesis 37:28 _____
2. How many donkeys (she asses) did Job own? Job 1:3 _____
3. How many shekels did Benjamin receive from Joseph? Genesis 45:22 _____
4. How many years did it take to build the Jerusalem temple? John 2 _____
5. How many disciples did Jesus send ahead in Luke 10? _____
6. How many days did it rain upon the earth during the great flood? _____ Genesis 7:17

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“When a man’s mouth is thus opened, God’s ears are never closed. When the penitent is talking the Savior is listening.”

~W. Graham Scroggie

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Refusing Profitable Advice!

“Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” 1 Kings 12:28

In many respects, Ahijah was Jeroboam’s pastor, and Jeroboam refused his advice. He had advised him and counseled with him, and as long as Jeroboam accepted the advice, he did well. But, he decided to turn his back upon his pastor’s advice, and in so doing, he became a failure. He was guilty of wrong worship, by setting up the golden calf in Bethel and Dan. (1 Kings 12:26-30).

You see, when a person leaves the true prophet of God, he almost always chooses a substitute. Jeroboam started his own religion by instructing the people to worship the image of the calf. He established heathen places of worship and started an idolatrous form of worship.

When people go against the will of God and refuse their prophet (pastor) or religious leader’s advice, they need something to salve their conscience. A false religion is an example of this. When a person refuses to obey the commandments of the Bible, he does not want to think he is a heathen. Therefore, he makes his own rules and regulations. He comes up with his own ideas about God; and in so doing, he becomes an idolater. Jeroboam led Israel into idolatrous worship. ~OV

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

Luke 21:8 “And he said, Take _____ that ye be not _____: for _____ shall come in my _____, saying, I am Christ; and the time _____ near: go ye _____ therefore after them.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False: Put a *T* in the blank if the statement is true and an *F* in the blank if the statement is false.

- _____ 1. The Gospel of Matthew was written by Matthew.
- _____ 2. Matthew contains 28 chapters.
- _____ 3. Prophecy was fulfilled in Matthew 2:15, 2:17-18, 2:23, and 3:3.
- _____ 4. Jesus gives the first and second greatest commandments in Matthew 22.
- _____ 5. Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 8.

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

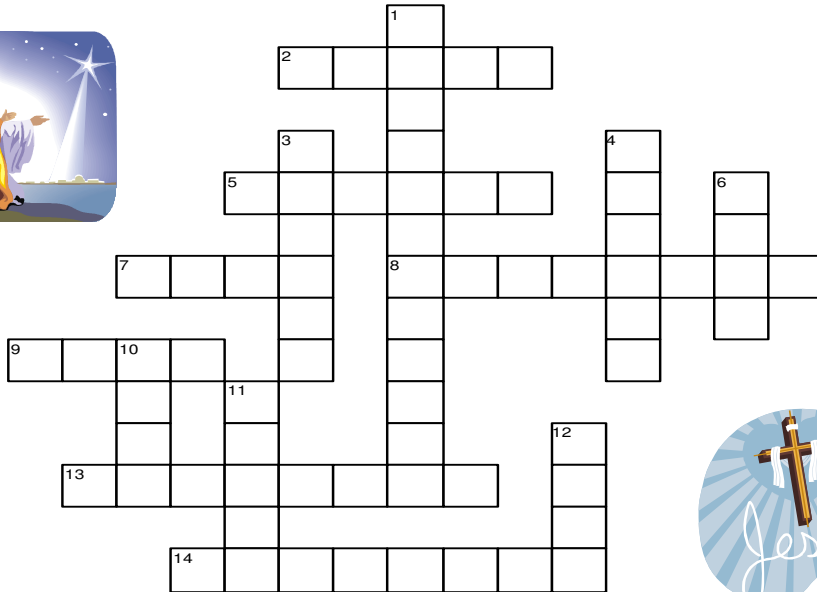
You call Me master, and obey Me not;
 You call Me light, and see Me not;
 You call Me the way, and walk with Me not;
 You call Me life, and live Me not;
 You call Me wise, and follow Me not;
 You call Me fair, and love Me not;
 You call Me rich, and ask Me not;
 You call Me eternal, and seek Me not.
 If I condemn thee, blame Me not.

~Author Unknown



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- 2 The third gift given to Jesus by the wise men. Matt. 2:11
- 5 Soldiers bowed the knee before Jesus, and _____ Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews." Matt. 27:29
- 7 An angel appeared to Joseph and told him to take Jesus and Mary and _____ to Egypt. Matt. 2:13
- 8 He shall be called a _____. Matt. 2:23
- 9 _____ men came from the east to worship Him. Matt. 2:1-2
- 13 When the king heard of Jesus' birth he was _____. Matt. 2:3
- 14 When the wise men saw the star, they _____ with exceeding great joy. Matt. 2:10

DOWN

- 1 The second gift brought by the wise men to Jesus in Matt. 2:11
- 3 _____ called His name JESUS. Matt. 1:25
- 4 Herod sent the wise men to diligently _____ for the child. Matt. 2:8
- 6 When Jesus was to be crucified, He was declared by accusation to be the _____ of the Jews. Matt. 27:29
- 10 When the wise men departed lo, the _____ went before them. Matt. 2:9
- 11 When the wise men arrived they went into the _____, where they saw the young child with his mother. Matt. 2:11
- 12 One of the three gifts brought to Jesus in Matt. 2:11

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9:8

What a great verse! My God is able. As I studied this verse, I noticed two words that jumped out at me. The first was abound, and the second was the various form of all. The first ‘abound’ refers to what we have from God. The second refers to what we do for God. God has given us abundant grace, that we might experience abundant success. We can accomplish all that God has for us to do if we tap His abundant resources. If you are not abounding in every good work, it is likely that you are not relying on His abundant grace.

Now let’s consider the different forms of the term ‘all’ used in this verse. To begin with God has **all grace** to meet our needs. He has all the grace we need for salvation, all the grace we need for service, and all the grace we need to face any trial.

Always - There is not a time when God’s grace can not meet our needs. He has always been, and He will always be. He always can meet our needs.

All sufficiency - There is never a need where God does not have enough grace to enable us to abound through it.

All things - There is not a circumstance where we do not have all we need through His grace. God has all grace, all the time, for all we need, in every situation. ~DLW

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 4:42 “And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Matching: Match the person in Column 1 with the event in Column 2.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Rich Young Ruler | A. A deacon and evangelist Acts 6:5-15 |
| _____ 2. Stephen | B. Took the place of Judas as an apostle Acts 1:23-26 |
| _____ 3. Mathias | C. Was a Sanhedrin before he met Jesus on the road to Damascus Acts 9:2-6 |
| _____ 4. Saul | D. Asked to sell his goods and follow Christ Matt. 19:16-22 |

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“The soul's deepest thirst is for God Himself, who has made us so that we can never be satisfied without Him.” ~F.F. Bruce

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

Vision Check

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” Ephesians 4:17-18

After nearly two years, I finally went to see an optometrist for an eye exam. When I put the new contact lenses in my eyes, I was amazed to discover everything coming into sharp focus and incredible detail. Suddenly, the world was a brighter, richer place. Up until the time I put the new lenses in my eyes, I did not realize what I was missing. The deterioration of my vision was so subtle over time that I wasn't aware of the blur and distortion I was ignorantly enduring.

How valuable clear vision is and how easy it is to become accustomed to poor vision. It is easy to let our sight of God grow dim as well. The tasks of daily living can easily crowd out the time with God that is so critical to clear vision. Our fervor for Him can gradually fade over time until one day we wake up and wonder, “Where is God?” when in reality we have moved away from him.

The above verses in Ephesians contain a plea to avoid the spiritual blindness of the unbeliever. The remedy is found a few verses later. *Ephesians 4:23b*, “**Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.**” Our spiritual vision correction should occur on a daily basis as we renew our minds with God’s Word and talk to Him in prayer. ~AJD

John 4:42 “And said unto the woman, Now we _____, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blank: Fill in the blank to complete the Bible verse or phrase.

1. John 17:17 “Thy Word is _____.”
2. John 15:5 “For without Me ye can do _____.”
3. John 21:17 “Peter, _____ thou Me?”
4. Mark 3:14 “And He ordained _____, that they should be with Him.”
5. Mark 3:17 “James and John, sons of Zebedee, Jesus surnamed _____ which is the Sons of Thunder.”
6. Mark 8:35 “For whosoever will save his life shall _____ it.”
7. Acts 8:4 “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where _____ the word.”

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Christmas is based on an exchange of gifts, the gift of God to man—His unspeakable gift of His Son, and the gift of man to God—when we present our bodies a living sacrifice.”

~Vance Havner



Morning: Amos 1-3

Evening: Revelation 5

 THE WORD FOR TODAY: 

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”

2 Timothy 4:7

Fight the fight—you will never have victory in the battle if you never get in the fight. This will require becoming familiar with your weapons. Just as David prepared to fight Goliath, he tested his armor. You need to know the Word of God (your sword) and be able to use it to cut away the lies of the world. Your faith will need to be prepared to take some hits to proving its strength. Be reminded that salvation covers your head and is based upon God’s promise not feelings. The truth of God holds everything else together so make sure you rely on it. Finally, get your feet ready to share the good news and your knees ready to fight in prayer. Do these to fight the good fight!

Finish the course—you have now entered the battle, and the race has begun. The key here is to finish the race. Some runners are at the front of the pack and others at the back. Christ has placed you where you are, and He expects you to run the race ahead, doing the best you can with the gifts and abilities that He has given. Endurance is the key which may mean you will have to run through the pain and occasionally walk until your strength returns, never quitting but moving forward until you cross the finish line.

Keep the faith—this requires nothing more than remembering in Whom you have placed your trust. It is not in some good works from your past or the faithfulness of others but in the very Creator of the universe. He stooped to call you His own and has a plan to use your life for

 THE WORD FOR TODAY: 

His glory and your reward. Place your faith squarely in Him knowing that even when you do not understand He is in control. ~DJJ

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN: 

John 4:42 “And said unto the woman, Now we _____, not because of _____ saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

 BIBLE QUIZ 

Multiple Choice: Choose and circle the correct answer.

1. Who is the only Egyptian queen mentioned in the Bible? 1 Kings 11:19
A. Zeresh B. Tahpenes
C. Jezebel D. Sheba
2. Who planted the first garden?
Genesis 2:8
A. Adam B. Cain
C. God D. Abel
3. Who confessed the building of a golden calf? Exodus 32:31
A. Moses B. Joshua
C. Aaron D. Elijah

 QUOTE OF THE DAY: 

“An avoidable absence from church is an infallible evidence of spiritual decay.”

~Frances Ridley Havergal



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Be not ye therefore partakers with them. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”
Ephesians 5:7, 11

In 1982, when asked by a young school girl from California what she should do if someone offered her drugs, Nancy Reagan, (wife of President Ronald Reagan) responded, “Just say no.” From that simple response, a movement was born to help keep children from experimenting with drugs. Organizations and clubs began popping up all over the country in an effort to curb the drug use that was so prevalent in the 60’s and 70’s. Mrs. Reagan’s movement spurred many young people to avoid and even condemn drug use.

Long before the 1980’s and Nancy Reagan, the Apostle Paul had a similar message to the church in Ephesus. After reminding the saints that ungodly actions did not become them, he, with different words, told the believers to “Just say no” to ungodly practices. In verse seven, he wrote, ***“Be not ye partakers with them.”*** Very simply, “Don’t get involved.” Again in verse 11, he wrote, ***“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.”*** Again very simply, “Just say no...don’t do it.”

However, the Apostle Paul takes the “Just say no” idea to another level. Not only does he encourage the saints to say no, he also encourages them to “reprove” the works of darkness. In other words, just say no yourself and tell others how bad not saying no is.” So, how are you doing? It is hard to say no to sin. When you are in the midst of a struggle, remember, there are others who are saying “NO” as well. You can say “NO” too. ~PO

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 4:42 “And said unto the woman, Now we _____, not because of _____ saying: for we have _____ him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Short Answer: Fill in the answer by looking up these verses and give the “I AM” that is referred to Jesus as:

1. Matthew 22:32 _____
2. Matthew 27:43 _____
3. John 6:35 _____
4. John 8:12 _____
5. John 10:9 _____

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Being disconnected from the local church, for whatever reason, is a dangerous way to live. Not only do these ‘lone rangers’ miss out on the blessings of functioning within the context of the body of Christ, but like lone sheep away from the safety of the flock and the watchful care of the shepherd, they are vulnerable to predators of every sort.”

~Nancy Leigh DeMoss



Morning: Amos 7-9

Evening: Revelation 7

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”
Matthew 6:14-15

Any athlete who competes long enough will experience an injury. Some injuries sideline them for a day or two, some a week, some a year, and some are career-ending. But every one of them is difficult to deal with and must be treated. Some even go so far as requiring surgery.

Just as physical injuries require treatment, so do emotional injuries. Crutches, bandages, and ice packs will not heal these emotional injuries. Sometimes, the only solution to these is the surgery of forgiveness. Forgiveness is not approving or excusing what someone did, and it is not necessarily reconciling with the person who caused the injury. It is not pretending you are not hurt, and it is not forgetting what happened. For example, if you have surgery on your physical body, you have a scar to remind you of what took place.

Emotional scars exist as well, even after the surgery of forgiveness. Over time, the scar's prominence fades, but if the scar is bumped, the pain returns. For that reason, we can also understand that forgiveness is not a one-time thing. You may have to forgive a person over and over again until you feel relief. ~AP

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 4:42 “And said unto the woman, Now we _____, not because of _____ saying: for we have _____ him ourselves, and _____ that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False: Put a *T* in the blank if the statement is true and an *F* in the blank if the statement is false.

- ____ 1. Jesus was circumcised on the eight day of his life? Luke 2:21
- ____ 2. Micah foretold that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem? Micah 5:2
- ____ 3. Mary, mother of Jesus, did not remain a virgin for the rest of her life? Mark 6:3, Matt. 13:55-56
- ____ 4. Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem to visit family after Jesus' birth. Luke 2:4-5
- ____ 5. The angels told the shepherds that they should worship the baby Jesus? Luke 2:15, 20

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“On the most elementary level, you do not have to go to church to be a Christian. You do not have to go home to be married either. But in both cases if you do not, you will have a very poor relationship.” ~Kent Hughes

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Rahab

“And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.” Joshua 6:25

Rahab is mentioned in the Bible 10 times. She is mostly known for helping the spies Joshua sent to check out the land. She was a prostitute in Jericho, surely the society rejected her for her profession.

She betrayed her own people. Why? She decided to be on God's side instead of the world's side; She decided to act on faith. It is evident that she knew about God and the coming Messiah. The Bible says in Hebrews 11:31, *“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.”*

What if our faith shone as bright as Rahab's did? She was an outcast, a prostitute, rejected by society, yet she trusted that the Lord would not reject her. James 2:25 says. *“Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?”* Oh that our works would be as great as Rahab's, that we would want to save our entire families as she did!

I challenge you today to think more about others than yourself. Get out there, and let your light so shine! ~KAT

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 4:42 “And said unto the woman, Now we _____, not because of _____ saying: for we have _____ him ourselves, and _____ that this is _____ the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill In: Fill in the number that answers the question.

- _____ 1. How many of David's servants were missing after fighting Abner? 2 Samuel 2:30
- _____ 2. How many times was Peter willing to forgive? Luke 17:4
- _____ 3. How many virgins went out to meet the bridegroom? Matthew 25:1
- _____ 4. With the Lord, how many years are like a day? 2 Peter 3:8
- _____ 5. How many baskets of fragments of food were gathered up after the feeding of the multitude? John 6:13

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The way to preserve the peace of the church is to preserve the purity of it.”

~Matthew Henry



Morning: Jonah

Evening: Revelation 9

 THE WORD FOR TODAY: 

A Contrast of Faith

“Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.” Matthew 9:22

In Matthew 9:18-26, there is a stark contrast of faith. A ruler had a sick daughter, and he came to ask Jesus to heal her. His faith is evident, ***“My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.*** On the way to heal the man’s daughter, Jesus was stopped by a woman who had a blood disease for twelve years. Her faith shines in her statement, ***“If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.”*** She was so certain of Jesus’ healing powers. Jesus said to her, ***“Thy faith hath made thee whole.”***

We have seen two wonderful examples of undeniable faith. Now, in verses 23-24, we see the contrast. ***“And when Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.”*** The mourners planted themselves at the ruler’s house. When Jesus instructed them to stop all the hoopla because the girl was alive, they laughed. There was no hope or faith in the eyes of the onlookers. Despite their lack of faith, Jesus did heal the girl (vs. 25).

What character in these miracles would characterize you? Are you like the woman with the blood disease, or are you hopeless like one of the mourners? Hebrews 11:1 says, ***“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*** Are you desper-

 THE WORD FOR TODAY: 

ate for a miracle? Find your hope and faith in God. ***“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.” Psalm 42:5***

~MFV

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN: 

John 4:42 ***“And said unto the woman, Now we _____, not because of _____ saying: for we have _____ him ourselves, and _____ that this is _____ the Christ, the Saviour of the _____.”***

 BIBLE QUIZ 

Multiple Choice: Choose and circle the correct answer.

1. Where was Christ when the wise men came to visit Him? Matt. 2:11
A. In a house B. In the temple
C. In a stable D. In a manger
2. Which of the Gospels speak of the events surrounding Christ’s birth.
A. Mark and John
B. Luke only
C. Matthew and Luke
D. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

 QUOTE OF THE DAY: 

“Evangelism is the perpetual task of the whole church, and not the peculiar hobby of certain of its members.” ~E. Wilson Carlisle



 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

“And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.” Luke 24:13-15

The apostles are in the upper room, Jesus comes to see them. First, He must prove Himself. He begins with the old commonplace greeting, heard on the street, in the marketplace, and in the countryside, *“Peace unto you.”* Then, He gives the following three proofs that He is the risen Christ. First, He stands among them with the door closed. Secondly, in order to demonstrate the activity of His resurrection, He shows them His hands and His feet. Thirdly, He asks for something to eat to prove that He is not a spirit.

Then, in Luke 24:35, the Bible says He “opened” their minds (understanding). This is very interesting, for during the afternoon, He had “opened” the Scriptures. The word “opened” is the same in both places. It means “to disentangle and to bring into true and right relationship.” When a person is in the Lord’s house with God’s people and Christ is in their presence, and the Word of God is being discussed, the mind is opened. The Word is opened; the will of God is opened; then and only then, our lives are disentangled, and we enter into a true and right relationship.

What a way to spend the first Sunday after the resurrection! What a way to spend any Sunday, fellowshiping with the risen Christ,

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

having our faith strengthened, and finding ourselves in the house of God. ~OV

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 11:26-27 “And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Short Answer: Fill in the blank with the correct answer.

1. “There was a man sent from God, whose name was _____. “ John 1:6
2. To whom did John the Baptist refer to when he said “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world?” John 1:29 _____
3. After Jesus fed the 5,000, what did the people want to do with Him? John 6:15 _____
4. Near what market was the Pool of Bethesda? John 5:2 _____

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“Sin in the church, left unaddressed, hurts our evangelism, leaves the proud unchecked, confuses young believers, hardens the unrepentant, and, worst of all, brings shame on the name of Christ.” ~Matt Schmucker



Morning: Micah 4, 5

Evening: Revelation 11

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Pickle

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”

1 John 4:20-21

Motioning to her neat rows of newly canned and sealed dill pickles, my sister uttered an unintelligible sound of dismay.

“What’s wrong?” I inquired.

“I forgot to put in the dill.”

“What?” I asked densely.

“I forgot to put the dill in the dill pickles,” she said, “I was so excited about all the extra spices I was adding—ones I didn’t even need—that I forgot about the dill.”

I couldn’t help but smile at the carefully canned jars of dill-less pickles. Her distressing situation was humorous, and fortunately for my sake, she eventually saw the comical aspect of her pickles as well.

We often run our lives the way my sister filled her pickle jars. We pack our days full of extras and forget the most important thing. One of the habits of highly effective people, according to Steven Covey, is to “Put first things first.” Would our lives look different if we followed this simple principle? Numerous times in Scripture God says that to love Him we must love our brother. Maybe that is because the world often evaluates a believer’s authenticity by his love for other Christians.

When we evaluate our ministry involve-

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

ment, giving, church attendance, and witnessing, we may think we are loving God; but if we are not loving our brother, we are missing the main thing. If our love for God is shown by our love toward our least favorite fellow Christian, then how are we doing loving God today? ~AJD

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 11:26-27 “And whosoever _____ and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill In: Fill in the blank space to complete the verse.

1. “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be _____ again.” John 3:7
2. “In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to _____ a place for you.” John 14:2

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The church is not a democracy in which we have chosen God, but a theocracy in which He has chosen us. The church is the only society in the world that never loses any of its members, even by death. The church upon its knees would bring heaven upon the earth.”
~E.M. Bounds



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.” 2 Corinthians 5:15

Have you ever felt a debt of gratitude to someone? Maybe your car broke down on the side of the road and a stranger stopped to help you. Maybe you were short on your rent money and a friend helped you get by, expecting no repayment. How did you feel toward that person? If you’re like me, you wished there was some way you could show your appreciation. The words “thank you” just did not seem strong enough.

Now think about what Jesus did for your you. He died for you. What an amazing thought! No one forced him to go to the cross. He went of His own free will and paid the price for your sins. He gave His life for you. He made it possible for you to be forgiven and receive eternal life.

Do you feel gratitude today toward Jesus for what He did? There is simply no way we could ever repay Jesus for His sacrifice. It is impossible for us to completely show our appreciation.

Yet the Apostle Paul teaches that there is something we can do to show our gratitude. Jesus died for us; now we should live for Him. That means that we should put Him first in our lives. We should seek to know and obey His will. We should strive to fulfill His purpose for our lives on this earth. In that small way, we can show our thanks to Him for what He did.

~DJB

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 11:26-27 “And whosoever _____ and _____ in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Matching: Match the person with the statement attributed to him.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1. Thomas | A. “Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us.” John 14:8 |
| 2. Cain | B. “The poor always ye have with you.” John 12:7-8 |
| 3. Jesus | C. “Lord, we know not whither thou goest.” John 14:5 |
| 4. Philip | D. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Genesis 4:9 |

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“We are too busy to pray, and so we are too busy to have power. We have a great deal of activity, but we accomplish little; many services, but few conversions; much machinery, but few results.” ~R.A. Torrey



Morning: Nahum

Evening: Revelation 13

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” Ephesians 5:15-17

If you were to go hiking in the mountains and had to walk next to the edge, how would you walk? Without a doubt, you would walk **VERY CAREFULLY**.

If you only had so much time to spend with a dying relative, how would you spend it? Without a doubt, you would spend it **VERY WISELY**.

If you had to make a major decision that would effect the outcome of your life, how would you make it? Without a doubt, you would make it **VERY INTELLIGENTLY**.

The Apostle Paul gave three quick instructions to all believers. 1. Walk circumspectly. (Aka: Walk very carefully.) 2. Redeeming the time. (Aka: Use your time wisely.) 3. Be ye not unwise. (Aka: Live your life intelligently.) Because you are human, your chances of falling into sin are great. Walk carefully. Because the days are evil, use your time wisely. The decisions that you make in regards to sin, can make or break your testimony. “Don’t be stupid, but very tenaciously, give your mind to walking in a wise way.”

In verse 17, Paul reminds us to understand what the will of the Lord is. If Scripture tells us to do something, that means it is possible. So, do your part: Walk carefully, use your time wisely, and live intelligently as you seek to understand the will of the Lord. ~PO

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 11:26-27 “And whosoever _____ and _____ in me shall _____ die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False: Put a *T* in the blank if the statement is true and an *F* in the blank if the statement is false.

- ___ 1. The angel said “Peace on earth to all men.” Luke 2:14
- ___ 2. The wise men were present at the birth site of Jesus. Matt. 2:16
- ___ 3. We are told that the angels sang at the announcement of Jesus’ birth. Luke 2:13
- ___ 4. The Bible tells us that three kings riding on camels visited Jesus. Matt. 2:1-23
- ___ 5. Mary gave birth on the night that she arrived in Bethlehem. Luke 2:6
- ___ 6. The star led the wise men straight to Jesus. Matt 2:2, 9

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer.” ~A.T. Pierson



 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”
2 Timothy 4:7

Fight the fight—you will never have victory in the battle if you never get in the fight. This will require becoming familiar with your weapons. Just as David prepared to fight Goliath, he tested his armor. You need to know the Word of God (your sword) and be able to use it to cut away the lies of the world. Your faith will need to be prepared to take some hits to proving its strength. Be reminded that salvation covers your head and is based upon God’s promise not feelings. The truth of God holds everything else together so make sure you rely on it. Finally, get your feet ready to share the good news and your knees ready to fight in prayer. Do these to fight the good fight!

Finish the course—you have now entered the battle, and the race has begun. The key here is to finish the race. Some runners are at the front of the pack and others at the back. Christ has placed you where you are, and He expects you to run the race ahead, doing the best you can with the gifts and abilities that He has given. Endurance is the key which may mean you will have to run through the pain and occasionally walk until your strength returns, never quitting but moving forward until you cross finish line.

Keep the faith—this requires nothing more than remembering in Whom you have placed your trust. It is not in some good works from your past or the faithfulness of others but in the very Creator of the universe. He stooped to call you His own and has a plan to use your life for

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

His glory and your reward. Place your faith squarely in Him knowing that even when you don’t understand He is in control. ~DJD

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 11:26-27 “And whosoever _____ and _____ in me shall _____ die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I _____ that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False: Put a *T* in the blank if the statement is true and an *F* in the blank if the statement is false.

- ___ 1. Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Matt. 26:36
- ___ 2. Jesus said He was the vine and we are the branches. John 15:5
- ___ 3. The value of the ointment which Mary used on Jesus was worth 500 pence. John 12:5

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“The summary of the Gospel is that our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, has revealed the will of His heavenly Father to us, and with His innocence has redeemed us from death, and has reconciled us with God. Therefore, Christ is the only way to salvation for all those who have been, are, and will be.”
~Ulrich Zwingli



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Christmas Traditions

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” Luke 2:10

I love Christmas! I love the crowded malls with consumers hustling about trying to find that perfect gift. I love Christmas food! Growing up in a pastor’s home, I was blessed to sample all kinds of tasty treats from our congregation during the holiday season. I love Christmas music! The sweet, blessed carols and the fun Christmas songs are so uplifting driving on snow covered roads or echoing through the house on a cold winter day.

Every household has their own Christmas traditions. In our household, we go to a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Afterward, we have some yummy food and open one present. On Christmas morning, we like to read the Christmas story from Luke 2. We have a wonderful breakfast, and then, we open gifts from one another. Also, we try to pray as a family for the people that sent us Christmas cards during the season. This year, since I am newly married, I am looking forward to starting some new traditions.

The news of Christ’s birth was filled with joy for all mankind. When the shepherds heard the news of the baby Jesus, it was time to celebrate! Jesus’ birth is worth celebrating and rejoicing, every day of every year. It brought hope for every man, woman, and child. It provided a way for mankind to live eternally with God.

Whatever your Christmas traditions, make sure that Christ is the center of all your activ-

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

ity. His birth gives us a reason to celebrate for all of eternity! ~MFV

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 11:26-27 “And whosoever _____ and _____ in me shall _____ die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I _____ that thou art the _____, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill in the Blank: Fill in the blank to complete each sentence.

1. _____ ruled Rome when Jesus was born. (Luke 2:1)
2. _____ was the mother of Jesus. (Luke 2:5)
3. Mary wrapped Jesus in _____ clothes and laid Him in a _____; because there was no _____ for them in the _____. (Luke 2:7)
4. Jesus was on the earth _____ days after He rose from the dead. (Acts 1:3)
5. Acts 1:11 states, “This _____ Jesus, which is _____ up from you into heaven, _____ so _____ in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Jesus is no security against life's storms, but He is perfect security in them.”

~Author Unknown



Morning: Haggai

Evening: Revelation 16

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

1 Corinthians 3:11

Jesus Christ is the Rock of our Foundation, and there is no other foundation. Speaking of Christ, Isaiah 28:16 says, “... *I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation*”

In Ephesians 2:20 the Apostle Paul writes, “*And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*”

The Bible teaches that not only is Jesus Christ the foundation of our salvation, but that He is the ONLY foundation, and the ONLY way (John 14:6) to Heaven.

All false religions try to put Jesus Christ on a lower level than God. However, Jesus stated in John 10:29-30, “*My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.*” Jesus claimed to be deity Himself, and so He is. Jesus is not only the Son of God, He is God the Son.

Any religion claiming to have a foundation outside of Christ is false. The church is built upon Christ and Christ alone. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said to Peter, You are a little stone, a pebble, and upon the Rock of Jesus Christ I will build my church. God used Peter and all the apostles to spread the Gospel around the world, but they were never the foundation of the church.

 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Today, God will use you also to give out the good news of Jesus Christ. The Church today is still built on the Rock. Jesus Christ is our foundation. Amen! *RKM*

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 11:26-27 “And whosoever _____ and _____ in me shall _____ die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I _____ that thou art the _____, the Son of _____, which should come into the world”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Short Answer: Fill in the blank with the correct answer.

1. When was the first rainbow?
Gen. 9:13-17

2. Who despised his birthright? Gen. 25:34

3. Who was the name of the man who was willing to sacrifice his own son?
Gen. 22:10 _____
4. Who lost his strength when his hair was cut? Judges 16:13-17

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“We do not want, as the newspapers say, a church that will move with the world. We want a church that will move the world.

~G.K. Chesterton



Use Every Opportunity

by Sumner Wemp

During the Christmas season, my yard is decorated with a manger scene with four feet high figures of Joseph, Mary, three wise men, a shepherd, camels, sheep, and a donkey. Then, I have a cross on the front of the house and a beautiful picture of Christ coming in the clouds on the other side of my yard. People stop to look at them all the time. It opens doors to share the Gospel. Four years ago, ten people prayed with me to receive the Lord Jesus as their Savior too.

A couple years ago, I was in the yard, and a fellow who was jogging stopped to tell how he liked the decorations. I thanked him and graciously gave him a tract. He said, "O, you talked to me a couple of weeks ago." Suddenly I recognized him, and asked, "If you died right now and went up the gates of heaven and they asked, "Why should we let you in," what would you tell them? That is the best question I have ever found to ask. Never ask, "Are you a Christian?" All members of churches, even of cult churches, will say they are.

He said, "I am doing all I can to get there." What a joy to tell him how the Lord Jesus suffered and died for our sins, paid our debt in full, rose again, and was seen by hundreds. "Ken, the whole issue is, did the Lord Jesus, the sinless Son of the living God, suffer and die for our sins or didn't He. Did He pay the debt of sin in full or not?" It was beautiful; He

paused a minute and then burst out, "Yes, He did, I see that," and his face just beamed.

Once again, I asked if he got to the gates of heaven, and they asked, "Why should we let you in," what would you say? With his face just glowing, he said, "Jesus died for my sins, paid my debt, and I believe that is why I should go to heaven." It was awesome! Ken got saved right then and there and knew for sure he was going to heaven. **GOD DID THAT.**

O dear people, "by all means" we should share the Gospel with "every creature" like God told us in Mark 16:15. We can do more to change the world than all the laws ever made, and you know that is true. In 2010, let's do more than ever before to win people to Christ. ***"The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few."*** Will you be a good laborer this year?



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

O Be Careful Little Eyes

“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

II Timothy 2:22

There is a children’s song by this title. The words speak of being careful what we see, say, do, and where we go. The text is simple, but the message is profound. This song is intended for children, but oh what a lesson could be learned by adults if we would follow it rudimentary guides!

It is not generally the first look or the first word that gets us into trouble. Instead, it is the desire to linger just a little longer to get the last word or to cheat only one more time. “Just once more” is what brings about the collapse of our character.

Knowing that we are sinful and predisposed to seek the dark ways of sin should stir us to run from sin. God has provided for us a way of escape, but we must heed His prompting to run. If you are saved, you have the Holy Spirit within you. He will let you know if you are in danger of falling into sin. He gently and some times not so gently speaks the words, “Be careful what you say!” “Be careful what you are seeing!” Listen to Him.

Remember always that our Father up above is looking down in love. He wants to protect us. He can only do so if we will obey His command. So the next time He says run, don’t waver; don’t even stop to think about it. Just run, and you will successfully be careful.

~DJJ

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 20:30-31 “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Short Answer: Fill in the answer by looking up these verses, and give the “I AM” that Jesus referred to Himself as:

1. John 10:11 _____
2. John 11:25 _____ and the _____
3. John 14:6 _____
4. John 15:1 _____
5. Rev. 22:13 _____ and _____

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

[Jesus]...“He was born a King. The wise men came from the East and asked, ‘Where is He that is born King of the Jews?’ (Matthew 2:2). He died a King. In Greek, in Latin, and in Hebrew, the description was written above His cross, ‘This is Jesus, The King.’ (Matthew 27:37).” ~W.A. Criswell



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.” Isaiah 65:17-19

If you turn on the evening news, you are likely to see many reasons for heartbreak. Reports of bad news usually outnumber the good. People are suffering in wars or natural disasters. Shootings, robberies, and terror attacks constantly remind us that our world is a messed up place. The repercussions of sin in our world are staggering.

That is why it is so comforting to read these verses from Isaiah 65, which are echoed in Revelation 21. The perfection of Eden was lost because of sin. However, one day God will restore that state of perfection. There will be no more wars or hurricanes or earthquakes. Crime will be forgotten. Suffering will be no more. Sorrow and hardship will be a thing of the past. Never again will loved ones be parted by the cruel sting of death.

So as we look around at the heart ache and suffering in our world, we should encourage ourselves with this thought: God is going to make all things new. He will wipe the tears from our eyes and the sorrow from our hearts. Death will be vanquished for good. Our joy will be full. ~DJB

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 20:30-31 “And many other _____ truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Multiple Choice: Choose and circle the correct answer.

1. Peter found one of these with a coin in its mouth. Matthew 17:27
A. Snake B. Sea Turtle
C. Fish D. Clam
2. Who did Jesus refer to as a brood of vipers? Matthew 23
A. The teachers of the law
B. The Romans
C. The Scribes and Pharisees
D. The Sanhedrin
3. What ruler was eaten by worms before he died? Acts 12:21-23
A. Herod B. Nebuchadnezzar
C. Saul D. Job

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

“A lot of church members who are singing, “Standing on the Promises” are just sitting on the premises.” ~Anonymous



 THE WORD FOR TODAY

Times and Seasons

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1

With the change of the seasons, it also brings forth a time of reflection. Over the past three years, I have gone through an array of ups and downs. In Ecclesiastes chapter three, I have noted the ups and the downs:

Birth/Death; Plant/Harvest; Kill/Heal; Break/Build; Weep/Laugh; Mourn/Dance; Cast away/Gather up; Embrace/Refrain; Receive/Lose; Rend/Sew; To be silent/To speak; Love/Hate; War/Peace.

Each of these stages are common to man. For me, I have written in my Bible all the ups, all the great things and victories God has given me. When I stop and think how God has hand-picked and fashioned me with the same precision He used to create the universe, I can scarce believe it. His love is unconditional and unfathomable to me. My abilities, looks, and personality should portray His love, strength, and power working in me. I am so glad that my talents, intelligence, aptitudes, appearance, and personality were made and fashioned as an original masterpiece. Oh, how awesome!

Everything that has happened in my lifetime, good or bad, were building blocks to enable me to become a vessel God could use. May we each day strive to be all God has intended us to be! ~KAT

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN

John 20:30-31 “And many other _____ truly did Jesus in the _____ of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

True or False: Put a *T* in the blank if the statement is true and an *F* in the blank if the statement is false.

- _____ 1. The Bible tells us Christ was born in December. Luke 2:8-11
- _____ 2. Jesus’ birth was prophesied in Isaiah 7:14.
- _____ 3. An angel appeared to Joseph and told him Mary would have a son And His name was to be called JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins. Matt 1:20-21
- _____ 4. The wise men came from the north to Jerusalem to visit Jesus. Matthew 2:1

 QUOTE OF THE DAY

"God is looking for broken men who have judged themselves in the light of the cross of Christ. When God wants anything done, He takes up men who have come to the end of themselves, whose confidence is not in themselves, but in God." ~H.A. Ironside

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

Man-made Versus God-made

“Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”
1 Corinthians 1:20

Recently, I took a trip to Vail, Colorado, nestled in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. After flying into Denver, I witnessed the mountains for the first time in my life. I had seen pictures and movies of their glory, but nothing does them justice! They stand so majestic, capped with snow as their peaks reach into the sky. The view was absolutely breathtaking. Even after being in Colorado for a week, the beauty of the Rockies still overwhelmed me.

Denver, Colorado is like a typical metropolitan city. Tall buildings provide a nice skyline. Restaurants, theaters, and stadiums are among other attractions in the city. When I traveled outside Denver, I was able to see the whole city with the domineering Rocky Mountains as the backdrop. What a sight! I thought, “Wow! The man-made city of Denver fails to compare to the natural beauty of the Rocky Mountains made by Almighty God!

Just as our huge U.S. cities fail to compare to God’s creation, human insight will never compare to God’s unfathomable wisdom. Mankind tries over and over to manipulate circumstances and direct their own paths, but by doing this, mankind cripples God’s ultimate all-knowing plan for the lives of His children.

God created everything in complete perfection, and His plan for your life is perfect. Be very careful “planning” your own way. Your

 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

plans and your way fail to compare to God’s plan for your life. *“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”*
Jeremiah 10:23 ~MFV

 SCRIPTURE FILL-IN:

John 20:30-31 “And many other _____ truly did Jesus in the _____ of his disciples, which are not _____ in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

 BIBLE QUIZ

Fill In: Fill in the blank with the correct answer for each question.

1. What was the name of the giant killed by David? 1 Samuel 17:23

2. What king tried to find out where Jesus was born? Matt. 2:3-4

3. Who was the father of Bartimaeus? Mark 10:46 _____
4. Who was the wife of King Ahab? 1 Kings 21:5 _____

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“Prayer is very hard work, why else is the prayer meeting the worst attended meeting in any church? For that is where the battle is.”

~Melvin Tinker



 THE WORD FOR TODAY:

 BIBLE QUIZ

“The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.”

Proverbs 20:7

Junior high cross country is an adventure. In this particular race, the 1.5-mile course ran through woods and hills, around playgrounds, and all over a park. Jay, a seventh-grade boy, was leading the field about halfway through the race. As they headed into the woods, Jay and the runner behind him approached a turn. Jay went on one side of the cone, and his competitor the other. The race continued, but Jay turned around.

Many people use the word integrity, but few truly understand it. The word itself is defined as "moral character, honesty and being sound throughout." In his Psalms, David talks much about integrity and relates it to the heart. He communicates that integrity is a heart issue and that it affects everything we do. It involves doing the right thing when no one is looking. That is a big challenge for all of us to follow. *Psalm 139:23-24* *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”* ~AP

Matching: Match the person and the question that is correct.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1. Judas | A. Who led an army that was armed with trumpets and pitchers? Jud. 7:19 |
| 2. Nathan | B. Who betrayed Jesus with a kiss? Matt. 26:47-49 |
| 3. Felix | C. Who was the prophet who rebuked David for his sins? 2 Sam. 12:7-12 |
| 4. Gideon | D. Who was the husband of Drusilla? Acts 24:24 |
| 5. Sosthenes | E. An old disciple of Cyprus. Acts 21:16 |
| 6. Paul | F. The chief ruler of the Synagogue. Acts 18:17 |
| 7. Mnason | G. Preached on Mars' Hill Acts 17:22 |

 SCRIPTURE FILL-INS

John 20:30-31 “And many other _____ truly did Jesus in the _____ of his disciples, which are not _____ in this book: But these are written, that ye might _____ that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

 QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“It is impossible for a believer, no matter what his experience, to keep right with God if he will not take the trouble to spend time with God. Spend plenty of time with Him; let other things go, but don't neglect Him.”

~J. Oswald Sanders

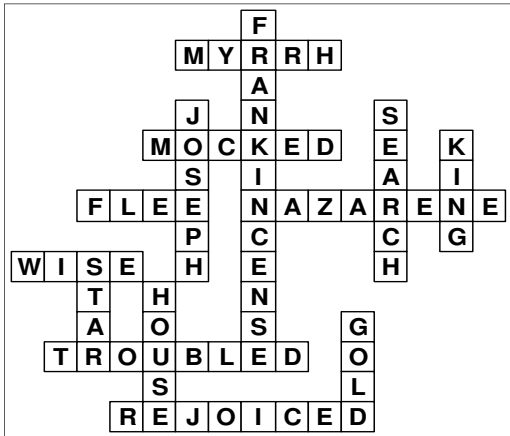


Morning: Malachi

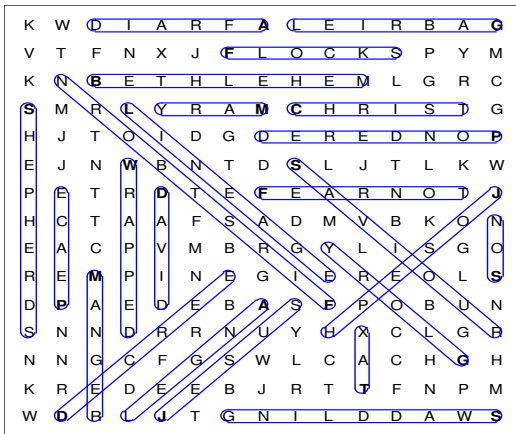
Evening: Revelation 22

Answers to Bible Quizzes and Puzzles

King of Kings, Lord of Lords (page 15)



The Christmas Story (Back Inside Cover)



Answers to Daily Quizzes

- Dec. 1 Pg 2 1C, 2A, 3B
 Dec. 2 Pg 3 1-Good, eternal, 2-Signs, 3-Guide
 Dec. 3 Pg 4 1-Adam blamed his sin on the woman God gave him, Eve. 2a "Who am I?" 2b "They will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice."
 2c "I am not eloquent."
 Dec. 4 Pg 5 1D, 2A

(Answers continued from column 1)

- Dec. 5 Pg 6 1C, 2B
 Dec. 6 Pg 8 1T, 2F, 3F, 4T
 Dec. 7 Pg 9 1C, 2D, 3D, 4B
 Dec. 8 Pg 10 1T, 2T, 3T, 4T
 Dec. 9 Pg 11 1C, 2A, 3B
 Dec. 10 Pg 12 1-King of the Jews, 2-servant, 3-Son of God, 4-Son of man, 5-Patmos, 6-Faithful, Just, forgive
 Dec. 11 Pg 13 1-20, 2-500, 3-300, 4-46, 5-70, 6-40
 Dec. 12 Pg 14 1T, 2T, 3T, 4T, 5F
 Dec. 13 Pg 16 1D, 2A, 3B, 4C
 Dec. 14 Pg 17 1-truth, 2-nothing, 3-lovest, 4-twelve, 5-Boanerges, 6-lose, 7-preaching
 Dec. 15 Pg 18 1B, 2C, 3A
 Dec. 16 Pg 19 1-God of Abraham, 2-Son of God, 3-Bread of Life, 4-Light of the World, 5-The Door
 Dec. 17 Pg 20 1T, 2T, 3T, 4F, 5F
 Dec. 18 Pg 21 1-19, 2-7, 3-10, 4-1000, 5-12
 Dec. 19 Pg 22 1-A, 2-C
 Dec. 20 Pg 23 1-John, 2-Jesus, 3-Make Him a King, 4-The Sheep Market
 Dec. 21 Pg 24 1-born, 2-prepare
 Dec. 22 Pg 25 1C, 2D, 3B, 4A
 Dec. 23 Pg 26 1F, 2F, 3F, 4F, 5F, 6T
 Dec. 24 Pg 27 1T, 2T, 3F
 Dec. 25 Pg 28 1-Caesar Augustus, 2-Mary, 3-Swaddling, manger, room, inn, 4-Forty, 5-Same, taken, shall, come
 Dec. 26 Pg 29 1-After the flood, 2-Esau, 3-Abraham, 4-Samson
 Dec. 27 Pg 31 and 1-Good Shepherd, 2-Resurrection life, 3-The Way, Truth, Life 4-True Vine, 5-Alpha and Omega,
 Dec. 28 Pg 32 1C, 2C, 3A
 Dec. 29 Pg 33 1F, 2T, 3T, 4F
 Dec. 30 Pg 34 1-Goliath, 2-Herod, 3-Timaeus 4-Jezebel
 Dec. 31 Pg 35 1B, 2C, 3D, 4A, 5F, 6G, 7E

