



FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

YEAR 2

Text: Copyright © 2016. Generations of Grace. All Rights Reserved.
Illustrations: Copyright © 2016. Chad Frye. All Rights Reserved. (www.chadfrye.com)

Generations of Grace
13248 Roscoe Blvd.
Sun Valley, CA 91352

www.generationsofgrace.com

Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible
(The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®)
Copyright © 2001 by Crossway.
Used by permission. All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-1-4951-8710-0

WELCOME TO *Generations of Grace*



This curriculum has been designed to deepen your own study of God's word so that you might be able to properly understand and accurately teach each lesson. It's our prayer that this curriculum would be a blessing to your ministry and home as God uses it to encourage your family.



Share the Lesson

- **Five-Day Devotionals** – Guides the family through the Generations of Grace lesson, a cross-reference passage, and a passage about Christ to lead the family through the whole counsel of God.
- **Generations of Grace Passages** – Reinforces the lesson that your child learned in Sunday School.
- **Cross-Reference Passage** – Points to another passage that reinforces the central truth of each week's lesson.
- **Christ-Centered Passage** – Connects each week's lesson to Jesus Christ and to the gospel.
- **Explain** – Communicates the truth of each day to the parent's heart and mind to prepare them to lead their child through the passage.
- **Ask** – Foster greater interaction between parent and children whether they're 3 years old or 11 years old.
- **Discuss** – Enable the conversation about the truth to progress to a deeper level.

Additional Resources

Use these additional resources to help support your lessons and to knit together the church and the home, ensuring that what is taught on Sunday matches what is learned throughout the week.

- **Coloring Book**
- **Craft Book**
- **Activity Book**
- **Student Journal**
- **Teacher Book**

CONTENTS

DEUTERONOMY

- 6** **WEEK 1:** *God requires obedience* • Deuteronomy 4:1–40
- 10** **WEEK 2:** *God calls Israel to love through obedience* • Deuteronomy 6:4–9
- 14** **WEEK 3:** *God promises to bless or curse* • Deuteronomy 28:1–68

JUDGES/RUTH

- 42** **WEEK 10:** *God is rejected by Israel* • Judges 1:1–3:6
- 46** **WEEK 11:** *God uses Gideon to deliver Israel* • Judges 6:1–8:34
- 50** **WEEK 12:** *God uses Samson to deliver Israel* • Judges 13:1–16:31
- 54** **WEEK 13:** *God's sovereignty in the book of Ruth* • Ruth 1:1–4:22

SAMUEL

- 58** **WEEK 14:** *God gives Israel a prophet and judge* • 1 Samuel 1:1–7:17
- 62** **WEEK 15:** *Israel rejects God as King* • 1 Samuel 8:1–12:25
- 66** **WEEK 16:** *Saul disobeys God* • 1 Samuel 13:1–15:35
- 70** **WEEK 17:** *God sees David's heart* • 1 Samuel 16:1–23
- 74** **WEEK 18:** *David fights for God's honor* • 1 Samuel 17:1–58
- 78** **WEEK 19:** *God gives David a friend* • 1 Samuel 18:1–20:42
- 82** **WEEK 20:** *God judges between David and Saul* • 1 Samuel 24:1–22
- 86** **WEEK 21:** *God makes David king* • 2 Samuel 1:1–2:7
- 90** **WEEK 22:** *God makes a covenant with David* • 2 Samuel 7:1–29
- 94** **WEEK 23:** *God forgives David* • 2 Samuel 11:1–12:25

JOSHUA

- 18** **WEEK 4:** *God calls Joshua to be His servant* • Joshua 1:1–9
- 22** **WEEK 5:** *God approves Rahab's faith* • Joshua 2:1–24
- 26** **WEEK 6:** *God reveals His might at the Jordan* • Joshua 3:1–5:1
- 30** **WEEK 7:** *God gives Jericho to Israel* • Joshua 5:13–6:27
- 34** **WEEK 8:** *God judges Achan's sin* • Joshua 7:1–26
- 38** **WEEK 9:** *God is chosen by Israel* • Joshua 23:1–24:29

KINGS/JONAH

- 98** WEEK 24: *God gives Solomon wisdom* • 1 Kings 2:1-4; 3:3-15
- 102** WEEK 25: *God's glory fills the temple* • 1 Kings 8:1-9:
- 106** WEEK 26: *God punishes Solomon* • 1 Kings 11:1-43
- 110** WEEK 27: *God punishes Jeroboam* • 1 Kings 12:1-33; 14:1-18
- 114** WEEK 28: *Elijah and the prophets of Baal* • 1 Kings 16:29-17:1; 18:1-2, 17-46
- 118** WEEK 29: *God is glorified by protecting Judah* • 2 Kings 18:1-19:37
- 122** WEEK 30: *God punishes Judah* • 2 Kings 21:1-18; 24:1-25:30
- 126** WEEK 31: *God shows mercy to Jonah and Nineveh* • Jonah 1:1-4:11

ESTHER/DANIEL/EZRA-NEHEMIAH

- 130** WEEK 32: *God uses Esther to protect His people* • Esther 1:1-10:3
- 134** WEEK 33: *God uses Daniel to interpret the king's dream* • Daniel 2:1-49
- 138** WEEK 34: *God protects Daniel's friends* • Daniel 3:1-30
- 142** WEEK 35: *God humbles Nebuchadnezzar* • Daniel 4:1-37
- 146** WEEK 36: *God judges Belshazzar for his pride* • Daniel 5:1-31
- 150** WEEK 37: *God delivers Daniel from the lions' den* • Daniel 6:1-30
- 154** WEEK 38: *God brought about the restoration of the temple* • Ezra 1:1-6:22
- 158** WEEK 39: *God guided Israel to repentance* • Ezra 7:1-10:44
- 162** WEEK 40: *God led Nehemiah to reconstruct the wall* • Nehemiah 1:1-7:73a
- 166** WEEK 41: *Israel refused to be ruled by God* • Nehemiah 7:73b-13:31

CHRISTMAS – THE SON OF MAN IS BORN

- 170** WEEK 1: *The Son of Man is born in Bethlehem* • Luke 2:1-20
- 174** WEEK 2: *The Son of Man is presented in Jerusalem* • Luke 2:21-38
- 178** WEEK 3: *The Son of Man is identified in the temple* • Luke 2:39-52

EASTER – THE SON OF MAN REDEEMS

- 182** WEEK 1: *The Son of Man anticipates His death* • Luke 22:7-20, 39-46
- 186** WEEK 2: *The Son of Man is crucified* • Luke 22:47-53; 23:26-49
- 190** WEEK 3: *The Son of Man is resurrected* • Luke 23:50-24:53



SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON
WEEK 24

God gives Solomon wisdom

1 Kings 2:1-4; 3:3-15



DAY 1

David commanded Solomon to be faithful to God • 1 Kings 2:1-4

READ

1 Kings 2:1-4

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 2:1-4

What is the most important thing a father can tell his son? As David was about to die, he told Solomon the one thing that would give him success as king: faithful obedience to all that God had commanded (1 Kgs 2:3). Through obedience Solomon would enjoy the blessings of God's covenant with David. This obedience would require fierce courage (2:1-2). Solomon had an important duty: to keep the charge of God (2:3). Like a vigilant guard, Solomon was to diligently fulfill his duty by faithfully living out all of God's word—every statute, commandment, rule, and testimony (2:3). Obedience was the duty of every Israelite (Deut 4:1), but especially of kings (Deut 17:18-20). No one is above God's law. This obedience is not just going through the motions, because God searches the heart (1 Chron 28:9). True obedience is devotion to God with heart, soul, and might (1 Kgs 2:4; Deut 6:4-6). So David prayed the best prayer a father can pray for a son: "Grant to Solomon my son a whole heart that he may keep your commandments, your testimonies, and your statutes" (1 Chron 29:19).

ASK

1. What did David say was the key to Solomon's success?
Obedience.
2. What kind of obedience did David tell Solomon to have?
Complete obedience; obedience from the heart.
3. Is anyone above God's law?
No. Even the most powerful men and women in the world are still subject to God's laws.
4. How did David pray for his son?
He asked God to grant his son heartfelt obedience to all God's commandments.

DISCUSS

1. If you could only have one more conversation with someone you love, what would you tell them?
2. Parents: Is the greatest emphasis of your parenting to teach your children God's word and cultivate in them a heart for God? Pray now with your children, asking God to give them a heart that desires to obey God's word.

DAY 2

God gave Solomon wisdom • 1 Kings 3:3–15

READ

1 Kings 3:3–15

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 3:3–15

What is more valuable than the most rare jewels (Prov 3:15)? What is worth seeking like a miner mining for precious gems (Job 28)? When God offered Solomon whatever he wanted (Prov 3:5), Solomon asked for something better than gold. Instead of blurting out a request, Solomon first paused to praise God for His steadfast love (3:6–7). Then, with a heart full of thankfulness, faith, and love, Solomon asked for wisdom, a teachable, humble, obedient, repentant heart (3:9). Wisdom is keeping and doing God's commands (Deut 4:6). It is living in the fear of God and accomplishing His will (Prov 9:10). Solomon needed godly wisdom to lead God's people, but you also need wisdom to successfully live out God's will (Eph 5:15–17). Your parents' job is to teach you wisdom through discipline (Prov 29:15), and you ought to receive their discipline with a teachable heart (Prov 15:32). Do you desire wisdom, to please God and serve others? Ask God. God kept His promise to give wisdom to Solomon (1 Kgs 3:28; 4:29–34), and He will keep His promise to give wisdom to everyone who asks in faith (Jas 1:5–6).

ASK

1. What did God tell Solomon to do?
God told Solomon to ask for anything he wanted.
2. What did Solomon pray about before asking for anything?
Solomon praised God for His love and trusted in God's faithfulness.
3. What could Solomon have asked for? Why didn't he?
He could have asked for wealth or long life. He didn't ask for these because he loved God's people more than himself.

DISCUSS

1. How does the Bible describe wisdom?
2. God freely gives wisdom to all who ask (Jas 1:5–6). So why doesn't everyone act wisely? In what ways have you failed to seek wisdom, and how can you seek wisdom this week?

DAY 3

A wise man builds his house on the rock • Matthew 7:24–27

READ

Matthew 7:24–27

EXPLAIN

The truth of Matthew 7:24–27

David knew how important obedience is. David watched Saul lose God's blessing through disobedience (1 Sam 15:22–23), and David gained God's blessing through obedience (1 Sam 23:4; 2 Sam 2:1–2). David also saw many blessings disappear when he disobeyed. David's disobedience led to death, rape, murder, and rebellion within his family. It forced David into temporary exile, and led to the deaths of 70,000

Israelites (2 Sam 12–20; 24). So David urged Solomon to obey: "If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever" (1 Chr 28:9). We hear an echo of David's words to Solomon about a 1,000 years later in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matt 7:24–27). While the crowds listened in utter astonishment (7:28), Jesus concluded His message with a call to genuine faith and salvation: only those lives built upon "the rock" (God's word) will remain after God's righteous judgment rains down from heaven (Matt 7:24–27). If your life rests on this rock, you are wise, for your life will escape eternal destruction.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. What did the wise man do?
He built his house on the rock.
2. What does it mean to build your life on the rock?
It means to live in obedience to God's word.
3. What did the foolish man do?
He built his house on the sand.
4. What happened to the foolish man's house (life)?
It was destroyed when the rain (God's judgment) came.

DISCUSS 

1. When someone builds a house, does he build the foundation first or last? So how is wisdom (living by God's word) especially important for you as children?
2. Parents: what kind of foundation are you laying for your family? What are your family's priorities? What governs the way your family functions?

DAY 4*The blessings of godly wisdom • James 3:13–18***READ** 

James 3:13–18

EXPLAIN **The truth of James 3:13–18**

When you seek wisdom, be careful, because there are two kinds of wisdom: worldly wisdom and godly wisdom. They have different sources: worldly wisdom comes from the earth, your flesh, and the devil (Jas 3:15), but godly wisdom comes from God (Prov 2:6) through Jesus Christ (Col 2:3). They have different standards: worldly wisdom tries to decide right and wrong apart from God (Gen 3:5–6), but godly wisdom seeks to know and submit to His standard. Worldly wisdom is trusting your own understanding, but godly wisdom depends on God (Prov 3:5–8). They have different attitudes and actions: worldly wisdom is jealous and selfishly ambitious (Jas 3:15–16), but godly wisdom is humble, gentle, pure, peaceable, teachable, merciful, beneficial, just, and sincere (Jas 3:17). Worldly wisdom is foolish and boastful, but godly wisdom boasts in the Lord (1 Cor 1:20–31; Jer 9:23–24). They have different results: worldly wisdom is useless and sad (Eccl 1:17–18), but godly wisdom helps in our work (Eccl 10:10) and brings joy (Prov 15:20). So seek the wisdom from God. Nothing else compares (Prov 8:11).

ASK 

1. What are the two kinds of wisdom?
Godly wisdom and worldly wisdom.
2. In what ways are they different?
They have different sources, standards, attitudes and actions, and results.
3. Where does godly wisdom come from?
Godly wisdom comes from God.
4. What is the result of worldly wisdom?
Even though it might seem smart, it is useless and sad in the end.

DISCUSS 

1. What would people around you say about your attitudes and actions? What do your attitudes and actions show about the kind of wisdom that is directing your life?
2. Is there such thing as right and wrong? If so, who decides it? How do you know what it is?

DAY 5

Christ is our wisdom • 1 Corinthians 1:18–31

READ

1 Corinthians 1:18–31

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Corinthians 1:18–30

Are you wise? The first step of wisdom is to realize that you are not wise and need wisdom from God. Not even Solomon had it all figured out. He turned from the path of wisdom and was unable to bring lasting peace to Israel. But David had a descendant who is greater than Solomon (Luke 11:31). Jesus was filled with wisdom even as a child (Luke 2:40, 52), and all wisdom belongs to Him (Rev 5:12; 7:12). He has now become wisdom to all who believe (1 Cor 1:30). God not only saves by His wisdom, He also gives His wisdom to all who trust in Jesus. This godly wisdom, along with righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, is God's gift to His children through Jesus Christ. Christians are truly the wise of this world because God has replaced their worldly wisdom with His own. But this wisdom comes to them only when they have realized that they are foolish, weak, and despised in themselves (1:26–28). So when unbelievers see the wisdom of the saved, it points them not to man but to Christ (1:31).

ASK

1. Did Solomon faithfully follow God all his life?
No. Sadly, Solomon strayed from God's commands later in life.
2. What does God give to all those who trust in His Son for salvation?
Godly wisdom, along with righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.
3. Why does God give Christians godly wisdom?
For His own honor and glory; to point unbelievers to Jesus.
4. Should Christians boast about the wisdom God has given them?
No. Godly wisdom is a gift God gives to the foolish, weak, and despised of this world.

DISCUSS

1. Many search for true wisdom, but few find it. Why is this? Have you humbled yourself and come to Christ?
2. When you act with godly wisdom, you become a living testimony of God's power and grace. How can you display godly wisdom this week?

NEXT WEEK

God's glory fills the temple

1 Kings 8:1–9:9



SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON
WEEK 25

God's glory fills the temple

1 Kings 8:1-9:9



DAY 1

God's glory filled the temple • 1 Kings 8:1-21

READ

1 Kings 8:1-21

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 8:1-21

The temple was not man's gift to God. It was God's gift to man. God allowed Israel to enjoy His presence at the temple. The ark, which represented God's presence, was moved into the temple (8:3-9), and God confirmed His presence by filling the temple with the cloud of His glory, the thick darkness that served as a symbol of God's holy presence (8:10-13; Exod 40:34-35). The dark cloud showed that God was present with Israel in a way they could know and experience. But it also showed that God was much bigger than they could understand or appreciate, for the cloud hid the fullness of His presence (1 Tim 6:16). This is the truth the temple teaches us: the God who is too great for us to fully comprehend (Rom 11:33) is willing to be present with His people. Since God was faithful to be present with Israel at the temple (1 Kgs 8:14-21; 2 Sam 7:13-14; Lev 26:12; Deut 12:5-11), you also can trust His promises to be even more present with you through Jesus Christ (Isa 7:14; Rom 8:38-39).

ASK

1. What was moved into the temple?
The ark of the covenant.
2. What did the ark of the covenant represent?
The ark represented the presence of God.
3. What does the cloud of God's glory show us about how we can know God?
We can know something about God, but not everything.
4. How did the temple prove God's faithfulness?
God kept His promise that David's son would build the temple.

DISCUSS

1. How was the temple a gift from God? Why isn't there a temple today (Eph 2:22)? How can you experience God's presence today (Rom 8:9; Gal 2:20)?
2. What are some things about God that He has clearly revealed to us? What are some things about God that are too great for us to totally understand (Deut 29:29)?

DAY 2

Solomon asked God to hear the prayers of His people •
1 Kings 8:22–53

READ

1 Kings 8:22–53

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 8:22–53

The temple was a gift because it was a place of prayer and forgiveness. After praising God for His matchless glory (1 Kgs 8:23–26), Solomon asked God to hear when anyone turned to God and prayed toward the temple (8:27–30). God is so great that not even the highest heavens can hold Him (8:27), yet God kindly chose to live with His people in the temple. Solomon especially asked God to hear prayers for forgiveness (8:31–53). Solomon knew that Israel would sin, so he prayed for God’s mercy, His kindness to forgive. Solomon prayed that God would hear from the temple and forgive all who repent. He asked God to remove the charges against the sinner. Even though Israel’s sin would be very great, the temple gave hope to Israel—and to all sinners—by reminding that God’s mercy is even greater. You should pray like Solomon, praising God’s glory, presenting your requests, and seeking forgiveness. All the while, pray humbly and reverently as Solomon did. He began his prayer while standing (8:22), but by the end he was kneeling, humbled and overwhelmed by God’s glorious presence (8:54).

ASK

1. How could God be present in the temple if the whole world is too small to hold God? *God was not kept in the temple, but He identified Himself with the temple and was specially present with His people there.*
2. What did Solomon ask God to do at the temple? *To hear people’s prayers and forgive them at the temple.*
3. How did Solomon pray? *Humbly and reverently.*

DISCUSS

1. There is no temple today, so how can your prayers come to God (Heb 4:15–16; 9:24)? They directed their prayers toward the temple, so how do you direct your prayers (John 14:13)?
2. When you pray, are you aware of who you are praying to and how glorious He is? How can you show reverence for God when you pray or listen to others pray (Eccl 5:1–2)?

DAY 3

Solomon blessed Israel • 1 Kings 8:54–66

READ

1 Kings 8:54–66

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 8:54–66

Solomon’s prayer for Israel is one you should copy, for yourself, for your family, and for all believers. First, pray for God’s presence (1 Kgs 8:54–57). God’s presence blesses, guides, and protects you (Ps 27:4–5). God’s presence empowered Moses (Exod 3:12), Joshua (Josh 1:9), Gideon (Judg 6:12), and David (1 Sam 16:18) to do amazing things for God. His presence is where you will find true joy (Ps 16:11). Second, pray that God will

give an obedient heart. Pray that God would do this “as each day requires,” because true obedience is a daily struggle, not a one-time experience (1 Kgs 8:58–59). Pray for God’s presence and a heart of obedience so that through these God would be honored by all people as the one and only God (8:60–61). Then, like Israel, present your sacrifice to God with great joy (8:62–66; Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15). The temple was the place of God’s presence in Israel, the center of Israel’s worship of God, and a testimony to all nations of God’s glory. May this also be true of you and your family (1 Pet 2:5, 9).

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. What did Solomon ask God to do?
Bless Israel.
2. What blessings did Solomon ask for?
God's presence and a heart of obedience.
3. Why did Solomon ask for these things?
So that when people heard of Israel and the temple, they would all see God's glory.
4. Why did Solomon ask God to draw the hearts of the people near to Him each day?
Because Solomon recognized that obedience is a daily struggle.

DISCUSS 

1. Do you often pray for God's presence in your life, and for a heart of obedience? Why are these two things so important to pray for?
2. What kinds of sacrifices do you offer to God (Ps 51:17; Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15)?

DAY 4*God answered Solomon's prayer • 1 Kings 9:1–9***READ** 

1 Kings 9:1–9

EXPLAIN **The truth of 1 Kings 9:1–9**

Obedience leads to blessing, and disobedience leads to trouble. This was God's answer to Solomon's prayer. God promised to be present in the temple (1 Kgs 9:1–3) and to keep His covenant with David (9:4–5). But He also warned that He would punish if Israel turned away from Him (9:6–9). God was always near and ready to bless from the temple, but Israel repeatedly rejected God. In fact, at the time the book of Kings was written, Israel was living in exile and the temple was destroyed. Later, Israel again rejected God when He came to them as their Messiah (John 1:11). Yet God's promise of blessing was still true. Israel's disobedience led to Christ's death, and Christ's death brings salvation to all people (Acts 2:23, 38), just as Solomon prayed the temple would (1 Kgs 8:41–43; Gen 12:3). What the stone temple failed to do through Israel's disobedience, the fleshly temple of Jesus Christ has accomplished. Just as God promised to forgive the Israelites who repented and prayed toward the temple, so God now forgives everyone who repents and looks to Christ for salvation (John 6:40).

ASK 

1. How do we know that God heard Solomon's prayer?
God appeared to Solomon a second time.
2. What did God require of Israel in order to be with them and hear their prayers?
God required that they be committed to Him, obeying Him with their whole hearts.
3. What had already happened by the time the book of Kings was written?
Israel was exiled and the temple was destroyed. This is what God warned would happen.

DISCUSS 

1. Solomon still disobeyed even after hearing God's warning. Do you know that disobedience leads to trouble? Do you sometimes choose to disobey anyway? Why (Jer 17:9)?
2. How was God able to keep His promise to punish sin, but also keep His promise to keep His covenant with David?

DAY 5

It is Christ who lives in me • Galatians 2:20

READ

Galatians 2:17–21

EXPLAIN

The truth of Galatians 2:20

Just as God was present with Israel in the temple, so He is present in you if you are a believer (Gal 2:20). If you are a believer, then you share in Christ's crucifixion and victory over sin. In His death, you also died to sin. You are no longer under the control of the old self. You no longer have to obey your old corrupt nature and sinful desires (Rom 6:6–7). This is because when you died to sin, you now live with Christ. Christ is in you through His Spirit who lives within you (1 Cor 6:19). This gives great comfort, because the Holy Spirit guarantees your salvation (Eph 1:13). Still, despite your new freedom and the Spirit's guarantee, it is still true that obedience leads to blessing and disobedience leads to trouble, because you experience the Spirit's influence in your life only as you submit to His control (Eph 5:18). So if you try to live by your own flesh, you will get bad results, but when you walk with the Spirit according to the word, you will produce good fruit (Gal 5:16–23).

ASK

1. How is God present with believers?
The Spirit of Christ lives in every believer permanently.
2. What does salvation free us from?
Slavery to sin.
3. Do believers always enjoy the blessings of Christ's presence?
No, because we experience greater fullness of the Spirit only as we obey Him.
4. If Christ is in you, how should you live?
Not by our own strength or desires, but in dependence on Christ.

DISCUSS

1. Is it possible to do good things (read the Bible, pray, go to church) trusting in your flesh instead of by faith in Christ? What happens when you act in your own strength?
2. Have you put your faith in Christ? If so, do you believe that your old self actually died with Him and that He is really in you? How does this help you say no to sin?

NEXT WEEK

God punishes Solomon

1 Kings 11:1–43



SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON
WEEK 26

God punishes Solomon

1 Kings 11:1-43



DAY 1

Solomon turned away from God • 1 Kings 11:1-8

READ 

1 Kings 11:1-8

EXPLAIN 

The truth of 1 Kings 11:1-8

The trouble begins when you chose to ignore God's commands (1 Kgs 11:1-2). God commands you to love Him with an undivided heart (Deut 6:5), and cling to Him, for He is your life (30:20). To help Israel do this, God commanded them not to marry the idolatrous inhabitants of the land (7:3-4). God also commanded the king not to take many wives (17:17), for these would turn his heart away from God. But Solomon did not listen. He loved his wives more than God and clung to them instead of God (1 Kgs 11:2). When Solomon ignored God's command, the results were exactly as God predicted: his wives turned his heart away from God (11:3). This is where sin always starts, in the heart (Mark 7:21-23). The sin in Solomon's heart grew into open idolatry (1 Kgs 11:4). He worshiped other gods, which was evil in God's sight (11:6). God demands exclusive worship, because He is a jealous God (Exod 20:3, 5). He is *different* from all other so-called gods (Isa 40:18, 25; 26:5). He is *holy* (Isa 6:3). He alone is worthy of worship.

ASK 

1. What did Solomon have a lot of?
He had a lot of wives. 1,000 of them.
2. What did his wives do to his heart?
They turned his heart away from God.
3. Why was Solomon's idolatry evil in God's eyes?
It was evil because God is the only one who is to be worshiped.
4. Should Solomon have known better?
Yes. God had appeared to Solomon twice, giving him wisdom and clear instructions.

DISCUSS 

1. What are some rules your parents have for you? How are these rules a blessing for you? Do you see God's commands as a blessing to keep you close to Him?
2. We give undivided attention to what we love. Are there any activities you give undivided attention to? How do you feel when someone gives you divided attention?

DAY 2

God punished Solomon • 1 Kings 11:9–25

READ

1 Kings 11:9–25

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 11:9–25

God was right to be angry with Solomon for rejecting His commandments (1 Kgs 11:9–10). God had loved Solomon from birth (2 Sam 12:24), David had taught him wisely (1 Kgs 2:1–4), and God had appeared to him twice, giving him great wisdom and clear instructions (1 Kgs 3:5–14; 9:1–9). Solomon had every advantage, but he threw it all away. So God **disciplined** Solomon: He punished him in love in order to correct and restore. He would tear the kingdom away from Solomon (11:11), just as He had warned (9:6–8), but He would still honor His covenant with David. He honored the covenant, first, by not taking the kingdom away during Solomon's reign, for He had promised not to reject him (2 Sam 7:15). Second, He would not remove the entire kingdom from David's line, because He had chosen David and Jerusalem (1 Kgs 11:12–13; cf. 2 Sam 7:16). Third, God kept His promise to discipline Solomon with the blows of men (2 Sam 7:14; 1 Kgs 11:14–25). In this way God faithfully loved and faithfully disciplined at the same time.

ASK

1. What advantages did Solomon have?
God's love, wisdom, and instruction, and David's teaching.
2. How did God punish Solomon?
God promised to take much of the kingdom away, and He brought enemies to fight against him.
3. Who did God use to discipline Solomon?
Hadad in the south and Rezon in the north.
4. Did Solomon's sin cancel God's covenant with David?
No. God promised to discipline, but not to reject.

DISCUSS

1. God acted like a father to Solomon. Parents: how can you imitate God by both loving and disciplining your children? Children: are you thankful for discipline, or would you like it better if your parents excused your sin (Prov 13:24; Heb 12:5–6)?
2. Have you ever lost special privileges because you did not obey? Has your sin ever hurt others too? Who else was hurt by Solomon's sin?

DAY 3

God replaced Solomon • 1 Kings 11:26–43

READ

1 Kings 11:26–43

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 11:26–43

Solomon failed, but God did not. Because Solomon failed, God brought a third enemy, an enemy from within (1 Kgs 11:26), who would divide Israel. God promised to tear ten tribes from Solomon's son and give them to Jeroboam because of Solomon's idolatry (11:29–37). In the end Solomon died and his glory faded away (11:40–43). But God's promise to restore

David's line will never perish (11:39). From the broken stump of the once glorious line a shoot would grow once again (Isa 11:1). Solomon was a failed prince of peace, but Jesus, the Son of David, is the true Prince of Peace. Jesus proved faithful to the very end (Psalm 22; Luke 23:46), and His heart belonged fully to the Father (Matt 26:39; John 4:34). At His first coming He made righteousness available by paying the price of sin (Rom 3:24–26), and at His second coming He will establish His righteous rule as He reigns from Jerusalem over the entire earth (Isa 2:1–4). Solomon failed. We all fail. But Jesus did not. He is our hope.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. What did Ahijah do to show that God was going to take Solomon's kingdom away?
Ahijah ripped a new robe into 12 parts. Jeroboam would get ten of them.
2. Why did God leave one tribe for Solomon's son?
To show His love for David and to keep His promise to David.
3. How does God's promise that David's house will not be humbled forever come true?
It comes true in Jesus Christ, the Son of David. He is the sinless, victorious, eternal king.

DISCUSS 

1. God used other men (Hadad, Rezon, and Jeroboam) to discipline Solomon. How does this reveal God's sovereign power over all the earth?
2. How did God have mercy on Solomon in the midst of judgment?

DAY 4*God's commands are a wall of protection • Psalm 119:161-168***READ** 

Psalm 119:161-168

EXPLAIN **The truth of Psalm 119:161-168**

God's commands are for your good. When Solomon ignored God's command, the results were exactly as God predicted (1 Kgs 11:3). How foolish! God's commands are a wall of protection for your own good, not an obstacle to your happiness. When you choose to climb over the wall, you fall into disaster. His commands keep you on the right path and protect you from great evil (Prov 4:11-19) So stand in awe of God's word, even when life is hard (119:161). Rejoice over God's word, like one who finds great treasure (119:162). Love God's law and hate anything that contradicts it (119:163). Remember God's law all day long and continually praise Him for it (119:164). Don't just say you love it: if you love God's law you will also keep it, because God knows your ways and He knows what is best (119:167-168). If you do this, you will find peace because God's law keeps you from stumbling (119:165). You will have hope of salvation instead of fearing judgment (119:166).

ASK 

1. What happens when you ignore or disobey God's commandments?
We fall into disaster.
2. What happens when you keep God's commandments?
We have peace, for God's commands protect us from harm.
3. When you see how good God's law is, what is the right response?
To love God's law, praise God for His law, and keep God's law.

DISCUSS 

1. Can you think of any rules at your house that protect you from harm? The last time you chose to disobey a rule, did it lead to happiness or sadness?
2. In today's Bible passage, the Psalmist proclaims his love for God's word. Do you love God's word? If so, how is this love seen in your life?

DAY 5

God disciplines those He loves • Hebrews 12:6

READ

Hebrews 12:3–11

EXPLAIN

The truth of Hebrews 12:6

Discipline hurts, doesn't it? When God disciplined Solomon, it brought great trouble to Solomon and to all Israel. But discipline is also a good thing. First, it shows that God is faithful (2 Sam 7:14). Second, it shows that God is loving. If you are God's child, God disciplines you because He loves you (Heb 12:6). But why would God cause pain to someone He loves? Is it because He is condemning you for your sin? No, because all your sins—past, present, and future—are already forgiven (Rom 8:1). Then why does He discipline? First, God disciplines the one He loves in order to correct. He allows straying believers to experience hardship in order to draw them back to Himself. Second, God disciplines His children in order to prevent future sin—like Paul's "thorn in the flesh" that kept him from exalting himself (2 Cor 12:7). Third, God teaches His children through discipline, using hardships to deepen their faith and reveal His character, as He did with Job. Be thankful that God is a true Father, who disciplines you because He loves you.

ASK

1. Who does God discipline?
Those He loves.
2. Why does God discipline believers?
To correct sin, prevent sin, and teach believers.
3. Is God's discipline of believers the same as His punishment of unbelievers?
No. There is no condemnation for those who have trusted Jesus for salvation.

DISCUSS

1. Parents: How consistent have you been to discipline your children? What does this show about your love for them? Do your children know you love them in the midst of discipline?
2. Children: Is discipline enjoyable? Can you explain why it is good even though it is painful?

NEXT WEEK

God punishes Jeroboam

1 Kings 12:1–33; 14:1–18



SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

WEEK 27

God punishes Jeroboam

1 Kings 12:1–33; 14:1–18



DAY 1

God was faithful to Jeroboam • 1 Kings 12:1–24

READ

1 Kings 12:1–24

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 12:1–24

It is discouraging to see people make foolish decisions, because their foolishness can hurt a lot of people. But we can find comfort knowing that God is in control even over people's folly. That's how it was with Rehoboam. He thought he was being clever when he chose to be Mr. Tough Guy (1 Kgs 12:6–14; cf. 4:7; 5:13), but his foolishness became clear pretty quickly when ten tribes rebelled, killed one of his officers and made Jeroboam their king (12:16–20). But even Rehoboam's foolishness was "a turn of affairs" from God (12:15). Everything happened just as God had promised. Ten tribes followed Jeroboam. One tribe, Judah, followed David's line (11:13). Benjamin's loyalty was split between north and south (12:21), and Levi, which was not counted among the twelve because it had no tribal land, remained faithful to David (2 Chr 11:14). Since God had ordained the north-south split, He stopped Rehoboam from beginning a civil war to try to take the ten tribes back by force (1 Kgs 12:24). Foolishness is never good, but not even this can frustrate God's plan.

ASK

1. What two promises did God make to Jeroboam?
God promised to make him king over 10 tribes of Israel, and He promised to make his descendants kings too if Jeroboam worshiped God (1 Kgs 11:26–39).
2. How did God keep His promise of giving 10 tribes to Jeroboam?
God used the foolishness of Rehoboam and his friends to tear Israel apart
3. How can this encourage you when things around you are going badly?
It reminds us that God is in control of the good and the bad

DISCUSS

1. Whose advice should you listen to? Do you choose to listen to those who are wise or to those who tell you what you like to hear?
2. Do you have any foolish rulers in authority over you? How do you react when you hear about their foolish decisions?

DAY 2

Jeroboam was unfaithful to God • 1 Kings 12:25–33

READ

1 Kings 12:25–33

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 12:25–33

Jeroboam had just seen things come true exactly as God had predicted (1 Kings 11:31). So you would think that Jeroboam would have believed the last part of God's message: he would have a lasting dynasty only if he worshiped God (11:38). But like many people today, Jeroboam rejected God's word because he didn't think it was helpful in his specific situation (12:26–27). So he set up a counterfeit religion. He acted like a new Aaron (12:28), and made his new religion look official. But like false religions today, Jeroboam's religion was man-made. God alone is to be worshiped as the invisible God (Exod 20:3–6), but Jeroboam made images to represent God. God chose Jerusalem (2 Chr 6:6), but Jeroboam chose Bethel and Dan. God chose priests from the Levites (Num 3:10), but Jeroboam made a new priesthood from all tribes (1 Kgs 12:31). God ordained the Feast of Tabernacles on the 15th day of the 7th month (Num 29:12), but Jeroboam replaced it with a festival of his own on the 15th day of the 8th month (1 Kgs 12:32–33).

ASK

1. Did Jeroboam worship God?
No. He made two calf idols instead.
2. After Jeroboam became king over the 10 tribes of Israel, what did he make?
He made a false religion, including 2 golden calves, 2 places of worship, lots of other places of worship, a new priesthood, and a new religious festival.
3. Why did Jeroboam make a false religion?
Jeroboam was trying to protect his kingship.

DISCUSS

1. If Jeroboam truly wanted to protect his kingdom, what should he have done?
2. Have you come across any false religions today? Why are false religions so tricky?

DAY 3

God judged Jeroboam • 1 Kings 14:1–20

READ

1 Kings 14:1–20

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 14:1–20

Jeroboam thought God was someone he could use, not someone he had to obey. So despite his counterfeit religion, he still hoped for a favorable word from God when his son was sick (1 Kgs 14:1–3). He saw God's prophet as a way to get what he wanted, not as a way to find out what God wanted. But God's prophet was not fooled. Though physically blind, Ahijah saw through the disguise of Jeroboam's wife (14:1–6).

Ahijah condemned Jeroboam for not following God as David had, even though God had proven His grace toward Him (14:5–9). Therefore, God would destroy the line of Jeroboam, cutting off every male descendant (14:10). Also, as Israel's king, Jeroboam's sin brought judgment on Israel as well. Israel would be exiled from the land (14:15–16). God's word came true. The sick son died immediately. And within a few years, the rest of Jeroboam's descendants were slaughtered (15:25–29). Then nearly 200 years later, Israel was driven into exile (2 Kgs 17:23). Because Jeroboam disobeyed God, he lost the blessing of a lasting dynasty and a secure kingdom.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. Why did Jeroboam send his wife to God's prophet?
Not to do what God wanted, but to get what he wanted.
2. Was God's prophet fooled when Jeroboam's wife came to see him?
No. Though physically blind, God allowed him to see through her disguise.
3. Jeroboam sinned to try to secure his kingship, but what did he actually get?
The destruction of his family and the end of his dynasty.
4. How did Jeroboam's sin affect Israel?
Because Israel embraced Jeroboam's false worship, Israel would be exiled from the promised land.

DISCUSS 

1. When you do what is convenient instead of what is right, what happens?
2. Do you go to God often, or just in times of crisis? When you go to God, do you seek His will or try to get Him to do what you want?

DAY 4*The wise receive instruction • Proverbs 15:31–32***READ** 

Proverbs 15:31–33

EXPLAIN **The truth of Proverbs 15:31–33**

Solomon wrote the whole book of Proverbs about wisdom, but Rehoboam ignored his dad's instructions. Don't make the same mistake. Unlike Rehoboam, you should listen "to life-giving reproof" (Prov 15:31). This is how you get wisdom: by being willing to listen to and obey the godly counsel of others (15:32). This explains why so many people reject wisdom: wisdom requires humility. A proud heart refuses to listen to the warnings of others. Do you have a humble, teachable spirit? Rehoboam refused to be taught. He rejected the counsel of his father's experienced advisors in favor of his friends' foolish flattery. Instead of wisdom he chose insolence, resulting in "nothing but strife" (13:10). Rather than turn away the people's wrath with a soft answer, Rehoboam stirred up their anger by his harsh words (1 Kgs 12:13–14; Prov 15:1). So learn from his error, listen to God's advice, and be gentle even with our opponents (2 Tim 2:25). Imitate Jesus, a gentle leader whose burden is light (Matt 11:29–30). Be wise, and embrace humility and gentleness.

ASK 

1. Who wrote most of the book of Proverbs?
Solomon. Sadly, his son didn't pay attention to his father's wisdom.
2. How is wisdom gained?
A teachable spirit; being willing to hear and obey godly counsel.
3. Why do many people reject wisdom?
Pride.
3. Why did Rehoboam refuse to listen to good counsel?
Because his friends' counsel made him feel important and powerful.

DISCUSS 

1. Do you truly listen to others, or are you already preparing what you're going to say in response while they're talking to you?
2. Who would you go to right now if you had a problem and needed advice? Why would you go to this person?

DAY 5

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life • John 14:6

READ

John 14:1-15

EXPLAIN

The truth of John 14:6

Man-made religion is more appealing to sinful people than true religion. To them, Jeroboam's religion felt more "real" because of the visible images. It was more tolerant, welcoming contributions from various religious traditions. It was more inclusive, allowing anyone to become a priest. It was more accessible, opening up two central places of worship as well as shrines throughout the land (1 Kgs 13:32). But like all man-made religion, it was an abomination, for God hates unauthorized worship (Exod 20:3-6; Lev 10:1-3). You can only come to God His way, through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). There are not many paths to God. There is only one. Jesus is the only way. If Jesus is the only way, then worship Him, and worship Him alone! If you do not properly worship God, nothing else you accomplish in your life matters. Rather than worship your own security or make up a religion for your own convenience, turn to "the way, the truth, and the life," and keep His commands (14:6, 15). Unless you do, your end will be worse than that of Jeroboam and his family (Rev 21:8).

ASK

1. Why did Israel like Jeroboam's man-made religion?
Because it felt good to their sinful hearts.
2. Why was Jeroboam's man-made religion an abomination?
Because he created his own way to come to God.
3. How many paths are there to God?
One. We may only come to God through His Son, Jesus Christ (John 14:6).
4. What does false religion produce?
Eternal death and separation from God (Rev 21:8).

DISCUSS

1. Why do people create false religions?
2. How would you respond to someone who said: "We're all on different paths, but we're all heading toward the same God"?

NEXT WEEK

Elijah and the prophets of Baal

1 Kings 16:29-17:1; 18:1-2, 17-46



SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

WEEK 28

Elijah and the prophets of Baal

1 Kings 16:29–17:1; 18:1–2, 17–46



DAY 1

God stopped the rain • 1 Kings 16:29–17:1; 18:1–2, 17–18

READ

1 Kings 16:29–17:1; 18:1–2, 17–18

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 16:29–17:1; 18:1–2, 17–18

Jeroboam sinned by creating a false way to worship God. Ahab made it worse by leading Israel to worship an entirely different god, Baal. So God sent Elijah, whose name means “Yahweh is my God” (1 Kgs 17:1). That was his message: the living God of Israel is the true God, and there is no other. To prove this, God punished Israel for their idolatry by stopping the rain (Lev 26:18–19; Deut 11:16–17; 28:23–24). Since Israel didn’t have river irrigation like Egypt, rain was necessary for food. By causing a drought, and by announcing it in advance (Isa 42:9), God showed that He, not Baal, was the true God. God’s curse was the result of Ahab’s idolatry, but Ahab accused Elijah of troubling Israel (1 Kgs 18:17). At that time everything in Israel seemed to be going well: the kingdom was stable, there was a new, permanent capital, and trade relations with the Phoenicians were prosperous. If only those intolerant believers in God would stop meddling! Yet, as Elijah declared, the wicked are the ones who bring trouble by abandoning the precepts of God (18:18).

ASK

1. Why was Ahab more wicked than any of Israel’s previous kings?
King Ahab officially introduced Baal worship into the nation of Israel.
2. How did God punish Israel for worshipping Baal?
God caused a drought, proving that Baal (a storm god) did not really have power to send rain.
3. What does Elijah’s name mean?
“Yahweh is my God.” He was committed to the true God when Israel was not.
4. Was Ahab right to blame Elijah for troubling Israel?
No. Trouble comes to those who turn away from God.

DISCUSS

1. Why does the world look down upon those who faithfully follow God?
Describe the persecutions Christians are facing in different parts of the world.
2. Have you ever had to stand up for the truth when it was not popular? What can give you strength to do so?

DAY 2

Elijah's test proved that Baal is not God • 1 Kings 18:19–29

READ

1 Kings 18:19–29

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 18:19–29

Israel had not yet wholly rejected God. They wanted to be able to worship God and Baal. But Elijah said they had to choose, since God alone deserves **worship** (1 Kgs 18:21). Their praise, devotion, and obedience must no longer be divided between God and Baal. To help them decide, Elijah proposed a contest (18:19). Since both God (Pss 18:14; 29:3–9; 104:3) and Baal were believed to possess power over thunder, lightning, and storms, it would be a fair test. The winner would demonstrate that he alone was God. So Baal's prophets prayed all morning. But "there was no voice" (1 Kgs 18:26). Why? Because there was no Baal. Getting frantic, they cut themselves, hoping to manipulate their gods by arousing their pity. Yet all their idolatrous worship was worthless. As morning passed into afternoon there was nothing: no voice, no answer, and no response (18:29). That's because false gods cannot hear. They are worthless, like scarecrows in a cucumber field (Jer 10:5) or logs cast into the fire (Isa 44:16–17).

ASK

1. What contest did Elijah propose?
Baal's prophets would prepare a sacrifice to Baal, and Elijah would prepare one to God. Then they would pray, and the one who sent the fire would prove to be God.
2. Why did Elijah propose this contest?
Elijah wanted Israel to stop "limping" between two decisions. They needed to worship God alone.
3. Did Baal send fire to burn up their sacrifice?
No. There was not even a tiny answer.

DISCUSS

1. What idols do people worship today (money, success, health, beauty, pleasure, entertainment, power, etc.)? Do you? What do people hope to get from them? Do these idols actually provide any answers?
2. How powerful is a scarecrow (Jer 10:5) or piece of firewood (Isa 44:16–17)? What kind of a meal do ashes make (Isa 44:20)? That's what idols are like.

DAY 3

Elijah's test proved that Yahweh is God • 1 Kings 18:30–40

READ

1 Kings 18:30–40

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Kings 18:30–40

While the chaotic prophets frantically raved into the afternoon, Elijah prepared calmly and quietly. He rebuilt the altar with 12 stones to represent the 12 tribes of Israel (1 Kgs 18:30–31). He soaked the wood and the altar with water to make it clear that the fire about to come was from God (18:33–35). Then Elijah prayed (18:36). He did not imitate Baal's prophets, for God forbids cutting (Lev 19:28; Deut 14:1) and cannot

be manipulated (Matt 6:7). Instead he prayed by faith, depending wholly on God. God answered Elijah immediately and powerfully. He burned up not just the offering, as the terms of the contest stipulated, but also the wood, stones, dust, and water too (18:38)! So when the people saw the fire from God they shouted, "Yahweh is God!" (18:39). **Yahweh is God's covenant name, the "name of God's redeeming love."** (Exod 3:14). Recognizing this, the people killed Baal's prophets according to God's law, because worship is serious, a matter of life and death (1 Kgs 18:40; Deut 13:13–18; 17:2–7).

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. Why did Elijah soak the wood and the altar?
To make it clear that the fire was from God.
2. Did Elijah pray like Baal's prophets?
Baal's prophets raved, cut themselves, and tried to manipulate their gods. Elijah prayed calmly and humbly, seeking God's glory and trusting God's sovereignty even over Israel's sin.
3. How did God prove that He is God?
God burned up the offering, the altar, and the water too.

DISCUSS 

1. You probably haven't seen fire come down from heaven and burn up an altar. But what unmistakable evidence of God's power do you have (Rom 1:19–20)?
2. How do you pray? Do you say certain words, or try to work up certain feelings, to try to get your prayer answered? Is God's glory your priority, or your passions?

DAY 4*God sent rain • 1 Kings 18:41–46***READ** 

1 Kings 18:41–46

EXPLAIN **The truth of 1 Kings 18:41–46**

Now that Baal was exposed as a fraud, God could restore rain to Israel without people thinking the rain was from Baal. So Elijah told Ahab to eat and drink, for the drought was over (1 Kgs 18:41). If Elijah was so sure of this, then why did he go up Mount Carmel to pray (18:42)? Because God uses His people's prayers to accomplish His promises. But this time God did not answer Elijah immediately (18:43). Yet Elijah persevered in humble dependence until a small cloud appeared (18:44). The cloud grew into a storm, resulting in a torrential downpour (18:44–45). The diligent prayer of a righteous man truly is powerful (Jas 5:16–18)! Then God empowered Elijah to run before Ahab's chariot the 20 miles back to Jezreel (1 Kgs 18:46). This showed God's power, but it also showed Elijah's loyalty. Elijah acted like one of Ahab's servants, running before his chariot. It was an opportunity for Ahab to consider all he had just seen and repent. If he would follow the words of God's prophet, God's prophet would be his servant instead of his enemy.

ASK 

1. What did Elijah say to Ahab?
He told Ahab to eat and drink, for the drought was over.
2. How many times did Elijah tell his servant to go up and look for rain?
Seven times.
3. How did God prove His power again?
God proved His power again by sending lots of rain and by empowering Elijah to outrun Ahab's chariot.

DISCUSS 

1. How have you seen God powerfully answer prayer? Do you believe prayer makes a difference? Do you pray first and often, or only as a last resort?
2. How should you respond if God doesn't answer your prayer right away? There are three possibilities: (1) Psalm 66:18; James 4:3; (2) Luke 22:42; 2 Corinthians 12:8–9; (3) Psalm 27:14; Hebrews 10:36.

DAY 5

Lukewarm: neither cold nor hot • Revelation 3:15–16

READ

Revelation 3:14–22

EXPLAIN

The truth of Revelation 3:15–16

At the beginning of the book of Revelation, the apostle John records seven different letters to seven different churches scattered throughout Asia Minor (Rev 2:1–3:22). These churches existed a long time ago, but they still apply to Christians today. They show us the kinds of problems churches have faced throughout history. The church John mentions is Laodicea (Rev 3:14–22), which was known for its lukewarm drinking water. This was because the city's water supply had to travel through a very long underground aqueduct before getting to the city. A lot of times, when visitors drank the water for the first time, they would immediately spit out the water because it was lukewarm. Sadly, the church at Laodicea was just like its water. Because their devotion to Christ was lukewarm (3:15), they were useless, like water that is neither cold nor hot. Unless they repented, God would spit them out (3:16). Like the Israelites on Mt. Carmel, they were limping between two opinions (1 Kgs 18:21). There is no neutrality before God—we are either for Him or against Him.

ASK

1. What was the city of Laodicea known for?
Its lukewarm drinking water.
2. How did the church at Laodicea resemble its drinking water?
The church's devotion to Christ was lukewarm—neither cold nor hot.
3. What does the church at Laodicea have in common with the Israelites on Mt. Carmel?
They were both lukewarm in their devotion to God.

DISCUSS

1. What things do you like to drink cold? What do you like to drink hot? Do you like to drink anything lukewarm? Why does God reject “lukewarm” worship, devotion, and obedience?
2. Is it possible to remain a “lukewarm” Christian (Matt 6:24)? Is there something in your life that is stealing away your love for God?

NEXT WEEK

God is glorified by protecting Judah

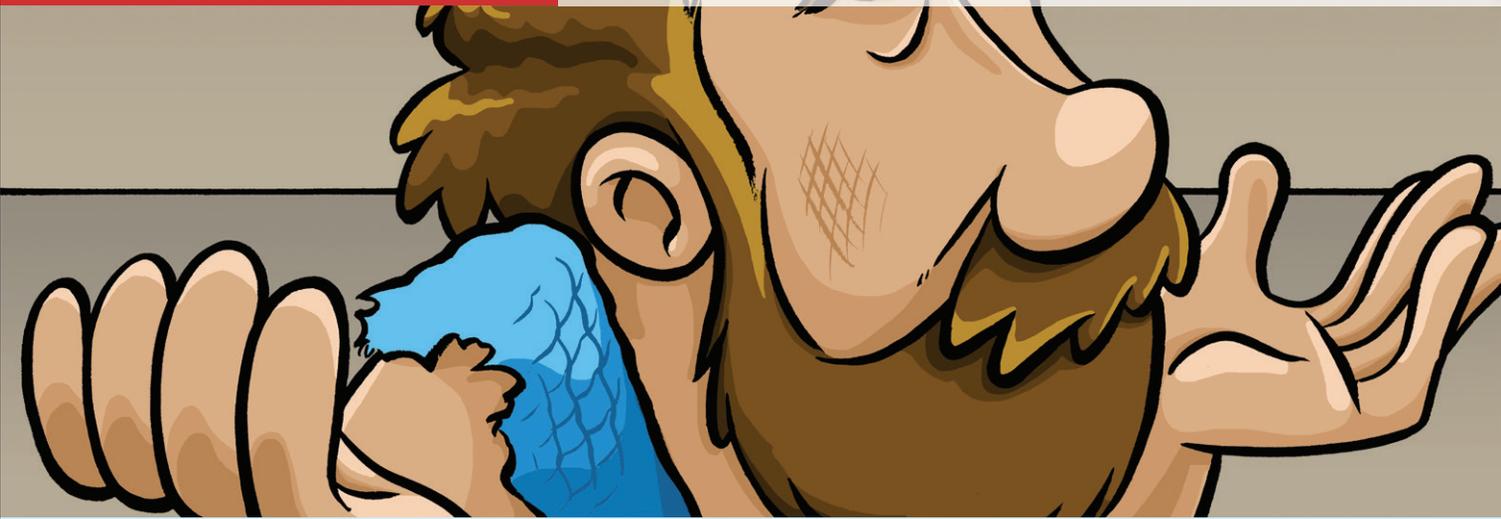
2 Kings 18:1–19:37



SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON
WEEK 29

God is glorified by protecting Judah

2 Kings 18:1–19:37



DAY 1

The Assyrians came • 2 Kings 18:1–16

READ 

Leviticus 8:1–36

EXPLAIN 

The truth of Leviticus 8:1–36

Why do bad things happen to good people? Hezekiah was a very good king who faced very serious trouble. No king of Judah so far had been as zealous for God as David had been—until Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:3). Hezekiah got rid of idolatry and all unauthorized worship (18:4). He trusted God more than any other king (18:5). He kept God's commands (18:6b) and stayed faithful to the end (18:6a). As a result, God blessed Hezekiah with the success that comes from obedience (18:7–8; Deut 28:1–14; Josh 1:8). But then Sennachrib, the king of Assyria, invaded and devastated Judah (1 Kings 18:13). How could this be if obedience leads to blessing? First, Judah's defeat was a direct consequence of past sin. The sins of Solomon (1 Kgs 11), Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12), and others brought Judah to this point. Second, as the story will show, God allowed this trouble in order to show His great power to deliver. Third, this trouble increased Hezekiah's faith. At first Hezekiah tried to stop Sennacherib by his own strength (18:15–16). But when his bribe failed, he threw himself entirely upon God.

ASK 

1. What was King Hezekiah known for?
He was known for his great faith and for destroying all false worship.
2. What happened to Israel and why?
God caused them to be defeated and exiled because of their sin.
3. Why did trouble come to faithful people like Hezekiah?
Because they still live in a sin-cursed world (Rom 8:22–23). Because God uses it to show His power to save and to increase their faith.

DISCUSS 

1. Describe a time when one person's sin hurt many others. When will the affects of sin end (Rom 8:23; Rev 21:4)?
2. Have you suffered when you were doing what is right? Does obedience guarantee you will only experience blessing?

DAY 2

The Assyrians boasted • 2 Kings 18:17–36; 19:8–13

READ

2 Kings 18:17–36; 19:8–13

EXPLAIN

The truth of 2 Kings 18:17–36; 19:8–13

Bullies brag and threaten and mock, and that's what Sennacherib sent his official, the Rabshakeh, to do. He shouted in Hebrew in order to weaken the faith of everyone in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 18:26–28). First, he cleverly mixed truth with error. He was right that Judah could not trust Egypt (18:21). He was right that Hezekiah had destroyed the high places (18:22). But he was wrong that God was upset about the destruction of the high places. Second, he mocked Judah's weakness (18:23–24). Third, he spoke outright lies. He claimed God had told Sennacherib to destroy Judah (18:25). Fourth, he threatened. He questioned their hope of deliverance, claiming that if Judah continued to resist, they would be left so hungry that they would eat and drink filth (18:27). He claimed that neither Hezekiah nor God would be able to deliver them (18:29–30), so they should trust Sennacherib instead (18:31–32). Then he made a big mistake: the Rabshakeh insulted God Himself (18:33–35; 19:8–13). He should have paid attention to what happened when Goliath insulted Israel's God (1 Sam 17:45–51).

ASK

1. Why did the Rabshakeh speak in Hebrew?
He wanted all the people of Jerusalem to hear him to weaken their faith in God.
2. How did the Rabshakeh undermine Judah's faith?
He said God was unhappy with Hezekiah, that God had told him to destroy Jerusalem, and that God could not save Jerusalem because no other gods could save their nations.
3. How did the Rabshakeh try to deceive Judah?
By mixing truth with error.
4. What did the Rabshakeh compare God to?
The powerless gods of other nations.

DISCUSS

1. Have you heard people attack Christianity by mixing truth with lies? Why is this combination so deadly?
2. Why was the Rabshakeh foolish to compare God to idols? How do people do this today in the way they live?

DAY 3

Hezekiah prayed • 2 Kings 18:37–19:7, 14–19

READ

2 Kgs 18:37–19:7, 14–19

EXPLAIN

The truth of 2 Kgs 18:37–19:7, 14–19

Hezekiah's enemies were strong, his resources were low, and his allies were weak. So he went to God's temple and mourned (2 Kgs 19:1). He cast all his burdens upon God (Ps 55:22). He sought God's word through Isaiah (2 Kgs 19:2). He trusted God to respond and defend His own honor (19:4). Isaiah gave hope: Do not fear, for God will make the king of Assyria go away and die (19:5–7). But after a second

message from the Rabshakeh (19:8–13), Hezekiah may have begun to doubt Isaiah's words. So Hezekiah prayed again (19:14–19). He began by remembering who God is, praising Him as the only God and the Maker of all things (19:15). Then he described his need to God (19:16–17), which helped give him the right perspective (19:18). After this he presented his request, asking God to save Judah (19:19a; Phil 4:6–7). Finally, he stated the reason for his request: "That all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone" (2 Kgs 19:19b).

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. What did Hezekiah do after he was told the words of the Rabshakeh?
“He tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the LORD” (2 Kgs 19:1).
2. How did Hezekiah pray?
He depended on God. He let God know his need. He remembered who God is and praised Him. He prayed for God to defend His glory.
3. On what basis did Hezekiah ask God to save Israel?
On the basis of God’s own name. That God might be honored in all the earth (2 Kgs 19:19).

DISCUSS 

1. What are some troubles you have faced or are facing now? Have you brought these troubles to God in prayer? Do your prayer patterns reflect a life of dependence on God?
2. When you ask God for help in prayer, do you also remember to praise and thank Him?

DAY 4*God answered • 2 Kings 19:20–34***READ** 

2 Kings 19:20–34

EXPLAIN **The truth of 2 Kings 19:20–34**

The Rabshakeh mocked, Hezekiah prayed, and now it was God’s turn. Didn’t they realize, He said, that they were messing with “the Holy One of Israel,” not some false god (2 Kgs 19:22)? God is holy, separate, not like other so-called gods. Sennacherib and the Rabshakeh were fools: by raging against God they guaranteed their own defeat (19:27; cf. 1 Sam 17:36). They were also arrogant, claiming credit for themselves even though their victories had been given by God (2 Kgs 19:23–26). Assyria often led away their captives with hooks in their noses, but now God would do the same to them (19:28). While putting Assyria in its place, God would rescue Jerusalem (19:29–31). He would prevent Assyria from stepping foot inside the city (19:32–33). Why was God so zealous to defend Jerusalem? He would do it “for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David” (19:34). Just as Hezekiah had prayed, God always acts for the sake of His own name, for His own glory (Isa 42:8; 48:11), which means He also acts for the sake of His people.

ASK 

1. How did Sennacherib guarantee his own defeat?
By mocking the Holy One of Israel.
2. Who had given Assyria its previous victories in battle?
God.
3. How would God lead Assyria away?
With a hook in their nose, just like Assyria used to lead away their captives.
4. What would God defend Jerusalem?
By protecting those who trust Him, God is defending His own glory.

DISCUSS 

1. Have you ever claimed credit for things that God has allowed you to do? What are some other ways people express pride against God?
2. Why is pride such a bad idea? Why do the proud lead a hard life (Jas 4:6)?

DAY 5

The Assyrians left • 2 Kings 19:35–37

READ

2 Kings 19:35–37

EXPLAIN

The truth of 2 Kings 19:35–37

God had given a huge promise. But would God's word really come true? How could Judah, with no army and no resources, defeat the massive Assyrian army? They couldn't. But God did. In one night the angel of the LORD slaughtered 185,000 Assyrians (2 Kgs 19:35), and those who survived returned to Nineveh (19:36). If just one **angel**, just one **fiery warrior of God**, was able to annihilate a huge army in one night, then nothing is impossible with God (Num 11:23). He is **omnipotent**, **all powerful**. Years later, Sennacherib's own sons assassinated him while he was worshiping his god (2 Kgs 19:37). Clearly his god wasn't so great. Where now is the boasting of Sennacherib and the Rabshakeh? It was silenced, just like all those who set themselves against God (Rom 14:11). But while God casts out the proud, He rescues humble people like Hezekiah (Matt 5:3). He saves all those who trust in Him.

ASK

1. What happened to the Assyrian army?
The angel of the LORD slaughtered 185,000 Assyrians in one night, and the rest went home.
2. What happened to Sennacherib, the king of Assyria?
He was assassinated by his own sons in the temple of his god.
3. What did this prove?
This proved that God alone is God, that He has power over all, and that He can always rescue those who trust in Him.

DISCUSS

1. How many people can fit into a large football stadium? Is this number more or less than the number of Assyrians the Angel of the LORD killed in one night?
2. Does God rescue every believer from the hands of his enemy (Heb 11:32–38)? Why is God not bound to do so?

NEXT WEEK

God punishes Judah

2 Kings 21:1–18; 24:1–25:30



SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON
WEEK 30

God punishes Judah

2 Kings 21:1-18; 24:1-25:30



DAY 1

God's anger against Manasseh • 2 Kings 21:1-18

READ 

2 Kings 21:1-18

EXPLAIN 

The truth of 2 Kings 21:1-18

How could the son of the most faithful king be so wicked? Instead of trusting God's promises like his father Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:5; 19:15-19), Manasseh trusted in false gods, worshiping everything but God (21:1-9). His idolatry was evil, even more wicked than the idolatry of the Canaanites whom the Lord removed from the land (21:9-11). By provoking God's anger, Manasseh guaranteed God's punishment. This punishment would be so terrifying that people would shudder just to hear of it (21:12). The worship of anyone or anything in God's place is irrational (21:2), useless (21:6), rebellious (21:4), faithless (21:7-8), evil (21:9-11), and destructive (21:12-14). Even though Manasseh repented at the end of his life (2 Chr 33:12-16), the damage was done. He left behind a legacy of sin (2 Kgs 21:17), one that even Josiah's reforms could not undo (23:26-27). May Manasseh's flagrant disobedience be a warning: turn from evil and seek God before it is too late (Isa 55:6-7). Those who do will find compassion, but those who do not will be punished severely, for God hates those who do evil (Ps 5:5).

ASK 

1. Who was the most wicked king of Judah? *Manasseh.*
2. What sins did Manasseh commit? *He built high places, worshiped idols (even in God's temple), sacrificed his son, practiced witchcraft, and killed innocent people.*
3. What did God think about Manasseh's sin? *God was angry with Manasseh's sin. He hates sin.*
4. Was Manasseh the only one who sinned? *No. All Judah had rebelled against God since the exodus from Egypt (2 Kgs 21:15).*

DISCUSS 

1. Look again and explain how worshiping anyone or anything but God is irrational (21:2), useless (21:6), rebellious (21:4), faithless (21:7-8), evil (21:9-11), and destructive (21:12-14).
2. What might you be valuing more than God? Why do people continue to prioritize other things above God, even though it is so pointless and wicked?

DAY 2

God's punishment of Judah • 2 Kings 24:1–25:26

READ

2 Kings 24:1–25:26

EXPLAIN

The truth of 2 Kings 24:1–25:26

Sometimes it seems like you can disobey and not get in trouble for it. But be warned: when God judges, judgment comes quickly (Prov 6:15), as it did upon Judah. First, Nebuchadnezzar attacked Egypt (605 B.C.). At this time he took captive some of the Jewish nobility, including Daniel (Dan 1:1–3). Then God sent raiders to punish Judah (602 B.C.) (2 Kgs 24:2–4). Then in 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar took King Jehoiachin, his family, and 10,000 officials, soldiers, and craftsmen to Babylon, including Ezekiel (24:10–16; cf. Ezek 1:1–3). Finally, God banished Judah from His presence (2 Kgs 24:20). There was a two-year siege, during which the people in Jerusalem suffered extreme misery, including cannibalism (25:3; Lam 2:20; 4:10). Finally in 586 B.C., Jerusalem was captured, the temple was destroyed, and the city walls were torn down (2 Kgs 25:9–10). All but the very poorest were taken to Babylon (25:12). In the stupidity of wickedness, the remaining Judeans assassinated the governor Nebuchadnezzar had appointed and disobeyed God by fleeing to Egypt, just as God had predicted (25:25–26; Jer 42:9–43:7; Deut 28:68).

ASK

1. Who did God send to destroy Judah?
God sent the Babylonians.
2. What did Judah suffer, lose, and leave when God punished them?
They suffered a brutal siege. They lost their temple, buildings, walls, gold, bronze, and many lives. They left the promised land. God took away all that God had given them.
3. Why did God destroy Judah?
Because God hates sin and promised to punish sin.

DISCUSS

1. Much suffering comes directly from sin. But what other explanations do people give for their trouble? Without knowing the real problem, will people find the right solution? What are some wrong solutions people try in order to fix problems caused by sin?
2. Judah watched the 10 northern tribes go into exile, but they failed to learn from their example. How can you learn from others' mistakes (1 Cor 10:1–11)?

DAY 3

God's faithfulness to David • 2 Kings 25:27–30

READ

2 Kings 25:27–30

EXPLAIN

The truth of 2 Kings 25:27–30

After several chapters of sin and sadness, there is a glimpse of hope. Around 561 B.C., after Jehoiachin had been in prison for 37 years, he was released and honored above all the other kings in Babylon (2 Kgs 25:27–28). God was still keeping His promise to David (2 Sam 7:12–16). David's dynasty had survived the curse of exile. Eventually, David's line would lead to

Jesus Christ (Matt 1:12), the true Son of David. He is your only reason for hope (Rom 15:12), because the story of Israel's fall shows that your salvation depends on God alone. Left to yourself, you are sinful and do not seek God (Rom 3:10) or live for God's glory (3:23). Apart from Christ, you can expect only certain and unavoidable doom. But Christ died to bear God's wrath against sin (3:24–25) and to give you new life if you believe in Him (6:4–5). In Christ you can be made a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), righteous in God's sight (5:21) and able to live your life pleasing to Him (5:9, 14–15).

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. Who was released from prison at the end of the story?
After 37 years in prison, Jehoiachin was released.
2. What did this show?
This showed that God was not finished with the line of David. The Messiah would still come through David's family.
3. Who is Jehoiachin's descendant?
Jesus (Matt 1:12).

DISCUSS 

1. Nothing can cancel God's promises. Not even your sin! What does this teach you about God?
2. How does the story of Jerusalem's fall show God's faithfulness both to punish and to bless?

DAY 4*God punished Babylon • Jeremiah 25:1-14***READ** 

Jeremiah 25:1-14

EXPLAIN **The truth of Jeremiah 25:1-14**

How could God use the wicked Babylonians and a pagan king to cause such pain and misery to Judah, His chosen people? Judah deserved to be punished, because she had persisted in her sin and would not listen to God's prophets (Jer 25:1-7). Judah would be made a "destruction," "a horror," "a hissing," "an everlasting desolation," "a ruin," and "a waste" (25:9, 11). Their punishment would be so severe that all signs of laughter and happiness would be removed (25:10). All this would be done by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, whom God even called "My servant" (25:9). Does that mean Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians were doing right? No; instead, it shows God's sovereign power. He is able to use even godless kings and nations to accomplish His perfect will. But God is also just. Once He was done using Babylon, He would severely punish Babylon and its king for their wicked violence, making their land an "everlasting waste," just like they had done to Judah (25:2). They would become slaves (25:14), even as they had made many others slaves.

ASK 

1. Who did God use to judge Judah?
Babylon and its king.
2. What does God's use of Babylon, a godless nation, reveal about God's power?
That God is all-powerful. He reigns over all people and nations.
3. Would Babylon escape God's judgment?
No. After God used them for His purpose, He would send other nations to punish Babylon.

DISCUSS 

1. What wicked nations or rulers do you know of? Are they outside of God's control? Will they escape God's justice? How does this give you comfort, courage, and hope?
2. When one person or nation defeats another, does that mean the winner was a better person or nation in God's eyes? Why do the more wicked sometimes win?

DAY 5

Jesus will punish every unbeliever • Revelation 20:11–15

READ

Revelation 20:11–15

EXPLAIN

The truth of Revelation 20:11–15

Do you take God's kindness for granted? God is very kind and patient, giving many opportunities to repent and mercifully forgiving those who do. But the purpose of His patience is to lead us to repent (Rom 2:4). Eventually, His patience comes to an end. When a person dies in unbelief, the opportunity to repent is over (Heb 9:27). They will be kept for the final judgment, when God will punish evil with great wrath (2 Pet 3:9–10). After Christ's 1,000-year earthly kingdom (Rev 20:1–6), Satan will lead a final rebellion against God and His people (20:7–9a). God will destroy this rebellion with fire from heaven (20:9b), and He will throw Satan into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever (20:10). Then God will gather all the unbelievers of all ages for final judgment (20:11–15). At this event, called the great white throne judgment, Jesus will judge every unbeliever according to their deeds (Rev 20:13; John 5:22–29; Acts 17:31). Then He will cast into the lake of fire all those whose names are not found in the book of life (3:5; Dan 12:1).

ASK

1. Does there come a time when it's too late to repent of our sins?
Yes. God will judge every unbeliever at the great white throne judgment.
2. How will unbelievers be judged at the great white throne judgment?
According to their deeds while on earth, since they never accepted Christ's righteousness.
3. What is the book of life?
A record of every person who has received salvation.

DISCUSS

1. How would you respond if someone said, "I want to have fun now, and I can repent later"? Why is it important that you do not delay to call upon Jesus for salvation?
2. Pray for the salvation of three family members or friends.

NEXT WEEK

God shows mercy to Jonah and Nineveh

Jonah 1:1–4:11



SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON
WEEK 31

God shows mercy to Jonah and Nineveh

Jonah 1:1-4:11



DAY 1

God called Jonah to preach to Gentiles • Jonah 1:1-17

READ 

Jonah 1:1-17

EXPLAIN 

The truth of Jonah 1:1-17

Who is in charge of saving? When you treat others as less than yourself, you are acting like it somehow depends on you. That's what Jonah did. Jonah refused to preach to Nineveh because Nineveh was a Gentile city and belonged to Israel's enemy, the Assyrians. Jonah preferred his comfortable life in Israel, which was peaceful and prosperous at that time (2 Kgs 14:25). But even though Jonah fled from God's presence (Jonah 1:3), God was still present (Ps 139:7-10) and still in control of salvation. As the ruler over nature (Ps 29:10), God hurled a violent storm at the ship (Jonah 1:4). As the ruler over chance, He controlled the lot to identify Jonah (1:7; Prov 16:33). Jonah was oblivious to God's intervention (Jonah 1:5), his profession contradicted his actions (1:9), and he preferred death over repentance (1:12). But God still saved. Jonah had fled from preaching to the Gentiles, non-Jews, but now God used him to convert Gentile sailors (1:16)! Jonah had run from God's command, but now by God's command a fish saved Jonah's life. Truly, salvation belongs to God, not to you or anyone else.

ASK 

1. Where did God tell Jonah to go? *Nineveh.*
2. Why didn't Jonah want to go to Nineveh? *The Ninevites were Gentiles and enemies of Israel. Jonah did not want them to be saved.*
3. Is it possible to run away from God? *No, because God is everywhere.*
4. How did God use Jonah to save the Gentile sailors? *God sent a storm, guided the lots, and used Jonah's confession to reveal Himself to the sailors.*

DISCUSS 

1. Have you ever refused to obey God or your parents because it made you feel uncomfortable?
2. God is present everywhere (Ps 139:7-10). Does this encourage you or scare you?

DAY 2

God saved Jonah, and Jonah gave thanks • Jonah 2:1–10

READ

Jonah 2:1–10

EXPLAIN

The truth of Jonah 2:1–10

Do you ever act like you have done something to earn God's salvation? Do you look down on others, as if you are a Christian because you are better than them? Jonah did this in chapter 1, acting like he could decide who deserved salvation. But he was soon very thankful that salvation depends on God! As he sank deeper into the water, he could not save himself. He praised and trusted God as the One who is sovereign and in control. He was on the verge of death, so he cried out to God from the depths of the sea (2:1–6a). Despite Jonah's disobedience, God was still gracious. God heard his cry and sent a large fish to rescue him (1:17). At this point, Jonah believed that salvation belongs to God, at least when he was the one being saved (2:9). You also face death, eternal death (Rom 6:23). Do you look to God alone to save you, or do you think you can still somehow save yourself?

ASK

1. Why did the fish swallow Jonah?
God commanded it to.
2. What did Jonah do in the belly of the fish?
He praised God for hearing his prayer.
3. How was Jonah's heart humbled in the belly of the fish?
He acknowledged God's sovereignty (Jonah 2:1–3), submitted to it (2:4–9), cried out to God from the depths of the sea (2:1–6a), and admitted that salvation belongs to God (2:9).
4. Why did the fish spit Jonah out on dry land?
God commanded it to.

DISCUSS

1. God sent the fish not to punish Jonah, but to rescue him. What would have happened to Jonah had God not sent the fish?
2. Have your parents ever helped you when your own disobedience got you in trouble? Has God shown you mercy when you were disobedient (Rom 5:8)?

DAY 3

God called Jonah to Preach to Gentiles again • Jonah 3:1–10

READ

Jonah 3:1–10

EXPLAIN

The truth of Jonah 3:1–10

God's mercy is very great! God again commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh, but this time, God called Nineveh (literally) "a great city to God," hinting at God's great compassion for the people there (Jonah 4:11). But Jonah still didn't value God's compassion for others. Even though Jonah obeyed (3:1–3), his heart was not in it (cf. 4:1–3). He preached only one day, and his message was brief and incomplete (3:3–4).

Jonah hoped for destruction, but salvation belongs to God. God proved this by using Jonah's reluctant message to bring all the Ninevites to true repentance. Imagine the noise created by a city full of hungry children and livestock! The Ninevites turned from their evil ways and entrusted themselves completely to God (3:8–9). So God saved them, because God abundantly pardons all who repent (Isa 55:6–7). Just as God saved the Gentile sailors, so now He saved the Gentile Ninevites. Does God's mercy upset you, as it did Jonah? Or, like the Ninevites, do you realize the greatness of your sin, repent, and run to Him for mercy?

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. Did Jonah's heart fully belong to God?
No. He preached only one day, and his message was brief and incomplete.
2. Why did God save the Ninevites?
God saved them because He always planned to save Gentiles (Gen 12:3), and because He is full of compassion.
3. What did the Ninevites do in order to be saved?
They repented and trusted. They did not think they could earn salvation. Instead, they turned to God and hoped He would save them.

DISCUSS 

1. The Ninevites were a wicked people, but God still saved them. What does this reveal about God's mercy?
2. The Ninevites did nothing to earn salvation, but God still saved them. What does this reveal about God's grace?

DAY 4*God confronted Jonah's selfish anger • Jonah 4:1–11***READ** 

Jonah 4:1–11

EXPLAIN **The truth of Jonah 4:1–11**

When someone gets a gift they didn't deserve, are you happy for them or angry? Jonah was angry. He did not want the Ninevites to get the gift of God's grace, mercy, patience, and love (4:1–4). He wanted God's **mercy** for himself when he was drowning, but he didn't think the Ninevites were worthy of God's underserved kindness. Jonah wanted to decide who was and who wasn't worthy of grace. So God gave Jonah an object lesson (4:5–7). If Jonah cared so much about a plant (4:8–9), why shouldn't God care about a very large city, especially one containing 120,000 children (4:10–11)? Jonah was totally unreasonable: if he cared about a plant, he should at least care for Nineveh's animals (4:11)! Jonah needed to realize that salvation belongs to God. Is that your great hope? When you see your sin and repeated failure, do you remember that God "is my rock and my salvation, my fortress...on God rests my salvation and my glory" (Ps 62:6–7). Do you trust entirely in God's overflowing compassion (Ps 119:156) and power to save (Zeph 3:17)?

ASK 

1. Was Jonah right to be angry?
No. Since he was happy for God to show mercy to him, he should have been happy for God to show mercy to Nineveh too.
2. What object lesson did God give Jonah?
A plant that grew up over Jonah's head and provided him with shade. The next day God caused a worm to attack the plant.
3. Why was God right to spare the Ninevites?
Salvation belongs to God, so He can save whomever He wants. He has always planned to save Gentiles, and He promises to save those who repent and trust in Him.

DISCUSS 

1. Are you ever discouraged by your own sin and failure? How does the truth that salvation belongs to God encourage you (Ps 62:6–7)?
2. Do you show grace to those who offend you (Matt 18:21–35)?

DAY 5

The sign of Jonah • Matthew 12:38–42

READ

Matthew 12:38–42

EXPLAIN

The truth of Matthew 12:38–42

Despite Jonah's rebellion and anger, in some important ways he prefigured Christ. When the unrepentant Jewish Pharisees asked for a sign to confirm Christ's message, Jesus gave them the sign of Jonah (Matt 12:39; 16:4). Like Jonah's miraculous survival in a fish, Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection would confirm His message (12:40). Jonah preached this message only half-heartedly, but the Ninevites believed his words, repented, and received salvation in a massive spiritual revival (12:41). Unlike Jonah, Jesus preached whole-heartedly. But the Jews of His day refused to repent and believe. So Jesus declared that the Ninevites would rise up at the judgment and condemn them. The Ninevites proved to the unrepentant Jews that salvation belongs not to the self-righteous but to those who respond to God's message and seek His compassion (12:41). The queen of the South will rise up too (1 Kgs 10:1–13), for she came to see Solomon's glory while the hard-hearted Jewish leaders despised the glory of God (Matt 12:42). So be warned: don't depend on your own goodness, but only on the mercy of God.

ASK

1. What is the sign of Jonah?
Jesus would be in the ground three days and nights like Jonah in the fish.
2. Why did Jesus give the Pharisees the sign of Jonah?
They refused to believe and thought they were better than the Gentiles. The sign of Jonah showed they needed to repent and believe like the Gentile Ninevites.
3. Who will condemn the unrepentant Jews at the judgment?
The repentant Ninevites and the queen of Sheba, for they responded to God's message while the Pharisees did not.

DISCUSS

1. Do you think you are going to heaven? If so, why? What are you depending on to get you there (Luke 18:10–14)?
2. Why is it wrong to seek miraculous signs when the Bible clearly presents the truth about God, man, and salvation (Matt 12:39)? How often have you heard God's truth?

NEXT WEEK

God uses Esther to protect His people

Esther 1:1–10:3

