

Suffering and Deliverance

Pastor Chad Wagner

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- I. Suffering, affliction, persecution, tribulation, and trouble are part of the Christian life (**Act 14:22**).
 1. Sometimes God delivers His children from these difficulties.
 2. At other times God allows us to experience them for various reasons.
 3. This study will cover the following topics:
 - A. God is our Saviour, not only eternally, but also temporally.
 - B. When and why God allows us to suffer and doesn't deliver us from it.
 - C. Examples of when God doesn't even deliver His children from death.
 - D. Three possibilities of how judgment will be meted out to a nation.
 - E. Biblical examples of God either delivering a people for the righteous among them or delivering the righteous alone.
 - F. Having hope because of past deliverances, both Biblical and personal.
- II. Along with His many other attributes, God is our Saviour (**2Sa 22:3; Psalms 106:21; Tit 1:3**).
 1. Saviour *n.* - 1. a. One who delivers or rescues from peril.
 - A. To deliver is to save from something.
 - B. Deliver *v.* - I. 1. *trans.* To set free, liberate, release, rescue, save. Const. *from, out of, of.* a. To release *from* a place. b. Now *esp.* To set free *from* restraint, imminent danger, annoyance, trouble, or evil generally.
 2. First, foremost, and most importantly, God has delivered us from eternal death and punishment in hell and the lake of fire (**1Th 1:10; Rom 5:9-10; Rev 20:15**).
 3. But that's not the only thing God has delivered us from.
 4. There are many different types of deliverances/salvations (**Psalms 44:4**).
 5. God delivers us from:
 - A. falling and tears (**Psalms 116:8; Jud 1:24; Phil 1:6; 2Ti 1:12 c/w Pro 24:16**)
 - B. our enemies (**Psalms 44:7; Psalms 136:24; Luk 1:71, 74**)
 - C. trouble (**Psalms 41:1; Psalms 50:15; Psalms 91:14-15**)
 - i. Trouble *n.* - 1. a. Disturbance of mind or feelings; worry, vexation; affliction; grief; perplexity; distress.
 - ii. Do you struggle with worry, stress, or depression?
 - iii. Call upon the Lord and He will save you from it (**Psalms 116:3-8**).
 - D. violence (**2Sa 22:3**)
 - E. persecution (**Psalms 7:1, 13; Psalms 31:15; Psalms 35:3; 2Ti 3:11**)
 - i. Persecute *v.* - 1. To pursue, chase, hunt, drive (with missiles, or with attempts to catch, kill, or injure). *Obs.* 2. To pursue with malignancy or enmity and injurious action; *esp.* to oppress with pains and penalties for the holding of a belief or opinion held to be injurious or heretical.
 - ii. If you endeavor to live a godly life, you shall suffer persecution (**2Ti 3:12**).
 - iii. But if you trust in God, He will deliver you from it.
 - F. distresses (**Psalms 107:13, 23-30**)
 - i. Distress *n.* - I. 1. a. The action or fact of straining or pressing tightly, strain, stress, pressure; *fig.* pressure employed to produce action, constraint, compulsion; less usually, pressure applied to prevent action, restraint. 2. a. The sore pressure or strain of adversity, trouble, sickness, pain, or sorrow; anguish or affliction affecting the body, spirit, or community.

- ii. Are you under pressure and stressed?
 - a. First of all search your heart and your life to see if it's not a result of your own foolish decisions (**Psa 107:17-18**).
 - b. Then cry unto the Lord and He will save you out of it (**Psa 107:19**).
 - iii. But don't expect this to happen though if you're not willing to change your lifestyle.
- G. death (**Psa 55:18; Psa 116:8**)
- 6. Many times in Israel's history God gave them saviours to save them out of the hands of their enemies when they cried unto Him (**Neh 9:27; Isa 19:20**).
- 7. Though the Lord used other men to be saviours of his people in a temporal sense, God is the only true Saviour (**Isa 43:3 c/w Isa 43:11; Hos 13:4**) of His people spiritually and eternally (**Tit 3:4-5 c/w 2Ti 1:9**).
- 8. Jesus Christ, who is God (**Joh 1:1, 14**), is our Saviour (**Php 3:20; Tit 1:4; 2Pe 1:1**).

III. Sometimes God causes or allows us to suffer and does not deliver us from it for various reasons.

1. Christians are appointed to affliction by God (**1Th 3:3; Act 9:16**).
 - A. Affliction *n.* - 1. The action of inflicting grievous pain or trouble. 2. The state of being afflicted; sore pain of body or trouble of mind; misery, distress.
 - B. Appointed *ppl.* - 1. Fixed by agreement; settled beforehand. 2. Fixed by authority; ordained.
 - C. In the same way that God has given us the gift of faith (**Rom 12:3**), so he has given us the gift of suffering for His sake (**Php 1:29**).
 - D. When God chose Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles, He also ordained that he would suffer greatly for Him (**Act 9:15-16**).
 - E. The more wisdom, knowledge, and faith that is given to a person, the more grief, sorrow, and chastisement he should expect to receive from God (**Ecc 1:18; Ecc 7:4; Luk 12:47-48**).
 - i. Grief *n.* - 1. Hardship, suffering; a kind, or cause, of hardship or suffering.
 - ii. Sorrow *n.* - 1. a. Distress of mind caused by loss, suffering, disappointment, etc.; grief, deep sadness or regret; also, that which causes grief or melancholy; affliction, trouble.
 - iii. Stripe *n.* - 1. A blow or stroke with a staff, sword, or other weapon, with a missile, with the claws or hoofs of an animal, etc. 2. A stroke or lash with a whip or scourge. Now *arch.*, chiefly in *pl.*
 - F. Jesus Christ, our Lord, Master, and Saviour, was a man of sorrows (**Isa 53:3**).
 - i. As His disciples we should expect to suffer like He did (**Joh 15:20**).
 - ii. The multitude of the elect which no man could number that John saw in heaven had come out of great tribulation (**Rev 7:9, 14**).
 - iii. So if you're a Christian, or desire to be one, don't expect to get through this life without suffering.
2. God may permit suffering for the purpose of:
3. punishment
 - A. When God's people are living like the heathen, God will punish them with the heathen (**Jer 9:25-26**).

- B. Punish v. - 1. a. *trans.* As an act of a superior or of public authority: To cause (an offender) to suffer for an offence; to subject to judicial chastisement as retribution or requital, or as a caution against further transgression; to inflict a penalty on.
- C. If God's church (which Jerusalem was symbolic of) is living in wickedness, it will not be unpunished when God judges the world (**Jer 25:29**).
- D. God will not completely destroy His people when they are judged with the world, but they will not be left unpunished (**Jer 30:11**).
- E. The LORD chastens whom He loves (**Heb 12:5-8**).
 - i. The chastening is grievous (**Heb 12:11**).
 - ii. But its purpose is to bring about the peaceable fruit of righteousness (**Heb 12:11**).
 - iii. Wise people will recognize God's punishment, receive it, and correct their behavior (**Pro 9:9**).
 - iv. But fools will be ground to powder and never change (**Pro 27:22**).

4. growth and improvement through suffering

- A. Sometimes God lets us suffer to humble us and strengthen us as we rely on Him (**2Co 12:7-10**).
 - i. Paul had a thorn in the flesh which buffeted him (v.7).
 - a. Thorn n. - 1. A stiff, sharp-pointed, straight or curved woody process on the stem or other part of a plant; a spine, a prickle. 2. *fig.* (or in *fig.* context): Anything that causes pain, grief, or trouble; in various metaphors, similes, and proverbial expressions, as *a thorn in the flesh* or *side*, a constant affliction, a source of continual grief, trouble, or annoyance; (*to be, sit, stand, walk*) *on thorns (a thorn)*, (*to be, etc.*) in a painful state of anxiety or suspense.
 - b. Whatever Paul's thorn in the flesh was, it was a continual source of grief, trouble, and pain for him.
 - c. Buffet v. - 1. *trans.* To beat, strike, esp. with the hand; to thump, cuff, knock about.
 - ii. He suffered with infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and distresses (v.10).
 - a. Infirmity n. - 1. Weakness or want of strength; lack of power to do something; inability. Also with *pl.* an instance or case of this. 2. Physical weakness, debility, frailty, feebleness of body, resulting from some constitutional defect, disease, or (now mostly) old age.
 - b. Reproach n. - 1. A source or cause of disgrace or shame (*to* a person, etc.); a fact, matter, feature or quality bringing disgrace or discredit upon one.
 - c. Necessity n. - 1. a. The fact of being inevitably fixed or determined. *Obs.* 10. a. The condition of being in difficulties or straits, esp. through lack of means; want, poverty. 11. A situation of hardship or difficulty; a pressing need or want. (Chiefly in *pl.*)
 - d. Persecution n. 1. a. The action of persecuting or pursuing with enmity and malignity; esp. the infliction of death, torture, or penalties for adherence to a religious belief or an opinion as such, with a view

to the repression or extirpation of it; the fact of being persecuted; an instance of this.

- e. Distress *n.* - 1. a. The action or fact of straining or pressing tightly, strain, stress, pressure; fig. pressure employed to produce action, constraint, compulsion; less usually, pressure applied to prevent action, restraint. 2. a. The sore pressure or strain of adversity, trouble, sickness, pain, or sorrow; anguish or affliction affecting the body, spirit, or community.
 - iii. Paul took pleasure in these afflictions because God made him strong through his weakness (v.10).
 - iv. Pleasure *n.* - 1. a. The condition of consciousness or sensation induced by the enjoyment or anticipation of what is felt or viewed as good or desirable; enjoyment, delight, gratification. The opposite of *pain*.
- B. Temptations and trials work patience which works in us to bring us to perfection (**Jam 1:2-4; Jam 1:12**).
- i. Patience *n.* - 1. a. The suffering or enduring (of pain, trouble, or evil) with calmness and composure; the quality or capacity of so suffering or enduring.
 - ii. Perfect *adj.* - 1. Thoroughly made, formed, done, performed, carried out, accomplished. *Obs.* 2. a. Fully accomplished; thoroughly versed, trained, skilled, or conversant. 4. a. In the state of complete excellence; free from any flaw or imperfection of quality; faultless. But often used of a near approach to such a state, and hence capable of comparison, *perfecter* (= more nearly perfect), *perfectest* (= nearest to perfection).
 - iii. Without suffering and enduring pain, trouble, and evil we would never learn to do so with calmness and composure and would therefore not grow into mature Christians.
- C. Tribulation works patience which works experience which brings hope (**Rom 5:3-5**).
- i. Tribulation *n.* - 1. A condition of great affliction, oppression, or misery; 'persecution; distress; vexation; disturbance of life'
 - ii. Experience *n.* - 1. a. The action of putting to the test; trial. *to make experience of*: to make trial of. 2. Proof by actual trial; practical demonstration. *to put in experience*: to fulfil in practice. *Obs.*; passing into 3. 3. The actual observation of facts or events, considered as a source of knowledge.
 - iii. Hope *n.* - 1. a. Expectation of something desired; desire combined with expectation.
 - iv. Hope, along with faith and charity, is one of the three chief Christian virtues (**1Co 13:13**).
 - v. In order to have the lofty virtue of hope we must endure suffering affliction, oppression, and misery.
 - vi. Hope will save us temporally, enabling us to faithfully finish our course in this life (**Rom 8:24-25**).
- D. The Lord lays affliction on us to prove us and try us as silver is tried (**Psa 66:10-11**).

- i. Prove v. - 1. a. *trans.* To make trial of, put to the test; to try the genuineness or qualities of; to try, test.
 - ii. Try v. - 1. a. *trans.* To separate (one thing) from another or others; to set apart; to distinguish. 2. a. To separate the good part of a thing from the rest, esp. by sifting or straining; hence, to sift or strain. 3. *spec.* To separate (metal) from the ore or dross by melting; to refine, purify by fire; also, to remove (the dross or impurity) from metal by fire.
 - iii. When God tries His children He separates the men from the boys.
 - iv. Silver has to be put through the fire to remove impurities from it (**Pro 25:4**).
 - v. Likewise the Lord tries our hearts to remove sin from them (**Pro 17:3; Mal 3:3**).
 - vi. God tries our work and burns off that which is not profitable in our service to Him and leaves what is (**1Co 3:12-15**).
 - vii. If we purge ourselves of our dishonorable qualities we will be prepared for greater service to God (**2Ti 2:20-21**).
- E. Another way God brings suffering into our lives for the purpose of growth and improvement is through marriage.
- i. Marriage is a great blessing, but it is also a source of trouble (**1Co 7:28**).
 - ii. Trouble n. - 1. a. Disturbance of mind or feelings; worry, vexation; affliction; grief; perplexity; distress.
 - iii. Getting married will bring out carnality and character flaws in you that you didn't know about and which would not have been revealed otherwise.
 - a. Marriage will (or should) greatly facilitate growth in the Christian life.
 - b. It is important for husbands and wives to correct sinful and foolish behavior and tendencies in their spouse because nobody else will.
 - c. When your spouse smites you (figuratively, of course) because of your sinful or foolish behavior, realize that God is using him or her to improve your character, and thank him or her for loving you enough to correct you (**Psa 141:5**).
 - iv. Marriage will give you a graduate level course in bearing trouble patiently and learning to both forgive and ask to be forgiven.

5. an example of suffering patiently to others

- A. God allowed the prophets to suffer as an example to us of how to suffer patiently (**Jam 5:10**).
- i. Example n. 1. A typical instance; a fact, incident, quotation, etc. that illustrates, or forms a particular case of, a general principle, rule, state of things, etc.; a person or thing that may be taken as an illustration of a certain quality. 6. A person's action or conduct regarded as an object of imitation; often qualified by adjs. *good, bad, evil*, etc. Phrases, *to give, leave, set an example*. Also, a person whose conduct ought to be imitated; a 'pattern' of excellence.
- ii. Consider just a few of the prophets.
 - a. Think about prophets like Jeremiah who was persecuted and was imprisoned in horrible conditions for preaching the truth.

- b. Consider Elijah who stood alone against hundreds of prophets of Baal and was persecuted by the king and queen of Israel.
 - c. Think about Micaiah who was persecuted by king Ahab for telling him the truth in opposition to the other 400 false prophets.
 - d. (Details will be given on these prophets later in the study.)
 - iii. The examples which the prophets left us of suffering patiently have provided millions of Christians with hope and courage for thousands of years.
 - iv. Their suffering had a purpose that extended beyond their own lives.
 - v. God allows us to suffer for the same purpose.
- B. God allowed Job to suffer unimaginably as an example for us to endure affliction patiently (**Jam 5:11**).
 - i. Endure *v.* - II. To last; to suffer continuously. 2. *intr.* To last, continue in existence. Also, to persist, 'hold out' in any action, etc. 3. *trans.* To undergo, bear, sustain (continuous pain, opposition, hardship, or annoyance); properly, to undergo without succumbing or giving way.
 - ii. Those who continue in pain, opposition, hardship, or annoyance without giving up are blessed.
 - iii. They are a good example to others.
- C. The Lord allowed Paul, our apostle, to suffer long and endure persecutions and afflictions as an example for us to learn from (**2Ti 3:10-11**).
 - i. Paul's suffering was "fully known" (**2Ti 3:10**) to Timothy and others because he as a minister of God was to serve as our pattern and example (**Tit 2:7; 1Ti 4:12; 2Th 3:9**).
 - ii. Paul was longsuffering (**2Ti 3:10**).
 - iii. Longsuffering *n.* - Patient endurance of provocation or trial; longanimity.
 - iv. He wrote about his tremendous suffering so that Christians would have an example to follow. Consider the things he suffered (**2Co 11:23-28**):
 - a. Paul received stripes "above measure" (v.23).
 - (i) Stripe *n.* - 1. A blow or stroke with a staff, sword, or other weapon, with a missile, with the claws or hoofs of an animal, etc. 2. A stroke or lash with a whip or scourge. Now *arch.*, chiefly in *pl.*
 - 1. Whip *n.* - 1. a. An instrument for flogging or beating, consisting either of a rigid rod or stick with a lash of cord, leather, etc. attached, or of a flexible switch with or without a lash, used for driving horses, chastising human beings, and other purposes.
 - 2. Scourge *n.* - 1. a. A whip, lash. Now only rhetorical, with reference to the torturing of human beings, or to ascetic discipline.
 - 3. Lash *n.* - 1. a. *gen.* A sudden or violent blow; a dashing or sweeping stroke (obs.). b. *spec.* A stroke with a thong or whip.
 - (ii) Above *adv.* - 7. Higher in degree; surpassing in quality; in excess of, beyond; more than. *above all*: beyond everything;

- first of all; chiefly. *above measure*: beyond or more than what is meet; in excess of moderation; excessively.
- (iii) Measure *n.* - II. Prescribed or limited extent or quantity. 10. What is commensurate or adequate; satisfaction (of appetite, desire, need). *Obs.* 12. a. An extent not to be exceeded; a limit. b. In advb. phr. *beyond (above, without, over) measure*, also *out of measure, out of all measure* (arch.): beyond all bounds, excessively. Formerly (esp. Sc.) used also predicatively = boundless, unlimited, excessive.
 - (iv) Paul was whipped and scourged excessively far beyond what was called for for his supposed crimes.
- b. Paul was in prison frequently (v.23).
- (i) First century Roman prisons were dreadful places.
 - (ii) They would have been dark, cold or hot, filthy, and very uncomfortable.
 - (iii) Prisoners were often put in chains (**Act 12:6; Act 21:33; Act 28:20; 2Ti 1:16**) or in the stocks (**Act 16:24**).
 - (iv) Stock *n.* - 17. Stocks, plu. A machine consisting of two pieces of timber, in which the legs of criminals are confined by way of punishment. (Webster's 1828)
 - (v) Even when Paul knew that prison time and affliction awaited him, it did not move him because he didn't count his life dear unto himself (**Act 20:23-24**).
 - (vi) Paul was an example to us to not be afraid of imprisonment for practicing our faith.
- c. Paul "oft" faced death (v.23).
- (i) Oft *adv.* - a. = often
 - (ii) Often *adv.* - 1. a. Many times; at many times, on numerous occasions; frequently. Opposed to *seldom*.
 - (iii) He indeed did face death or was nigh unto it often (**2Co 1:9; Act 23:12; Act 27:20; etc.**).
- d. Paul received 39 stripes from the Jews five different times (v.24).
- (i) The Jewish beatings were limited to 40 stripes (**Deut 25:2-3**).
 - (ii) It was tradition for them to never exceed 39 stripes.
 - (iii) Being beat with 39 strikes of a rod or a whip would be excruciatingly painful.
 - (iv) These five beatings were in addition to the "stripes without measure" which he listed earlier (v.23).
- e. Paul was beaten with rods three times (v.25).
- (i) Rod *n.* - I. 1. a. A straight, slender shoot or wand, growing upon or cut from a tree, bush, etc. 2. a. An instrument of punishment, either one straight stick, or a bundle of twigs bound together.
 - (ii) These beatings were in addition to the "stripes without measure" (v.23) and the five times he was given 39 stripes by the Jews (v.24).

- f. Paul was stoned once (v.25).
 - (i) Stoned *ppl.* - 1. Pelted with stones.
 - (ii) Stone *v.* - 1. a. *trans.* To throw stones at, pelt with stones; esp. to put to death by pelting with stones.
 - (iii) It doesn't take much imagination to know how painful a stoning would be.
 - 1. Have you ever been hit in the head or the body with a stone or even a baseball?
 - 2. Imagine that pain, multiplied by 100, simultaneously.
 - (iv) Paul was left for dead after being stoned in Lystra (**Act 14:19**).
 - (v) After being left for dead, Paul rose up and went to Derbe the next day and preached the gospel there (**Act 14:20-21**).
 - (vi) After preaching the gospel in Derbe and teaching many, Paul returned to Lystra where he had been stoned and confirmed the disciples there and exhorted them to continue in the faith and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (**Act 14:21-22**).
 - (vii) Paul suffered tremendously but nevertheless continued in the faith as an excellent example for us to follow.
- g. Paul suffered shipwreck three times (v.25).
 - (i) This would have put him at his wits' end (**Psa 107:23-27**).
 - (ii) He despaired even of life (**Act 27:20**).
- h. Paul spent a night and a day in the deep (v.25).
 - (i) He was apparently floating in the ocean for 24 hours after one of those shipwrecks.
 - (ii) That would have been miserable.
- i. Paul spent a lot of time journeying away from home (v.26).
 - (i) He spent years away from home during his evangelistic trips.
 - (ii) This would have been wearying and would have made him homesick.
- j. Paul was in perils of waters (v.26).
 - (i) Peril *n.* - 1. a. The position or condition of being imminently exposed to the chance of injury, loss, or destruction; risk, jeopardy, danger.
 - (ii) These perilous times in waters were likely in addition to the three shipwrecks he suffered and the night and a day he spent in the deep.
 - (iii) After these frightening experiences, Paul continued his evangelistic trips because his faith had not been shaken.
- k. Paul was in perils of robbers (v.26).
 - (i) Robber *n.* - 1. a. One who practises or commits robbery; a predator, plunderer, despoiler.
 - (ii) Thieves would not only take the victim's money and possessions, but would often badly wound him in the process (**Luk 10:30**).

- (iii) This would have caused Paul physical suffering as well as emotional suffering due to fear and anxiety.
- l. Paul was in perils by his own countrymen (v.26).
 - (i) Countryman *n.* - 2. A man of one's own country, a fellow-countryman; a compatriot; usually with *possessive*.
 - (ii) His countrymen were the Jews (**Rom 9:3-4**).
 - (iii) The Jews persecuted Paul from city to city trying to have him killed (**1Th 2:14-15; Act 13:50; Act 14:5-6, 19; Act 17:5; Act 18:12; Act 20:3, 19; Act 21:27-31; Act 22:22; Act 23:12**).
- m. Paul was in perils by the heathen (v.26).
 - (i) Heathen *n.* - 1. Applied to persons or races whose religion is neither Christian, Jewish, nor Muslim; pagan; Gentile. In earlier times applied also to Muslims; but in modern usage, for the most part, restricted to those holding polytheistic beliefs, esp. when uncivilized or uncultured.
 - (ii) Paul was not only persecuted by the Jews, but also by the Gentiles.
 - (iii) Sometimes Paul was in danger of being harmed by the Gentiles because the envious Jews stirred them up against him (**Act 14:2, 5; Act 17:5; Act 22:22-25**).
 - (iv) Their problems with him often were a result of his preaching or actions harming them financially (**Act 16:16-24; Act 19:23-30**).
 - (v) Paul fought with beasts at Ephesus which were either Gentiles called beasts or literal beasts which he was thrown to by Gentiles (**1Co 15:32**).
- n. Paul was in perils in the city (v.26).
 - (i) He experienced numerous perils in the cities he traveled to and preached in.
 - (ii) Paul was assaulted in cities like Lystra (**Act 14**), Philippi (**Act 16**), Ephesus (**Act 19**), and Jerusalem (**Act 21**).
- o. Paul was in perils in the wilderness (v.26).
 - (i) Though it is not recorded, Paul no doubt faced danger from wild animals, rough terrain, severe weather, and thieves as he made his way through the wilderness between cities on his trips.
 - (ii) One example is when he got bit by a venomous snake while warming himself by a fire (**Act 28:3-5**).
- p. Paul was in perils in the sea (v.26).
 - (i) Acts 27 tells the account of one of Paul perilous times in the sea.
 - (ii) He was shipwrecked three times and spent a night and a day in the water (v.25).
- q. Paul was in perils among false brethren (v.26).

- (i) Peril *n.* - . a. The position or condition of being imminently exposed to the chance of injury, loss, or destruction; risk, jeopardy, danger.
- (ii) Perils can also be of a spiritual nature (**2Ti 3:1-5**).
- (iii) False brethren can cause a pastor and a church much injury and danger.
 1. They creep into the church unawares (**Gal 2:4; Jud 1:4**).
 2. They draw away disciples after them with deceptive false doctrine (**Act 20:29-30; Eph 4:14; Gal 1:6-7; Gal 3:1; 2Ti 2:16-19**).
 3. They will forsake us when times get tough (**2Ti 1:15-16; 2Ti 4:14-16**).
- (iv) False brethren are a great source of suffering for God's people (**Php 3:18-19; Act 20:31**).
- (v) But they're also used by God to help the church grow spiritually and purge it of people who shouldn't be there (**1Co 11:19; 1Jo 2:19**).
- (vi) Paul suffered perils of false brethren as an example to us of how to do so.
- r. Paul was in weariness (v.27).
 - (i) Weariness *n.* - 1. Weary condition; extreme tiredness or fatigue resulting from exertion, continued endurance of pain, or want of sleep.
 - (ii) Weary *adj.* - I. 1. a. Having the feeling of loss of strength, languor, and need for rest, produced by continued exertion (physical or mental), endurance of severe pain, or wakefulness; tired, fatigued. Now with stronger sense: Intensely tired, worn out with fatigue.
 - (iii) Paul was extremely and intensely tired due to many things such as his much studying (**Ecc 12:12**), long journeys, spiritual warfare, preaching the gospel, contending for the faith, and caring for the churches (**2Co 11:28-29**).
 - (iv) Some pastors have killed themselves or nearly killed themselves doing the work of the ministry (**Php 2:30; 2Co 12:15**).
 - (v) Doing the right thing can be wearying, but we must not let it stop us (**Gal 6:9; 2Th 3:13**).
 1. It's worth being weary to do the Lord's work.
 2. God will satiate the weary soul and fill the sorrowful soul (**Jer 31:25**).
 3. God is never weary, and He has plenty of strength to give to the weary so that they will finish running their course (**Isa 40:28-31**).
 4. God's strength is made perfect in our weakness (**2Co 12:9-10**).

- (vi) If you are weary from doing things God never told you to do, or, worse yet, from doing things which God told you not to do in His word, then come unto Jesus, live your life under His easy and light yoke, and you will find rest (**Mat 11:28-30**).
- (vii) Paul suffered weariness as an example to us of how to do so.
- s. Paul was in painfulness (v.27).
 - (i) Painfulness *n.* - 1. The quality of being fraught or attended with pain; distressingness. Also in passive aspect: The condition of suffering pain; distress, affliction.
 - (ii) The stoning, beatings, the imprisonments, and all of the stress and mental anguish Paul endured was very painful.
 - (iii) As the old saying goes though, "no pain, no gain."
 - (iv) The pain Paul endured facilitated his growth as a Christian and a minister.
- t. Paul was in watchings often (v.27).
 - (i) Watching *n.* - 1. The action of the verb *watch* in various senses. *lit.* and *fig.* 2. The state or condition of being awake, wakefulness; often, wakefulness from disinclination or incapacity for sleep; an instance of this.
 - (ii) Watch *n.* - I. Wakefulness, vigil. 1. a. The state of being awake; voluntary or involuntary going without sleep; wakefulness.
 - (iii) Watch *v.* - 1. a. To be or remain awake.
 - (iv) Often *adv.* - 1. a. Many times; at many times, on numerous occasions; frequently. Opposed to *seldom*.
 - (v) Paul was awake at night frequently.
 - (vi) This was likely because of all of the perils he faced which either kept his mind racing at night, or required that he stay up to watch for danger.
- u. Paul was in hunger and thirst (v.27).
 - (i) He suffered the lack of his most basic needs of food and drink.
 - (ii) God allows His people to suffer hunger at times to prove them and make them rely on Him (**Deut 8:3, 16**).
 - (iii) Despite allowing Paul to suffer hunger and thirst for a time, God supplied all his need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (**Php 4:19**).
- v. Paul was in fastings often (v.27).
 - (i) Fasting *n.* - 1. The action of the vb. *fast*; abstinence from food; an instance of this. 2. A season of abstinence from food, a fast.
 - (ii) Paul afflicted his soul and chastened himself with fasting often as well (**Dan 9:3 c/w Dan 10:12; Psa 69:10**).
- w. Paul was in cold and nakedness (v.27).

- (i) Nakedness *n.* - 1. The state or condition of being unclothed or destitute of clothing.
- (ii) It was common for prisoners to be stripped of their clothes before being beaten (**Act 16:22-23**).
- (iii) Paul was in prison without his cloak (a loose outer garment) and asked Timothy to bring it to him before winter (**2Ti 4:13, 21**).
- (iv) He no doubt suffered many a cold night in a cold prison.
- v. All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (**2Ti 3:12**).
- vi. A pastor is to be an example to the church in all areas of life (**1Ti 4:12**).
 - a. Therefore, it follows that a pastor will suffer persecution and affliction as an example to the flock.
 - b. Pastors should expect to suffer more than others since they are supposed to be examples.
- D. Paul and Silas were falsely accused, beaten, and cast into prison for casting a spirit of divination out of a young woman (**Act 16:16-24**).
 - i. In prison they prayed and sang praises to God (**Act 16:25**).
 - ii. What a wonderful example of suffering patiently they were for us!
- E. Paul himself was comforted by the faithful suffering of the Thessalonian saints (**1Th 3:3-4, 6-7**).
 - i. Paul gloried in the Thessalonian saints in the other churches for how they patiently and faithfully endured persecutions and tribulations (**2Th 1:4-5**).
 - ii. Their patient suffering was a source of inspiration and encouragement to the apostles and the other churches.

6. learning to trust in God instead of ourselves

- A. God will sometimes bring such intense suffering into our lives that we cannot possibly bear by our own strength which makes us trust in Him instead of ourselves (**2Co 1:8-9**).
 - i. Pressed *ppl.* - 1. Subjected to pressure; forced or squeezed into a smaller volume or denser consistence than the ordinary.
 - ii. Measure *n.* - 1. a. The action or process of measuring, measurement. 12. a. An extent not to be exceeded; a limit. Now only in certain phrases, as *to set measures to, to know no measure* (see also b and c). b. In advb. phr. *beyond (above, without, over) measure*, also *out of measure, out of all measure* (arch.): beyond all bounds, excessively. Formerly (esp. Sc.) used also predicatively = boundless, unlimited, excessive.
 - iii. Above *adv.* - 7. Higher in degree; surpassing in quality; in excess of, beyond; more than. above all: beyond everything; first of all; chiefly. above measure: beyond or more than what is meet; in excess of moderation; excessively.
 - iv. Strength *n.* - 1. The quality or condition of being strong. a. Power of action in body or limbs; ability to exert muscular force. b. Bodily vigour in general; efficiency of the bodily powers; esp. in contrast with the weakness due to illness, fatigue, age, immaturity, etc. c. Power in general, whether physical, mental, or due to the possession of resources; ability for effective

action; efficiency, vigour (of mental faculties, etc.). d. Capacity for moral effort or endurance; firmness (of mind, character, will, purpose); power to resist temptation or fulfil a difficult duty; †fortitude as one of the cardinal virtues. Freq. in phr. ***strength of character***. ***in one's own strength***: in reliance on oneself and not on divine grace.

- v. **Despair** v. - 1. *intr.* To lose or give up hope; to be without hope. Const. *of* (with indirect passive *to be despaired of*)
 - vi. Substituting the definitions, Paul was under excessive pressure which was beyond all bounds surpassing what he was able to endure mentally and physically to the point where he had given up hope that he would even live.
 - vii. In that condition all self-trust and self-reliance is gone, and we are forced to trust in God alone for deliverance.
- B. By suffering great troubles, fightings, and fears we learn to rely on God's comfort which only He can provide **(2Co 7:5-6)**.
- i. **Comfort** v. - 1. *trans.* To strengthen (morally or spiritually); to encourage, hearten, inspirit, incite.
 - ii. God strengthens us by sending others to encourage us in our time of trial.
 - iii. When I was enduring the greatest trouble I have ever faced as a minister, God comforted me by sending my best friend to visit me who had no idea that anything was going on.
- C. When David was greatly distressed he encouraged himself in the LORD his God **(1Sa 30:6)**.
- i. **Greatly** *adv.* - 1. To a great extent, in a great degree; extensively, exceedingly; highly; much, very.
 - ii. **Distressed** *ppl.* - Afflicted with pain or trouble; sorely troubled; in sore straits. Applied spec. to a person living in impoverished circumstances.
 - iii. **Strait** *n.* - II. Strict, rigorous. 6. a. Of conditions, sufferings, punishment, etc.: Pressing hardly, severe, rigorous.
 - iv. Were he not in such dire straits he might not have looked to the LORD for help **(Psa 30:6)**.
 - v. We must follow David's example and look to the LORD from whence cometh our help **(Psa 121:1-2)**.
- D. God will put us in trying situations which we have no ability to get ourselves out of, nor do we even know what to do, so that we will set our eyes upon Him for deliverance **(2Ch 20:12)**.

7. making us draw nigh to God

- A. When we suffer adversity we draw nigh to God and know Him in a deepness that we would not otherwise **(Psa 31:7)**.
- B. God knows our way and tries us to purify us **(Job 23:10)**.
- C. Jesus was tempted and tried just like us and therefore knows our soul in adversity **(Heb 2:18)**.

8. making us look beyond this life to the next life in eternity

- A. The affliction we endure in this life makes us look beyond the temporal to the eternal **(2Co 4:17-18)**.

- i. Temporal *adj.* - 1. Lasting or existing only for a time; passing, temporary. Now *rare* or merged in 2. 2. Of or pertaining to time as the sphere of human life; terrestrial as opposed to heavenly; of man's present life as distinguished from a future existence; concerning or involving merely the material interests of this world; worldly, earthly. (Opp. to *eternal* or *spiritual*.)
 - ii. If God didn't allow us to suffer, we would be like the carnal man who minds only earthly things (**Php 3:19; Rom 8:5**).
 - iii. We might forget that our conversation is in heaven (**Php 3:20; Pro 15:24**).
 - iv. We might fail to set our affections on those things which are above (**Col 3:1-2**).
 - B. The sufferings of the present time focus our attention on the glory that awaits us (**Rom 8:18-19**).
 - C. The weeping we endure now because of God's chastisement makes us look for the joy that awaits us (**Psa 30:5**).
 - D. The tears we shed while sowing faithfully give us hope of the joy we shall reap in eternity (**Psa 126:5-6; Luk 6:21; Mat 25:21**).
9. showing ourselves approved as the ministers of Christ
- A. God allows his ministers to suffer afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watchings, fastings, dishonor, and evil reports to prove to the brethren that they are approved of God (**2Co 6:4-10**).
 - B. Patience *n.* - 1. a. The suffering or enduring (of pain, trouble, or evil) with calmness and composure; the quality or capacity of so suffering or enduring.
 - C. Affliction *n.* - 1. The action of inflicting grievous pain or trouble. 2. The state of being afflicted; sore pain of body or trouble of mind; misery, distress.
 - i. We have already studied the long list of afflictions that Paul suffered patiently (**2Co 11:23-28**).
 - ii. These sufferings showed that Paul was approved as a minister of Christ.
 - D. Necessity *n.* - 1. a. The fact of being inevitably fixed or determined. *Obs.* 10. a. The condition of being in difficulties or straits, esp. through lack of means; want, poverty. 11. A situation of hardship or difficulty; a pressing need or want. (Chiefly in *pl.*)
 - i. This is what Paul referred to by "having nothing" (**2Co 6:10**).
 - ii. True ministers sometimes find themselves in financial hardship.
 - iii. They don't get a predetermined salary from the church.
 - E. Distress *n.* - I. 1. a. The action or fact of straining or pressing tightly, strain, stress, pressure; *fig.* pressure employed to produce action, constraint, compulsion; less usually, pressure applied to prevent action, restraint. 2. a. The sore pressure or strain of adversity, trouble, sickness, pain, or sorrow; anguish or affliction affecting the body, spirit, or community.
 - i. Pastors are often under a lot of stress and pressure because of their work.
 - ii. When this happens it is evidence that they are approved as the ministers of Christ.
 - F. Tumult *n.* - 1. Commotion of a multitude, usually with confused speech or uproar; public disturbance; disorderly or riotous proceeding.
 - i. Paul was the victim of numerous tumults during his ministry.

- ii. The Jews caused an uproar in Thessalonica because of Paul's effective preaching (**Act 17:4-5**).
 - iii. There was an uproar in Ephesus because Paul preached Christ which was a threat to the worship of Diana (**Act 19:28-34, 40**).
 - iv. In Jerusalem the Jews stirred up the people and caused a tumult to try to kill Paul (**Act 21:27-36**).
 - v. The fact that huge crowds were against Paul was not a sign that he was wrong, but that he was right.
 - vi. This was just another indication that Paul's ministry was approved by God.
- G. Labor *n.* - 1. a. Exertion of the faculties of the body or mind, esp. when painful or compulsory; bodily or mental toil.
- i. Toil *n.* - 1. Verbal contention, dispute, controversy, argument (obs.); also, battle, strife, mêlée, turmoil (arch. or merged in 2). 2. With *a* and *pl.* A struggle, a 'fight' (with difficulties); hence, a spell of severe bodily or mental labour; a laborious task or operation. 3. a. Without *a* or *pl.* Severe labour; hard and continuous work or exertion which taxes the bodily or mental powers.
 - ii. Labor is difficult and is a source of affliction.
 - iii. So much so that some ministers work themselves to (or nearly to) death (**Php 2:30**).
 - iv. Pastors labor in the word and doctrine (**1Ti 5:17-18; 1Co 15:10**), in prayer (**Col 4:12**), and in building churches (**1Co 3:8-9**).
 - v. They also sometimes have to labor at other work to provide for their needs or the needs of others (**Act 18:3; Act 20:33-35; 1Co 4:12; 2Th 3:8**).
 - vi. When ministers suffer in labor and toil they show themselves approved by God.
- H. Evil report
- i. Evil *adj.* - I. Bad in a positive sense. 1. Morally depraved, bad, wicked, vicious. 2. Doing or tending to do harm; hurtful, mischievous, prejudicial. Of advice, etc.: Misleading. Of an omen, etc.: Boding ill. 3. Uses partaking of senses 1 and 2: c. Of repute or estimation: Unfavourable. evil tongue: a malicious or slanderous speaker.
 - ii. Report *n.* - 1. a. Rumour, common talk. b. With *a* and *pl.* A rumour; a statement generally made or believed. *the report goes*: it is commonly said.
 - iii. Paul was the subject of lying rumors and slander (**Rom 3:8**).
 - iv. Slander and rumors are one of the many ways that pastors suffer which shows that they are approved by God.
 - v. See <https://pastorwagner.com/praise> for examples of evil reports.

10. making us identify with the sufferings of Jesus Christ

- A. When we suffer for Christ, we identify with Him and know Him in a way that we could not otherwise know Him (**Php 3:10**).
- i. We have fellowship with Christ in His suffering when we suffer for Him.
- ii. Fellowship *n.* - 1. a. Partnership; membership of a society. Also, in political sense, alliance. *Obs.* b. Participation, sharing (in an action, condition, etc.); 'something in common', community of interest, sentiment, nature, etc.

- iii. We are made conformable unto His death (**Php 3:10**) when we die to ourselves (**Rom 6:6-8; Gal 2:20; Gal 5:24; Gal 6:14**) and are willing to die for Him (**Act 20:24; Act 21:13; 2Ti 4:6**).
 - iv. Conformable *adj.* - 1. According in form or character to (a standard or pattern); similar, resembling, like. Const. *to*.
- B. The more we suffer for Christ, the more our consolation abounds (**2Co 1:5**).
 - i. Consolation *n.* - 1. The action of consoling, cheering, or comforting; the state of being consoled; alleviation of sorrow or mental distress.
 - ii. Abound *v.* - 1. To be present in overflowing measure; to be plentiful; to prevail widely.
 - iii. It seems counterintuitive that suffering for Christ would bring us alleviation of sorrow and mental distress, but it makes sense when we realize that suffering for Christ draws us closer to Christ.
- C. When God allows us to be troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, and cast down we bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus because we are suffering as He did (**2Co 4:8-10**).
 - i. Troubled *ppl.* - 1. Physically agitated; of the sea, sky, etc., stormy; of water, wine, etc., stirred up so as to diffuse the sediment, made thick or muddy, turbid. 2. Disturbed; disquieted; disordered; agitated; afflicted.
 - a. Jesus was troubled on every side.
 - (i) His natural brethren caused Him grief (**Joh 7:3-5**).
 - (ii) His disciples caused Him grief (**Mat 17:14-20; Mat 26:51-54**).
 - (iii) His followers caused His life to be disquieted (**Mar 6:31-33; Mar 5:25-31**).
 - (iv) The Pharisees caused Him grief (**Luk 11:53-54**).
 - (v) The authorities caused Him grief (**Luk 13:31-32; Joh 19:1-3**).
 - b. When we are troubled on every side, we are identifying with the sufferings of Jesus.
 - ii. Perplexed *ppl.* - 1. Of a person: Involved in doubt or anxiety on account of the intricate character of the matter under consideration; bewildered, puzzled: see *perplex* *v.* 1.
 - a. Jesus was amazed (**Mar 14:33**).
 - b. Amazed *adj.* - 1. Driven stupid; stunned or stupefied, as by a blow; out of one's wits. 2. Bewildered, confounded, confused, perplexed. Of things: Thrown into confusion.
 - c. Jesus marveled (**Mar 6:6**).
 - (i) Marvel *v.* - 1. *intr.* To be filled with wonder or astonishment; to be struck with surprise.
 - (ii) Wonder *n.* - II. 7. a. The emotion excited by the perception of something novel and unexpected, or inexplicable; astonishment mingled with perplexity or bewildered curiosity.
 - d. When we are perplexed, we are identifying with the sufferings of Jesus.

- iii. Persecute v. - 1. To pursue, chase, hunt, drive (with missiles, or with attempts to catch, kill, or injure). *Obs.* 2. To pursue with malignancy or enmity and injurious action; esp. to oppress with pains and penalties for the holding of a belief or opinion held to be injurious or heretical.
 - a. Jesus was persecuted (**Joh 5:16; Joh 15:20**).
 - b. When we are persecuted, we are identifying with the sufferings of Jesus.
- iv. Cast down -
 - a. Jesus was man of sorrows (**Isa 53:3**).
 - b. He experienced extreme heaviness (**Mar 14:33**).
 - c. Heavy *adj.* - VII. Weighed down mentally or physically. 27. a. 'Weighed down' with sorrow or grief; sorrowful, sad, grieved, despondent.
 - d. When we are cast down and depressed, we are identifying with the sufferings of Jesus.
- D. If we suffer physically in our flesh by being whipped, beaten, etc. which leaves scars on our bodies like Paul, we bear in our bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus (**Gal 6:17**).
 - i. Jesus suffered bodily and was left with scars.
 - a. Jesus' hands, feet, and side (**Luk 24:39; Joh 20:25, 27**) and back (**Isa 50:6; Joh 19:1**) were scarred.
 - b. Jesus' face was scarred.
 - (i) He was struck in the face (**Luk 22:64**), crowned with a crown of thorns (**Mar 15:17**), and had his beard plucked off (**Isa 50:6**) leaving his visage marred more than any man (**Isa 52:14**).
 - (ii) Visage *n.* - 1. The face, the front part of the head, of a person
 - (iii) Marred *ppl.* - c. Disfigured, mutilated.
 - ii. Paul suffered the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for the sake of Christ's church (**Col 1:24**).
 - iii. We, like many, have never resisted unto blood (**Heb 12:4**).
 - iv. But if God ever allows that to happen to us, we will be especially close to the Lord Jesus.
- E. When we suffer for Christ we are made partakers of Christ's sufferings (**1Pe 4:12-14**).
 - i. This draws us close to Jesus having had a similar experience with Him.
 - ii. Jesus said if they persecuted Him they would persecute us (**Joh 15:20**).
 - iii. When we suffer persecution for our faith in Christ we have assurance that we belong to Him (**2Ti 2:12**).

11. being a witness for Jesus through our suffering (2Co 4:11)

- A. When God allows us to suffer for Christ we make the life of Jesus manifest in our suffering.
- B. Manifest *adj.* - 1. a. Clearly revealed to the eye, mind, or judgement; open to view or comprehension; obvious.
- C. When we suffer for Christ, we show the world that Jesus Christ is the Living God.

12. learning obedience

- A. Jesus Christ learned obedience by the things He suffered (**Heb 5:7-8**).
- B. So obedient was Jesus that He obeyed the Father even unto death (**Php 2:8**).
- C. God likewise will make us suffer that we may learn to obey Him.

13. obtaining a blessing in this life and a reward in the next

- A. When we are persecuted for righteousness' sake and for Christ's sake we are blessed now and have a great reward awaiting us in heaven (**Mat 5:10-12**).
- B. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (**Rom 8:18**).
- C. Never forget that God has a purpose in our suffering, and it is ultimately for our good.

IV. Sometimes God *doesn't* deliver His children *even* from death.

1. The Lord does this for the following reasons:

- A. God is glorified in their death (**Joh 21:19**).
- B. In some cases the martyr is spared greater suffering than others must endure (**Isa 57:1**).
- C. The death of His saints is precious in God's sight (**Psa 116:15; Rev 14:13**).

2. Such examples are:

A. Abel

- i. Abel was the first martyr.
- ii. Abel was a righteous prophet (**Mat 23:35; Luk 11:50-51**).
- iii. He made his offering by faith to God (**Heb 11:4**).
- iv. He was murdered for it because of envy (**Gen 4:8 c/w 1Jo 3:12**).
- v. God didn't spare Abel's life even though he was righteous and did nothing to deserve death.

B. Zechariah

- i. Zechariah was the last prophet in the Old Testament to be killed (**Mat 23:35**).
- ii. Zechariah was martyred because he condemned the people of Judah for their idolatry (**2Ch 24:18-22**).
- iii. Like Abel, he did nothing wrong, but God nevertheless allowed him to be martyred.

C. John the Baptist

- i. John the Baptist was the first New Testament martyr.
- ii. He was the greatest prophet to ever live because he was the forerunner of the Messiah (**Luk 7:26-28**).
- iii. He rebuked the king because of his sin and was put in prison for it (**Mat 14:3-4**).
- iv. He was beheaded because of a foolish oath Herod made (**Mat 14:6-10**).
- v. John the Baptist was a great prophet and a faithful Christian who did nothing wrong, but God nevertheless allowed him to be martyred.

D. Jesus Christ

- i. Of course the most important martyr of all is our Lord Jesus Christ.

- ii. He was sinless (**1Pe 2:22**) and had no legitimate crime or offence laid to His charge (**Joh 8:46; Joh 18:38**).
 - iii. Convince v. - II. To convict, prove, demonstrate. 4. To prove (a person) to be guilty, or in the wrong, esp. by judicial procedure; to prove or find guilty; to convict of, rarely for, in (an offence or error); = *convict* v.
 - iv. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners (**Heb 7:26**).
 - v. He always did what pleased God (**Joh 8:29**).
 - vi. He pleaded with God to spare Him the suffering and death that was awaiting Him (**Luk 22:42**).
 - vii. They set up false witnesses against Him (**Mar 14:55-59**).
 - viii. He was beaten (**Mar 15:15**), spit upon (**Mar 15:19**), mocked (**Mar 15:20**), humiliated, and crucified (**Mar 15:25**).
 - ix. Despite doing nothing wrong, nevertheless God allowed Him to be martyred.
- E. Stephen
- i. Stephen was a good man and full of faith (**Act 6:8**).
 - ii. He earnestly defended the faith and his wisdom was not able to be resisted (**Act 6:10**).
 - iii. So his enemies suborned witnesses to falsely testify against him (**Act 6:11-14**).
 - iv. He enraged them with his defense, so they stoned him (**Act 7:54-60**).
 - v. Like the other martyrs before him he did nothing worthy of death, nevertheless God allowed him to be martyred.
- F. James
- i. James was an apostle (**Mat 10:2**) and one of Jesus' three closest friends (**Mat 17:1; etc.**).
 - ii. He was killed by King Herod when he persecuted the church (**Act 12:1-2**).
 - iii. Despite being an apostle and one of Jesus' closest friends and having done nothing wrong, God nevertheless allowed him to be martyred.
- G. Paul
- i. Paul was the chiefest of the apostles (**2Co 11:5; 2Co 12:11; Rom 11:13**).
 - ii. He wrote half of the New Testament (Romans through Hebrews).
 - iii. He made several evangelistic trips all over the known world and started numerous churches.
 - iv. Notwithstanding all of the selfless work that he did for Jesus Christ, God still allowed him to be martyred (**2Ti 4:6**).
- H. Peter
- i. Peter was an apostle (**Mat 10:2**) and one of Jesus' three closest friends (**Mat 17:1; etc.**).
 - ii. He boldly preached the gospel in the face of persecution (**Act 4:18-21; Act 5:28-29; Act 5:40-42**).
 - iii. He was used of God to open the door of faith unto the Gentiles (**Act 15:7**).
 - iv. Despite his great zeal and love for Jesus Christ and the fact that he did nothing to deserve death, God nevertheless allowed him to be martyred (**Joh 21:18-19**).

V. When a nation is in need of judgment, there are four possibilities of how it will be meted out.

1. God will spare the entire nation for the sake of the righteous minority.
 - A. God would have done this for Sodom and Gomorrah if there would have been even ten righteous among them (**Gen 18:24-26, 32**).
 - i. This should give us hope because God might spare this nation for the sake of His few faithful churches within it.
 - ii. This may be the reason that this nation was not destroyed long ago.
 - B. The LORD spared the nation of Judah for a long time for the sake of the remnant (**Isa 1:9**).
 - C. God said that he would pardon the city of Jerusalem if they could find *a man* who executed judgment and sought the truth (**Jer 5:1**).
 - D. Remember this the next time things look hopeless: you could be the reason that God spares our nation, state, city, or town.
2. God won't spare the nation for the sake of the righteous.
 - A. This happened prior to the Babylonian captivity when the wrath of the Lord arose until there was no remedy and He destroyed the nation (**2Ch 36:16-17**).
 - B. Judah became so wicked that God said that even if Moses and Samuel would have stood before God and interceded for them their destruction would not be averted (**Jer 15:1-9**).
 - C. When a nation fills up the cup of its iniquity and judgment has been determined upon it, even the repentance of the king will not stop God from destroying that nation (**2Ki 23:24-27**).
 - D. They that are often reprov'd and continue to harden their necks will be destroyed without remedy (**Pro 29:1**).
3. God will only spare the righteous minority.
 - A. When a nation is too far gone in backsliding and sin God will only spare the righteous within it when He judges it (**Eze 14:13-14**).
 - i. In such a case, God will not even deliver the children of the righteous, but only the righteous themselves (**Eze 14:15-20**).
 - ii. God has no grandchildren.
 - B. Jeremiah and Ebedmelech were both spared death because of their faithfulness while the rest of the nation were judged (**Jer 39:11-18**).
 - C. Jeremiah's remnant were spared and treated well by the enemy when they were conquered (**Jer 15:11**).
 - D. Those that seek the LORD, righteousness, and meekness may be hid in the day of God's anger (**Zep 2:3**).
 - i. God's children should seek to save themselves from this untoward generation (**Act 2:40**).
 - ii. They can do so by repenting of their sins, getting baptized into the church, and living a godly life (**Act 2:38-42**).
 - E. God shortened the days of the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD for the elects' sakes, otherwise they too would have been killed (**Mat 24:22**).

F. God spared a remnant that escaped the sword of Nebuchadnezzar when He destroyed Jerusalem by him the first time (**Eze 6:8**).

4. God will not spare the nation *nor* the righteous minority.

A. When a nation is ripe for judgment, there are times when God will destroy both the righteous and the wicked in it (**Eze 21:3-5**).

B. Pray that our nation will not get to that point.

VI. An examination of Biblical examples of God either delivering a people for the righteous among them or delivering the righteous alone.

1. Enoch

A. Enoch lived only three generations prior to the great flood in the days of Noah (**Gen 5:21, 25, 28-29**).

B. The earth was corrupt and filled with violence in Noah's day (**Gen 6:11**).

i. The earth likely did not turn wicked overnight.

ii. It was likely an evil place when Enoch walked the earth a few generations prior.

iii. Enoch prophesied against the ungodly which he probably personally witnessed in action (**Jud 1:14-15**).

C. Enoch walked with God (**Gen 5:22**).

D. Because of this God took him to heaven to be with him (**Gen 5:24 c/w Heb 11:5**).

i. Translate v. - I. 1. a. *trans.* To bear, convey, or remove from one person, place or condition to another; to transfer, transport; *spec.* to remove a bishop from one see to another, or a bishop's seat from one place to another, and, in Scotland, a minister from one pastoral charge to another; also, to remove the dead body or remains of a saint, or, by extension, a hero or great man, from one place to another. b. To carry or convey to heaven without death; also, in later use, said of the death of the righteous.

ii. He was one of only two people in human history who was taken to heaven without dying first (**2Ki 2:11**).

E. Enoch was delivered from the evil to come that he would have witnessed in his lifetime (**Isa 57:1-2**).

F. There are some lessons we can learn from this.

i. Godly men throughout history have lived in evil times, so we are not experiencing something new (**Ecc 1:9-10**).

ii. Godly men condemn the wickedness around them, not conform to it.

iii. We can and should walk with God, even when living in an evil generation.

iv. Those who walk not in the counsel of ungodly, but delight in the LORD, are blessed (**Psa 1:1-2**).

v. If we walk closely with God like Enoch, God may likewise deliver us from this evil world by taking us out of it early by death.

2. Noah and his family

A. Noah lived in an exceedingly wicked generation (**Gen 6:5, 11-12**).

- B. The cup of the world's iniquity was full, and the LORD had determined to destroy it (**Gen 6:6-7**).
- C. Noah was a just man who found grace in the eyes of the LORD (**Gen 6:8-9**).
- D. Noah obeyed God and built the ark by faith (**Heb 11:7**).
- E. God saved Noah and his seven other family members from death (**2Pe 2:5**).
- F. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. Truth doesn't lie in numbers.
 - ii. It pays to hold fast to the LORD even if the entire world is against you.
 - iii. Going along with the crowd will bring you destruction.
 - iv. It pays to do what God says, even if it seems like a gargantuan task.
 - v. It would have seemed impossible by human reasoning for God to destroy the earth and the entire human population while simultaneously saving eight faithful people, but God did it.
 - vi. God can easily deliver the faithful while destroying those around them.
 - vii. Take comfort, brethren, because God is well able to do the same for us.

3. Abraham

- A. Abraham grew up as an idolater (**Jos 24:2**).
- B. The LORD delivered him from his false religion by calling him out of Ur away from his family where he grew up (**Gen 12:1**).
- C. God called Abraham alone (**Isa 51:2**).
- D. In his case, some of his family came with him and they were delivered from their idolatry as well (**Gen 12:4-5**).
- E. Abraham obeyed God by faith and was blessed for it (**Heb 11:8-10**).
- F. Abraham was not delivered from physical death or suffering, but being delivered from false religion is far more important than those things.
- G. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. Where you came from is not nearly as important as where you're going and where you will end up.
 - ii. Our past is no excuse for not following God in the present.
 - iii. God often calls people to follow Him as individuals, not as families or groups.
 - iv. God can use one faithful man to save his family from false religion.
 - v. God will richly bless those who will forsake all and follow Him (**Mar 10:28-30**).
 - vi. Never forget how incredibly blessed you are to have been delivered from the lies and bondage of false religion.

4. Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of Lot

- A. When Abraham and Lot decided to part company, Lot went to live in Sodom (**Gen 13:8-13**).
- B. Sodom and Gomorrah went to war with the nations who had previously subjugated them and were spoiled by them (**Gen 14:8-11**).
- C. Lot was also taken captive (**Gen 14:12**).
- D. Lot was a just man who was vexed by the sinners of Sodom (**2Pe 2:7-8**).

- E. When Abraham heard that Lot was captured he armed his 318 trained servants and smote the kings that had taken him captive and delivered him and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah from them (**Gen 14:13-16**).
- F. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. God will sometimes deliver a wicked nation for the sake of a righteous man among them.
 - ii. Remember that you could be that righteous person for whose sake the LORD could deliver our wicked nation.
 - iii. God sometimes decides to deliver His disobedient children from trouble.
 - iv. But God does not always do so, so never presume on the mercy of God (**Rom 3:8**).

5. Lot

- A. After Sodom and Gomorrah were delivered from their oppressors by Abraham they continued in their wicked ways, and God was ready to destroy them (**Gen 18:20-22**).
- B. This is an example of the wicked being shown favor but yet not repenting (**Isa 26:10**).
- C. Abraham bargained with God and got Him to agree to spare the cities if there were but ten righteous within them (**Gen 18:23-32**).
- D. There were not ten righteous people in those cities because God did end up destroying them (**Gen 19:24-25**).
- E. Lot was a righteous man who made poor decisions and was vexed by the wicked whom he chose to live near (**2Pe 2:7-8**).
- F. God delivered Lot, his wife, and two of his daughters (**Gen 19:15-16**).
- G. This is a case of only the righteous and those around him being delivered from destruction, but not the community or nation as a whole.
- H. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. God would have delivered Lot's other daughters and sons in law if they would have heeded the warning (**Gen 19:12-14**).
 - a. Failure to heed God's warnings which He gives through His messengers can result in destruction.
 - b. God may deliver one of your family members, but not you if you disregard His admonitions.
 - c. Don't assume that you will be delivered from calamity just because your family member (husband, wife, father, mother, etc.) is obedient to God (or somewhat obedient in the case of Lot).
 - ii. The LORD was merciful to Lot and dragged him out of the city before He destroyed it (**Gen 19:15-16**).
 - a. God is not always so merciful, so don't ever assume that if you delay to obey that God will miraculously save you.
 - b. Don't assume that because Lot was a pathetic follower of God, but was nevertheless delivered, that you will be too.
 - c. God rewards those that diligently seek Him (**Heb 11:6**), so if you want assurance of God's deliverance you should serve God fervently.

6. Jacob

A. Jacob was delivered from Esau.

- i. Jacob had swindled Esau out of his birthright (**Gen 25:29-34**) and his blessing (**Gen 27:35**).
- ii. Esau hated him for it and vowed to kill him (**Gen 27:41**).
- iii. Jacob fled for his life, and after being away for many years he decided to go back to his home land.
- iv. He sent messengers to Esau telling him he was coming back and was seeking grace in his sight (**Gen 32:3-5**).
- v. He was told that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men which greatly frightened Jacob (**Gen 32:6-7**).
- vi. Jacob made preparations to protect his family from Esau (**Gen 32:7-8**), and then he prayed to God for deliverance from Esau, reminding God of His promises (**Gen 32:9-12**).
- vii. When he met Esau, the Lord softened Esau's heart, and he received Jacob in peace (**Gen 33:1-5**).
- viii. "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." (**Pro 16:7**)
- ix. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. Do what God tells us to do, even when it looks like danger might lie ahead.
 - b. Press on, and never turn back from doing what God has commanded because of fear.
 - c. Make preparations to limit the harm or loss that we might incur in a battle.
 - d. Remind God of His promises, and humbly ask Him to deliver us according to them.
 - e. Humble ourselves when facing an enemy more far more powerful than ourselves and seek peace if doing so doesn't compromise obedience to God (**Luk 14:31-32**).

B. Jacob and his family were saved from dying in the great famine.

- i. Near the end of Jacob's life a terrible seven year famine afflicted the land (**Gen 41:54**).
- ii. Jacob and his family got food from Egypt (**Gen 42:1-3**) and then later moved down into Egypt to be sustained there during the famine (**Gen 45:9-11**).
- iii. In order to experience this great deliverance (**Gen 45:7**), Jacob had to first undergo tribulation (**Rom 5:3-4**).
 - a. Jacob's sons sold their brother Joseph, his favored son (**Gen 37:3**), into slavery in Egypt because they hated him (**Gen 37:4 c/w Gen 37:28**).
 - b. They made Jacob believe that Joseph had been killed (**Gen 37:31-33**).
 - c. Jacob had to suffer the terrible pain of thinking that Joseph was dead for years (**Gen 37:34-35**).

- d. Joseph ended up becoming the Prime Minister of Egypt and was put in charge of the food program during which he laid up food to bring them through the famine (**Gen 41:41, 46-49**).
- iv. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. God will often allow us to suffer great affliction after having delivered us from trouble in the past.
 - b. The elderly (even those who are godly) are not exempt from suffering calamities in life, so if you do someday, know that you are not alone.
 - c. Sometimes our present suffering is the means by which God will deliver us from greater suffering later.

7. Joseph

- A. Joseph was delivered from being killed by his brethren.
 - i. As we saw in the previous section, Joseph's brethren conspired to kill him because they envied him (**Gen 37:11, 17-20**).
 - ii. They devised a wicked way, but the Lord directed the thoughts of Ruben who suggested that they throw him into a pit instead of killing him (**Gen 37:21-22 c/w Pro 16:9**).
 - iii. The Lord put it in Judah's heart (**Pro 21:1**) to sell Joseph instead of killing him (**Gen 37:26-27**).
 - iv. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. Our greatest foes will often be they of our own household (**Mat 10:36**).
 - b. God can change the hearts and minds of our enemies in order to deliver us.
 - c. Our deliverance may not come in the form that we had hoped for.
 - d. If we remain faithful, better days lie ahead, which the rest Joseph's story shows.
- B. Joseph was delivered from prison.
 - i. While overseer of Potiphar's house, Joseph was cast into prison because he was falsely accused of attempted rape (**Gen 39:17-20**).
 - ii. The Lord was with Joseph in prison and put him in charge of the inmates (**Gen 39:21-23**).
 - iii. Joseph was in prison for a least two years (**Gen 41:1**).
 - iv. God gave Joseph the power to interpret dreams which ended up being his ticket to be released from prison to become the Prime Minister of Egypt (**Gen 41:9-16, 37-41**).
 - v. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. We will sometimes suffer for doing righteousness and be falsely accused.
 - b. If we serve God faithfully in bad circumstances, God will be with us and reward us, making the unfortunate situation more easy to bear.
 - c. Sometimes God will let us suffer patiently for a long time before delivering us.

- d. If we are diligent in our business, even while suffering in prison, God will take notice and may deliver us out of it to serve in high places **(Pro 22:29)**.

8. Moses

A. Moses was delivered from death as a baby.

- i. After the death of Joseph the children of Israel were afflicted by the Egyptians, which only caused them to multiply **(Exo 1:12)**.
- ii. Note: the church always grows under persecution.
- iii. To reduce the population the king of Egypt commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill all the baby boys that were born **(Exo 1:15-16)**.
 - a. Note: abortion, ethnic cleansing, and population control are not new concepts.
 - b. The midwives disobeyed the order, saved the baby boys' lives, and then righteously lied about it, for which God blessed them **(Exo 1:17-21)**.
 - (i) This was the first act that God did to deliver Moses from death before he was born.
 - (ii) Remember that God is well able to deliver us even when we are in a completely helpless condition.
- iv. Pharaoh then charged the people to cast every son that was born into the river **(Exo 1:22)**.
 - a. Moses' mother disobeyed the wicked order of Pharaoh and hid Moses for three months **(Exo 2:1-2)**.
 - b. When she could hide him no longer, she made an ark, placed him in it, and put it in the water near the bank of the river, and his sister watched to see what would happen **(Exo 2:3-4)**.
 - c. Pharaoh's daughter found baby Moses in the ark, knew he was the son of one of the Hebrews, and had compassion on him **(Exo 2:5-6)**.
 - d. Moses' sister asked her if she wanted her to go find him a Hebrew wet nurse, which she agreed to; so she went and got their mother **(Exo 2:7-8)**.
 - e. Pharaoh's daughter paid Moses' mother to nurse him until he was weaned at which time he became the son of Pharaoh's daughter **(Exo 2:9-10)**.
- v. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. God can use women who are weaker vessels to deliver his children from death.
 - b. God uses people who are brave enough to defy ungodly government laws to save life and blesses them for it.
 - c. When we are helpless and our helpers are unable to help us any further and the situation looks impossible, God can use an unlikely person to deliver us.
 - d. God can use people who are near the highest places of government to deliver us.

- e. God sometimes allows us to undergo great danger and deliverance because He has special plans to use us in the future.
- B. Moses was also delivered from death after he killed an Egyptian.
 - i. After Moses was grown he went out to see his Hebrew brethren and saw an Egyptian attacking a Hebrew, whom he defended, killing the Egyptian (**Exo 2:11-12 c/w Act 7:23-24**).
 - ii. Word got out, and Pharaoh sought to kill Moses, but he escaped to the land of Midian (**Exo 2:13-15**).
 - iii. This is the second time that God delivered Moses from death.
 - iv. When he got to Midian, God providentially provided him with a wife and family (**Exo 2:16-22**).
 - v. Moses lived in Midian until God called him to go back to Egypt to lead His people out of Egypt to the promised land.
 - vi. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. Sometimes God will deliver us by having us flee.
 - b. Even if the king of the most powerful empire in the world tries to kill you, if God has plans for your life, He will deliver you from him.
 - c. God sometimes will use the heathen to give his people a place of refuge until He is ready to use them for great things.

9. Israel from Egypt

- A. The Israelites were slaves working under hard bondage, and they cried unto the Lord for deliverance (**Exo 2:23**).
- B. God heard their cry and had mercy on them because of His covenant He made with their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (**Exo 2:24-25**).
- C. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and told him He would send him to Pharaoh to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt (**Exo 3:10**).
 - i. Remember that Egypt was the most powerful empire in the world, and Pharaoh was its king.
 - ii. The children of Israel were Pharaoh's slaves.
 - iii. Escaping their bondage in Egypt was humanly impossible.
 - iv. Their situation seemed as helpless as could be.
- D. Nevertheless, God promised to smite Egypt with His wonders and bring Israel out with great wealth (**Exo 3:20-22**).
- E. After destroying Egypt with ten plagues, the Lord brought out Israel with a mighty arm and with silver and gold in their hands (**Act 7:36; Act 13:17; Exo 12:35-36**).
- F. Just as God had promised, He brought them out with silver and gold in their possession (**Psa 105:37-38**).
- G. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. Even when we are weak, God can deliver us.
 - ii. When our situation seems impossible, God is still able to deliver us.
 - iii. God can deliver his people who are living under the most oppressive government tyranny.
 - iv. Powerful governments and kings are no match for God.
 - v. God can provide wealth and sustenance to those who have nothing.

10. Israel from Pharaoh's armies at the Red Sea

- A. When the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, in mercy He didn't lead them through the land of the Philistines in the north, though it was near, because God knew that they might turn back to Egypt when they saw war (**Exo 13:17**).
- B. Instead God led them to the Red Sea so that He could show His power to save them (**Exo 13:18**).
- C. The LORD had Moses take them to a place at the edge of the Red Sea where they were cornered with no way out (**Exo 14:1-3**).
- D. The LORD then hardened Pharaoh's heart and made him pursue them so that He would be honored by destroying him and his army (**Exo 14:4-9**).
- E. Israel's situation now seems hopeless.
 - i. Their backs are to the Red Sea, and the most powerful military in the world is closing in on them (**Exo 14:10**).
 - ii. The cry unto the LORD in desperation (**Exo 14:10**).
 - iii. And then they blame Moses and wish they would have stayed in Egypt and remained slaves (**Exo 14:11-12**).
 - iv. Moses exhorts them to stand still and see the salvation of God and assures them that God will fight for them and that they will never see the Egyptians again (**Exo 14:13-14**).
 - v. God told Moses that he was to stretch out his hand with his rod in it over the Red Sea and it would be divided and Israel would walk through it on dry ground (**Exo 14:15-16**).
 - vi. That night God put a cloud of darkness between the Israelites and the Egyptians to keep them apart while the LORD parted the Red Sea with a strong east wind which dried up the sea bed (**Exo 14:19-21**).
 - vii. Israel walked through the midst of the sea on dry ground with the waters as walls on both sides of them (**Exo 14:22**).
 - viii. The Egyptians pursued after them into the sea, and the LORD took the wheels off their chariots and closed the sea in upon them (**Exo 14:23-28**).
- F. The LORD saved/delivered Israel that day out of the hands of the Egyptians (**Exo 14:29-30**).
- G. When Israel saw that great work of the LORD, they feared God and believed in Him and His servant Moses (**Exo 14:31**).
- H. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. God will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able and will make a way of escape for us so that we will be able to bear it (**1Co 10:13**).
 - ii. God will sometimes put us in a very difficult trial so that He can show His power in delivering us from it.
 - iii. God will let us become cornered with our backs to the wall with no way out so that we will cry out to Him for help.
 - iv. God will let our enemies pursue us until it appears that they are going to destroy us.
 - v. Even when God's people blame Him or the preacher for their situation, God will nevertheless deliver them.
 - vi. God is well able to deliver us from an impossible situation by miraculous means.

- vii. God will destroy our enemies after He is done using them to teach us to suffer patiently and rely on God for salvation.
- viii. God delivers us so that we will fear Him and believe in Him.
- ix. God uses His minister to lead His people through difficult times so that they will have confidence in him.

11. Israel from thirst in the wilderness

A. At Marah

- i. The first place Israel went after they crossed the Red Sea was Marah where the water was bitter (**Exo 15:23**).
- ii. Israel did what they always did: complain (**Exo 15:24**).
- iii. Moses cried unto the LORD, and God had him cast a tree into the water which made it sweet (**Exo 15:25**).
- iv. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. High mountains are connected to deep valleys; often great deliverance is followed by hardship.
 - b. God is merciful (to a point), even when His children complain.
 - c. A praying and interceding man of God can be the salvation of a church.
 - d. The LORD will not suffer His people to lack their basic needs (**Pro 10:3; Php 4:19**).
 - e. God can provide when our resources run out.

B. At Rephidim

- i. After providing them with water previously, Israel journeyed to Rephidim, and again there was no water to drink (**Exo 17:1**).
- ii. As usual, Israel complained to Moses that they had no water (**Exo 17:2-3**).
- iii. They even tempted the LORD, questioning if He was with them (**Exo 17:7**).
- iv. The Lord had Moses strike a rock with his rod, and water came out to quench their thirst (**Exo 17:5-6**).
- v. The LORD again delivered His people from their distress.

C. At Kadesh

- i. When Israel arrived in Kadesh, there was again no water and they gathered themselves against Moses (**Num 20:1-2**).
- ii. They wished that they had died in the wilderness like their brethren had, and they complained about the place that Moses had brought them to (**Num 20:3-5**).
- iii. The LORD instructed Moses to speak to the rock and water would come out of it (**Num 20:6-8**).
- iv. In frustration, Moses smote the rock with his rod instead of speaking to it, and water came out abundantly (**Num 20:9-11**).
- v. Moses was judged for not obeying God and was barred from going into the promised land (**Num 20:12**).
- vi. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. God will allow us to suffer with the same affliction numerous times after He has delivered us from it.

- b. The LORD is longsuffering and will put up with murmuring, and even lack of faith, and will yet deliver us.
- c. God has many different ways in which He can provide for the same need.
- d. God may decide to deliver us even if we don't obey Him fully, but there may be consequences to face later.

12. Israel from hunger in the wilderness

- A. Two and a half months after being delivered from Egypt, the Israelites found themselves with no food (**Exo 16:1-3**).
- B. They complained and wished they had died in Egypt where they had plenty of food (**Exo 16:3**).
- C. God was merciful and provided them bread from heaven (**Exo 16:4**).
 - i. The bread was called manna which was a small, round, white, sweet seed (**Exo 16:14-15, 31**).
 - ii. The LORD gave them a certain rate every day to prove them (**Exo 16:4**).
 - iii. They gathered every man according to his eating: those who needed much got much, and those who needed little got little (**Exo 16:16-18**).
 - iv. On the sixth day God gave them twice as much because they were not to gather on the sabbath day (**Exo 16:5, 29**).
- D. The LORD also gave them quail to eat so they had flesh as well as bread (**Exo 16:11-13**).
- E. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. Be careful what you wish for because God may give it to you (that generation ended up dying in the wilderness).
 - ii. Suffering and trouble are things that we will always have to deal with; it is not a one-and-done experience.
 - iii. We have a tendency to forget about God's previous deliverances and provision and quickly complain as soon as something goes wrong.
 - iv. We always think the grass is greener on the other side.
 - v. God is abundant in mercy to whiners like us.
 - vi. God can furnish a table in the wilderness. He can provide for our needs when things seem impossible.
 - vii. God's provision is good.
 - viii. God gives us our *daily* bread.
 - a. He provides for our present needs, not our lifetime needs all at once.
 - b. He does this to prove us to see if we will live by faith and trust that He will provide again tomorrow.
 - ix. God provides according to our needs.
 - a. God will provide a lot for those who need a lot, such as those with large families.
 - b. God will provide a little for those who need little.
 - x. God will provide extra ahead of time for a time in life when there will be no gathering — make sure you lay up in store when He does.
 - xi. God provides a variety of provisions to meet our needs.

13. Israel from enemies in the wilderness

- A. Immediately after the LORD delivered Israel from dying of thirst by giving them water out of the rock in Rephidim, they were attacked by Amalek (**Exo 17:8**).
- B. Moses told Joshua to choose out men and go fight with Amalek (**Exo 17:9-10**).
- C. When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed in the battle; when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed (**Exo 17:11**).
- D. Aaron and Hur helped hold up Moses' hands until the end of the day, and Joshua and his army defeated Amalek (**Exo 17:12-13**).
- E. God had Moses write down the account of Israel's success in battle with Amalek for a memorial (**Exo 17:14**).
- F. Memorial *n.* - 1. Preserving the memory of a person or thing; often applied to an object set up, a festival (or the like) instituted, to commemorate an event or a person.
- G. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. God's people are tried with divers (**Jam 1:2**) and manifold (**1Pe 1:6**) temptations.
 - a. Divers *adj.* - 1. Different or not alike in character or quality; not of the same kind. *Obs.* in this form since c1700, and now expressed by *diverse* a. 1.
 - b. Manifold *adj.* - 1. a. Varied or diverse in appearance, form, or character; having various forms, features, relations, applications, etc.; complex. 2. Qualifying a plural *n.* (or collective noun): Numerous and varied; of many kinds or varieties. Formerly simply: Numerous, many.
 - c. Temptation *n.* - 1. The action of tempting or fact of being tempted, esp. to evil; enticement, allurement, attraction. (Sometimes with more or less approach to senses 2 and 3.) 2. The action or process of testing or proving; trial, test. 3. A severe or painful trial or experience; an affliction, a trial.
 - d. Temptation in these verses is used in senses 2&3 (**Jam 1:3; 1Pe 1:7**).
 - e. God brings about growth and patience in us by trying us with many different kinds of tests and trials.
 - ii. Many times God expects us to fight our own battles with the resources we have. He doesn't always fight them entirely by Himself for us.
 - iii. God will use our feeble efforts to deliver us through His strength.
 - iv. God will send us helpers when we get weak to help us fight our battles.
 - v. The battles will not be over in an instant, but if we keep fighting with God's help, we will prevail (**Gal 6:9**).
 - vi. We must not give up the fight even when we are tired and feel like giving up (**Pro 24:10; Jer 12:5; Heb 12:1-4; 2Ti 4:7**).
 - vii. God wants us to remember the great deliverances that He has wrought in our lives (**Psa 111:4**).

14. Israel from the Canaanites in the promised land

- A. The five kings of the Amorites

- i. Early on when Israel entered the land of Canaan, five kings of the Amorites banded together to attack them at Gibeon after the men of Gibeon made peace with Israel (**Jos 10:1-5**).
 - ii. The LORD assured Joshua that He had delivered them into his hand (**Jos 10:8**).
 - iii. Joshua believed the LORD and attacked them (**Jos 10:9-10**).
 - iv. The LORD cast down great hailstones from heaven and killed more of the Amorites than Israel killed (**Jos 10:11**).
 - v. The LORD then made the sun stand still for an entire day at Joshua's request until Israel had defeated the Amorites (**Jos 10:12-14**).
 - vi. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. God will allow enemies far more numerous and powerful than we to attack us.
 - b. The LORD gives us assurance in His word that He is with us and will deliver us from our troubles (**Isa 41:10; Isa 43:2; Isa 54:17**).
 - c. If we believe Him and go out to battle, the LORD will fight for us.
 - d. God can use acts of nature to fight our battles for us.
 - e. God can do miraculous things that would seem absolutely impossible to deliver us.
- B. A huge confederacy of kings
- i. After slaying the five kings of the Amorites, Joshua and Israel had great success in battle.
 - a. They destroyed the kingdoms of Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Horem, Eglon, Hebron, Debir (**Jos 10:28-39**).
 - b. They slew all the inhabitants of the lands surrounding them because God fought for them (**Jos 10:40-43**).
 - ii. After hearing of those great victories, Jabin king of Hazor made an alliance with at least 14 kings in the surrounding lands who assembled all their armies together, being as numerous as the sand of the seashore, to fight against Israel (**Jos 11:1-5**).
 - a. Joshua had defeated the five kings of the Amorites who had banded together to fight against him.
 - b. He had also defeated seven kingdoms one at a time after that.
 - c. But now, there are at least 14 kings that are confederate against him with an innumerable multitude of soldiers ready to make war against him.
 - (i) If there was ever a time to be afraid and feel overwhelmed, this was it.
 - (ii) But even in a situation as dire as this there is no reason to fear if God is on your side (**Psa 27:3**).
 - (iii) There is no record of Joshua being afraid when seeing this great multitude assembled against him.
 - d. God commanded Joshua to be not afraid and promised him that He would deliver them all slain before Israel the next day (**Jos 11:6**).
 - e. Joshua believed God and led his army against them *suddenly* (**Jos 11:7**).

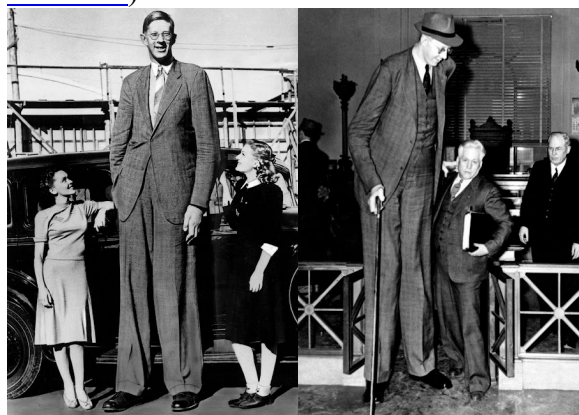
- f. Suddenly *adv.* - 1. Without warning or preparation; all at once, all of a sudden. In some contexts the implication is rather 'At an unexpected moment, unexpectedly'. 2. Without delay, forthwith, promptly, immediately, directly, at once.
- g. The LORD delivered them into his hand, and they slew them until none remained (**Jos 11:8-9**).
- iii. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. As we grow in Christian maturity, God will bring greater trials into our lives.
 - b. As we mature, things that would have made us fear or worry aforetime will not be as big of a deal.
 - c. We must face our enemies boldly in faith, trusting God to keep His word to deliver us.
 - d. We must not delay to keep God's commandments when facing a great trial or enemy (**Psa 119:60**).
 - e. God can perform miraculous deliverances when He is with us and we trust Him to do so.

15. David from Goliath

A. Goliath was a champion of the Philistines who was six cubits and a span tall (**1Sa 17:4**).

- i. Cubit *n.* - 1. The part of the arm from the elbow downward; the forearm. 2. An ancient measure of length derived from the forearm; varying at different times and places, but usually about 18–22 inches.
- ii. Span *n.* - 1. a. The distance from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger, or sometimes to the tip of the forefinger, when the hand is fully extended; the space equivalent to this taken as a measure of length, averaging nine inches.
- iii. Using an 18 inch cubit and a 9 inch span, Goliath would have been **9ft 9in** tall.
- iv. Using a 22 inch cubit and a 9 inch span, Goliath would have been **11ft 9in** tall.
- v. The tallest man in medical history is Robert Perishing Wadlow who was 8ft 11.1in tall. (<https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/tallest-man-ever>)

vi.



- vii. Goliath was approximately 1-3 feet taller than Wadlow.
- viii. Goliath would have been between 4-6 feet taller than David if he was of average height.
- B. Goliath was well armed.
 - i. He had a helmet made of brass (**1Sa 17:5**).
 - ii. He was armed with a coat of mail that weighed 5,000 shekels of brass (**1Sa 17:5**).
 - a. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a Shekel weighs 1/60th of a Mina which is equivalent to one pound. Therefore, a Shekel weighs 1/60th of a pound.
 - (i) Shekel *n.* - 1. a. An ancient unit of weight of the Babylonians, and hence of the Phœnicians, Hebrews, and others, equal to one-sixtieth of a mina (see mina 1).
 - (ii) Mina *n.* - 1. A unit of weight anciently used in Western Asia, Greece, and Egypt. In Greek-speaking countries it contained 100 drachmas; it varied according to locality and time, but was not far from 1 lb. avoirdupois [standard American pound]; 100 minas made a talent. In Assyria and Babylonia there seem to have been two different minas, one being double of the other.
 - (iii) Using this definition of a Shekel, Goliath's coat of mail weighed approximately **83.33lbs** (5,000 shekels / 60 shekels/lb).
 - b. According to the Unger's Bible Dictionary, a Shekel weighs ten pennyweights in English (see Metrology, III. (1) Shekel).
 - (i) According to Wikipedia, a Pennyweight is 0.054857 avoirdupois [standard] ounces. (*Pennyweight*, [Wikipedia](#))
 - (ii) Using this definition of a Shekel, Goliath's coat of mail weighed approximately **171.43lbs** ((5,000 shekels x 10 pennyweights/shekel x 0.054857 oz/pennyweight) / 16 oz/lb).
 - c. Depending on the weight of the shekel, Goliath's coat of mail weighed between 83.33lbs and 171.43lbs.
 - d. Needless to say, he was a very large and heavily armored man.
 - iii. He had greaves of brass upon his legs and a target of brass between his shoulders (**1Sa 17:6**).
 - a. Greave *n.* - 1. Armour for the leg below the knee.
 - b. Target *n.* - 1. A light round shield or buckler; a small targe.
 - c. He was well armed and protected.
 - iv. The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam (**1Sa 17:7**).
 - a. Beam - A part of a loom, used in comparison to indicate the great size of the spears carried by the enemy soldiers who were defeated by the heroes of Israel (1 S. 17:7; 2 S. 21:19; 1Ch. 11:23; 20:5). (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)
 - b. Goliath's spear was huge.
 - c. It has been estimated to have been over 12 feet long.
 - (i) "Based off the looms used in that time period, it would be common for a weaver's beam to be 2 to 2 1/2" inches thick and more than 5 feet long."
(<https://www.goliathsspear.com/weavers-beam>)

- (ii) "For the physics of our Goliath's spear beam to work properly with a 16lb 11oz spear head and the height of Goliath, we choose a 10' length 2in diameter pole, including a 6lb 1.2oz counterweight, giving our spear a total length of 12 ft 7in. This is not to say the spear could not have been even longer. The Bible doesn't give us the exact length. However, the length we calculated for our replica would allow Goliath to have a center of balance to hold the spear easily with one hand about 62 inches from the tip. This would allow him to thrust it directly at the enemy to achieve the best leverage and killing force." (Ibid)
- v. His spear's head weighed 600 shekels of iron (**1Sa 17:7**).
- According to the definition of a shekel in the OED (see above) the head of Goliath's spear weighed **10lbs** (600 shekels / 60 shekels/lb).
 - According to the definition of a shekel in Unger's Bible Dictionary (see above) the head of Goliath's spear weighed **20.6lbs** ((600 shekels x 10 pennyweights/shekel x 0.054857 oz/pennyweight) / 16 oz/lb).
 - Depending on the weight of the shekel, Goliath's spear head weighed between 10lbs and 20.6lbs.
 - In other words, his spear weighed as much as 1-2 sledge hammers.
- vi. He had a servant bearing a shield in front of him (**1Sa 17:7**).
- vii. It should be very obvious by now that Goliath was an enormous giant who was heavily armed and protected.
- C. Goliath taunted Israel, challenging them to fight with him (**1Sa 17:8-10**).
- D. Saul and all Israel were dismayed and greatly afraid of the giant (**1Sa 17:11**).
- Dismayed *ppl.* - Overwhelmed with fear, etc.; appalled.
 - Fear *n.* - 1. In OE.: A sudden and terrible event; peril. 2. a. The emotion of pain or uneasiness caused by the sense of impending danger, or by the prospect of some possible evil. Now the general term for all degrees of the emotion; in early use applied to its more violent extremes, now denoted by alarm, terror, fright, dread. In 14th c. sometimes pleonastically *dread and fear*.
 - Afraid *adj.* - 1. As *ppl.* Alarmed, frightened; hence as *adj.*, In a state of fear or apprehension, moved or actuated by fear.
 - Greatly *adv.* - 1. To a great extent, in a great degree; extensively, exceedingly; highly; much, very.
- E. David went to take food to his brothers who were fighting the Philistines and saw Goliath defying the armies of God, and he was indignant (**1Sa 17:26**).
- F. He went before Saul and volunteered to fight Goliath (**1Sa 17:32**).
- Saul scoffed at the idea of David fighting Goliath because he was a youth (**1Sa 17:33**).
 - Youth *n.* - 1. a. The fact or state of being young; youngness. (Often blending with sense 2.) 2. a. The time when one is young; the early part or period of life; more specifically, the period from puberty till the attainment of full growth, between childhood and adult age.
 - David was a stripling (**1Sa 17:56**).

- c. Stripling *n.* - 1. A youth, one just passing from boyhood to manhood.
 - d. David was not going to let Saul despise his youth (**1Ti 4:12**).
 - ii. David made his case for why he was qualified to fight the giant based on his past experience.
 - a. He told of a time when a lion and a bear attacked his flock and he defended the sheep and killed the attackers (**1Sa 17:34-35**).
 - b. David reasoned that since God delivered him out of paws of the lion and bear that he would deliver him out of the hand of Goliath (**1Sa 17:36-37**).
 - c. David was walking by faith believing that God would save him presently because he had saved him in the past (**2Co 1:10**).
 - d. The apostle Paul likewise concluded that because God delivered him out of the mouth of *the lion* that he would deliver him from every evil work (**2Ti 4:17-18**).
 - e. This is a principle that Israel should have been familiar with (**Deut 1:30**).
 - iii. Saul gave David permission to fight the Philistine and gave him armor, a helmet, a coat of mail, and a sword, but David put them off because he had not proved them (**1Sa 17:38-39**).
 - a. This was wise for a couple of reasons.
 - b. Firstly, we should prove things before we hold fast to them (**Eph 5:10; 1Th 5:21**).
 - c. Secondly, we should not rely on our weapons for protection, but on God's help and protection (**1Sa 17:47; Psa 20:7; Psa 33:16-19; Psa 44:6-7; Pro 21:31; 2Ch 13:15, 18; 2Ch 20:15; Isa 31:1**).
- G. Rather than use the weapons and armor that men had made and offered to him, David chose five little smooth stones out of the brook which God had made (**1Sa 17:40a**).
 - i. Better is little with fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith (**Pro 15:16**).
 - ii. The LORD loves sending His faithful saints into battle outnumbered so that He gets credit for the victory (**Jdg 7:7**).
 - iii. David would only end up needing one stone, but it's nevertheless wise to be prepared and lay up for the time to come since we don't know how much of our resources God will use to save us.
- H. With his sling in his hand and the stones in his bag, David approached Goliath (**1Sa 17:40b**).
 - i. With Goliath was an arm of flesh, but with David was the LORD his God to help him (**2Ch 32:8**).
 - ii. The LORD was David's salvation and his strength, and therefore he was not afraid (**Psa 27:1**).
- I. Goliath approached David and disdained and reproached him when he saw that he was a youth armed with a staff (**1Sa 17:41-43**).
 - i. Disdain *v.* - 1. *trans.* To think unworthy of oneself, or of one's notice; to regard or treat with contempt; to despise, scorn.

- ii. Goliath was despising David's youth (**1Ti 4:12**).
- J. Goliath proudly boasted how he would kill David if he came to him (**1Sa 17:44**).
 - i. Before destruction the heart of man is haughty (**Pro 18:12**).
 - ii. "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off" (**1Ki 20:11**).
- K. David told the giant that he came in the name of the LORD of hosts, not with weapons of war like him, and that the LORD would deliver him into his hand (**1Sa 17:45**).
 - i. In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence (**Pro 14:26**).
 - ii. Though war rose up against David, in God was he confident (**Psa 27:2-3**).
- L. David boldly told Goliath that the LORD would deliver him into his hand (**1Sa 17:46-47**).
 - i. God would deliver David so that all the earth would know that there is a God in Israel.
 - ii. God used young David who was greatly inferior to the giant so that everyone would know that the battle was the LORD's who saves not by sword and spear.
- M. When Goliath came near to meet David, David ran toward the army to meet him (**1Sa 17:48**).
 - i. Goliath was no doubt in a proud rage because of David's words.
 - a. He didn't even respond, but immediately headed toward him.
 - b. When Goliath heard David's words about the God of Israel delivering him into his hand he should have feared and departed from evil, but rather he raged and was confident (**Pro 14:16**).
 - ii. David didn't wait for him to get close, but ran toward him.
 - a. We must not *run from* battles that the LORD has put us in, but rather *run toward* them.
 - b. David knew whom he had believed and was persuaded that God would be there for him in the battle (**2Ti 1:12**).
 - c. David wisely ran to Goliath to get within striking distance of him before the giant could strike first him.
 - d. It's much easier to win a fight if you go on the offensive first, rather than waiting to be attacked and playing defense.
 - iii. The LORD taught David's hands to war and his fingers to fight in this battle (**Psa 144:1**).
- N. David sling a stone and sunk it into Goliath's forehead, knocking him to the ground (**1Sa 17:49**).
 - i. David, by the providence of God, hit Goliath in the only part of his body which was unprotected and vulnerable.
 - a. It only takes one weakness to be exploited to take a man down.
 - b. Goliath in his pride and haste probably didn't close his shield to protect his face.
 - ii. David had obviously practiced with his sling and was an expert marksman as others in Israel were (**Jdg 20:16**).
 - a. He didn't go into battle unprepared.

- b. But neither did he go into battle trusting in his own strength and abilities (**Psa 44:6; Pro 21:31**).
 - iii. Let this be a reminder to us of the following.
 - a. Let not the mighty man glory in his might (**Jer 9:23**).
 - b. The LORD didn't take pleasure in Goliath's strong legs, but in David who feared Him and hoped in Him (**Psa 147:10-11**).
 - c. Pride goes before destruction and an haughty spirit before *a fall* (**Pro 16:18**).
- O. David didn't have his own sword so he used Goliath's to slay him and cut off his head (**1Sa 17:50-51**).
 - i. God used Goliath's own weapons against him (**Psa 9:15-16; Ecc 10:8; Pro 11:5-6**).
 - ii. The sword he was planning to use to kill David was used to kill him (**Mat 7:2; Deut 19:19-21**).
 - iii. God provided David the weapon he needed when he needed it.
- P. The Philistines fled when they saw their champion was dead and Israel pursued, wounded, and spoiled them (**1Sa 17:51-53**).
 - i. Let this be a reminder that when fighting a battle with sin or heresy we must strike at the root and destroy the source/foundation.
 - ii. Once the foundation is destroyed, the rest will follow.
- Q. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. Might doesn't make right.
 - ii. With God nothing shall be impossible.
 - iii. God can deliver us when we face enemies much greater and more powerful than ourselves.
 - iv. People will look down on us and despise us when we are living by faith and doing things they are afraid to do.
 - v. One's youth or size will not prevent God from using him to defeat a great enemy.
 - vi. Don't despise the youth and zeal of a young and faithful man.
 - vii. It only takes one brave and faithful man to stand up and deliver a whole nation with God's help (**Ecc 9:14-16**).
 - viii. Past deliverances in our lives should give us the faith to trust God that He will deliver us in the future.
 - ix. We must rely on God's deliverance, not our own strength or men's ideas, when facing adversity or enemies.
 - x. We must run into battle, not run from it.
 - xi. God will use our enemies' weapons to destroy them.
 - xii. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

16. David from Saul

- A. Saul was the king of Israel (**1Sa 10:24**).
- B. Saul envied David (**1Sa 18:6-9**).
 - i. Because of his envy, God sent an evil spirit into him (**1Sa 18:10**).
 - ii. Beware, Christian: this can happen to you.

- iii. If we let envy, pride, bitterness, resentment, etc. build up in us, God can turn us over to a delusion and cause us to lose our minds and turn on our brethren.
 - iv. I have witnessed this happen and have been a victim of it in a church.
 - C. Saul tried to kill David eleven times.
 - i. Saul threw a javelin at David twice when he played the harp for him **(1Sa 18:10-11)**.
 - a. David escaped Saul's attempt at murdering him **(1Sa 18:11)**.
 - b. David behaved himself wisely in all his ways, and the LORD was with him **(1Sa 18:12-14)**.
 - c. This made Saul afraid of David **(1Sa 18:15)**.
 - ii. Saul tried to set David up to be killed by the Philistines.
 - a. Saul devised a scheme to give his daughter Merab to David for a wife on the condition that he would fight for him so that the Philistines would kill him **(1Sa 18:17-18)**.
 - b. Merab was given to another man, so Saul offered his daughter Michal to David for the same reason **(1Sa 18:19-24)**.
 - c. Saul told David he wanted him to give him 100 Philistine foreskins for Michal with hopes that he would die in battle with them **(1Sa 18:25-26)**.
 - d. David and his men slew 200 Philistines and brought their foreskins back to Saul **(1Sa 18:27)**.
 - e. Saul could see that the LORD was with David and this made him more afraid of him and caused him to be his enemy continually **(1Sa 18:28-29)**.
 - f. David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul **(1Sa 18:30)**.
 - iii. Saul tried to talk his son Jonathan and his servants into killing David **(1Sa 19:1)**.
 - a. Jonathan loved David and therefore told him to hide himself while he went and tried to persuade Saul to not kill him **(1Sa 19:2-3)**.
 - b. Jonathan reasoned with Saul and dissuaded him from killing David **(1Sa 19:4-6)**.
 - c. David was again able to be in Saul's presence in peace and escaped death again **(1Sa 19:7)**.
 - iv. Saul again tried to kill David with a javelin.
 - a. David went out to war again with the Philistines and slew them with a great slaughter **(1Sa 19:8)**.
 - b. This made Saul envious again and the evil spirit entered him and enticed him to kill David while he played for him **(1Sa 19:9)**.
 - c. David dodged the javelin and fled from Saul and escaped **(1Sa 19:10)**.
 - v. Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him and kill him **(1Sa 19:11)**.
 - a. David's wife Michal warned him of the conspiracy and let him down through a window, and he escaped **(1Sa 19:11-12)**.

- b. Michal put an image under the covers in David's bed to make it look like he was in bed sick in order to deceive Saul and his men (**1Sa 19:13-17**).
 - c. When she was found out, she lied to save her life (**1Sa 19:17**).
 - d. God again delivered David out of Saul's hand (**1Sa 19:18**).
 - e. David knew there was but a step between him and death (**1Sa 20:3**).
- vi. Saul pursued David with his servants.
 - a. Saul had decreed that David would surely die (**1Sa 20:31**).
 - b. David went to Ahimelech the priest and lied to him saying he was on official business from the king in order to get bread for the young men that were with him and Goliath's sword to defend himself (**1Sa 21:1-6, 8-9**).
 - c. He next went to Achish king of Gath to find refuge, but the men recognized him which made David afraid, so he feigned himself a madman in order to be delivered out of the hand of Achish (**1Sa 21:10-15**).
 - d. At the cave of Adullam David acquired a band of about 400 misfits who were in distress, in debt, and discontented (**1Sa 22:1-2**).
 - e. David went to Mizpeh of Moab until the prophet told him to go to Judah (**1Sa 22:3-5**).
 - f. When Saul heard that David was in Judah he pursued after him with his servants (**1Sa 22:6-8**).
 - g. Saul found out that Ahimelech the priest had helped David and he commanded Doeg to slay the priests (**1Sa 22:17-19**).
 - h. Abiathar the priest escaped and told David what happened and joined with him (**1Sa 22:20-23**).
 - i. David was once again delivered out of Saul's hand.
- vii. Saul pursued David and tried to kill him at Keilah.
 - a. David was told that the Philistines were fighting against Keilah and robbing the threshingfloors (**1Sa 23:1**).
 - b. After getting counsel from the LORD twice, David slaughtered the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah (**1Sa 23:2-6**).
 - c. When Saul found out that David was in Keilah he assumed that God had delivered him into his hand because he was shut in the city, so he called all the people to go to war at Keilah against David and his men (**1Sa 23:7-8**).
 - d. David got wind of Saul's plan and enquired of the LORD and found out that the men of Keilah would deliver him up to Saul, so he departed out of the city and was spared from death again (**1Sa 23:9-13**).
 - (i) Note: people who you help will sometimes turn on you.
 - (ii) Note: God knows not only what *will* happen, but also what *could have* happened.
- viii. Saul pursued David and tried to kill him in the wilderness of Ziph.
 - a. David hid out in the wilderness of Ziph, and Saul sought him out every day, but the LORD saved him from Saul (**1Sa 23:14-15**).

- b. Jonathan went to the wilderness to strengthen David's hand in God **(1Sa 23:16-18)**.
- c. The Ziphites told Saul that David was in the woods in the hill of Hachilah, and they offered to deliver him into his hand **(1Sa 23:19-20)**.
- d. Saul was delighted and told them to go find out where David was hiding so he could find him and kill him **(1Sa 23:21-23)**.
- e. They went to Ziph, but David was in Maon **(1Sa 23:24)**.
- f. Saul heard that David was in Maon and pursued after him there **(1Sa 23:25)**.
- g. Saul was closing in on David being on one side of the mountain with David on the other side **(1Sa 23:26)**.
 - (i) Saul had compassed David and his men round about.
 - (ii) There was nowhere to turn.
 - (iii) It looked like it was finally over and Saul was going to kill him.
- h. *But*, just as Saul was ready to crush him, a messenger came to Saul telling him that the Philistines had invaded the land, and Saul left pursuing David and went after the Philistines **(1Sa 23:27-28)**.
- i. David escaped and went to the strongholds of Engedi **(1Sa 23:29)**.
- j. David once again and was delivered from death by God.
- ix. Saul pursued David and tried to kill him in the wilderness of Engedi.
 - a. After Saul finished fighting the Philistines he was told that David was in Engedi, and he took 3,000 chosen soldiers in Israel to hunt him down **(1Sa 24:1-2)**.
 - b. Saul entered a cave to relieve himself, and it just so happened that David and his men were hiding in that cave **(1Sa 24:3)**.
 - (i) This could have been the death of David if Saul would have found him in the cave.
 - (ii) But Saul didn't know he was there, and David was again delivered from death.
 - c. David's men tried to talk him into killing Saul, but he would not because Saul was the LORD's anointed, so he instead cut off the skirt of Saul's robe **(1Sa 24:4-7)**.
 - d. After Saul left the cave David went out and cried unto him that he had spared his life **(1Sa 24:8-15)**.
 - e. Saul recognized that David was more righteous than he, so after asking David to swear to not kill his family after he was king, Saul went home **(1Sa 24:16-22)**.
 - f. David was again delivered out of the hand of Saul.
 - g. David did not take matters into his own hand and kill Saul, but rather waited on the LORD to take vengeance on Him **(Rom 12:19-21)**.
- x. Saul pursued David and tried to kill him again in the wilderness of Ziph.
 - a. After Saul had made peace with David at Engedi in 1Sa 24, the Ziphites came to Saul telling him that David was hiding in the hill of Hachilah **(1Sa 26:1)**.

- b. Apparently having forgotten about David's kindness to him, Saul took his 3,000 chosen soldiers and went into the wilderness of Ziph looking for David (**1Sa 26:2**).
 - c. When David was sure that it was Saul that was encamped against him, he went into the camp and stole Saul's spear and cruse of water which were next to him while he slept (**1Sa 26:3-4, 12**).
 - d. David again refused to kill Saul, but was resolved to let the LORD judge him (**1Sa 26:9-11**).
 - e. When Saul found out that David had again spared his life he was smitten with repentance and promised to no more do David any harm, and he went back to his place (**1Sa 26:21, 25**).
 - f. Saul actually kept his promise this time (**1Sa 27:4**).
 - g. The LORD had once again delivered David out of Saul's hand.
 - h. When a man's ways please the LORD He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him (**Pro 16:7**).
 - xi. The LORD delivered David out of the hand of Saul all those times (**2Sa 12:7; 2Sa 22:1**).
- D. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
- i. Not even a king can harm us if God chooses to deliver us from him (**Psa 105:14-15**).
 - ii. Our enemies will use various means to persecute us, but none will prevail if God chooses to deliver us.
 - iii. *Many* are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all (**Psa 34:19; Psa 129:1-2; Job 5:19; Pro 24:16**).
 - iv. Behaving wisely will aid in our deliverance from trouble (**Pro 16:20; Pro 28:26**).
 - v. God can use people who are close to our oppressors to talk them out of persecuting us.
 - vi. God can use our godly deception of others to deliver us.
 - vii. God will send others to help us when we are being persecuted.
 - viii. Always seek counsel from God to determine what to do when being persecuted in order to be delivered.
 - ix. God will sometimes deliver us by allowing us to flee from our persecutors.
 - x. God is able to deliver us even in the most impossible of circumstances.
 - xi. God can foil the plans of our persecutors by distracting them with other crises that they have to attend to.
 - xii. God can save us from enemies who greatly outnumber us.
 - xiii. When being persecuted, we must never resort to the evil tactics of our enemies or the world, but rather leave vengeance up to the LORD.

17. David from Absalom

- A. Absalom was David's third son (**2Sa 3:3**).
- i. He was a very handsome man who was praised by many (**2Sa 14:25**).
 - ii. He would let his hair grow long for an entire year without cutting it (**2Sa 14:26**).
 - iii. This is evidence of his ungodly and rebellious nature (**1Co 11:14**).

- B. David did not discipline his children well (**1Ki 1:5-6**).
- C. David loved Absalom and longed for him even after he killed his brother Amnon (David's son) (**2Sa 13:28-29 c/w 2Sa 13:37-39; 2Sa 14:1**).
- D. Absalom was a rebel who stole the hearts of the men of Israel with his slick tongue (**2Sa 15:1-6**).
- E. He was able to deceive the men of Israel into making him their king (**2Sa 15:7-12**).
- F. When David got word of it he fled for his life (**2Sa 15:13-14**).
- G. David's counselor Ahithophel was among the conspirators, and David prayed that the LORD would turn his counsel into foolishness (**2Sa 15:31**).
 - i. While David was worshiping God, his friend Hushai the Archite came to him, and David told him to go to Absalom and feign himself as Absalom's servant that he might defeat the counsel of Ahithophel (**2Sa 15:32-34**).
 - ii. This was an act of godly deception which God blessed.
- H. Ahithophel's counsel was as if a man enquired at the oracle of God (**2Sa 16:23**).
- I. After Ahithophel's counsel was followed by Absalom (**2Sa 16:20-22**), he gave him additional counsel which might have caused David's death (**2Sa 17:1-4**).
 - i. Hushai then gave opposing, inferior advice to Absalom (**2Sa 17:5-13**).
 - ii. Absalom accepted the counsel of Hushai over the good counsel of Ahithophel because the LORD had appointed him to do so that He might destroy him (**2Sa 17:14**).
 - iii. Hushai then passed along the plan to David so that he would not be where Absalom thought he was supposed to be (**2Sa 17:15-16**).
 - iv. David got the message and escaped (**2Sa 17:22**).
 - v. Ahithophel committed suicide when he saw that his counsel was not followed (**2Sa 17:23**).
- J. When Absalom went to battle against David on his mule, his head got caught in an oak tree where he hanged until Joab killed him (**2Sa 18:9, 14-17**).
- K. David was again delivered from death by God (**2Sa 22:2-4**).
- L. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. God will often allow close family members to afflict us (**Mat 10:21; Mat 10:34-36**).
 - ii. If you don't discipline your children, they will be a source of suffering in your life (**Pro 10:1; Pro 17:21; Pro 17:25; Pro 19:13; Pro 29:15**).
 - iii. Showing favor and sympathy to rebellious children will only make them worse and will come back to bite you.
 - iv. Your friends will sometimes turn on you, but God will never forsake you (**2Ti 4:16-17**).
 - v. God can make our wicked, oppressive leaders listen to foolish advice which will thwart their evil plans and destroy them (**2Th 2:11-12**).
 - vi. God can take the wise in their own craftiness (**Job 5:13**) and defeat the worldly wisdom of the wicked (**1Co 1:19-20; Isa 19:11**).
 - vii. Our enemies will reap what they sow and will be judged according to their works (**Gal 6:7-8; Job 4:8**).
 - viii. God can save us from enemies and destroy them even when we don't have enough sense to desire it.

18. Elijah

A. God delivered Elijah from starvation.

- i. Elijah prophesied that it would not rain for 3.5 years (**1Ki 17:1 c/w Jam 5:17**).
- ii. The LORD sent Elijah into the wilderness and gave him water from a brook and food via ravens morning and evening (**1Ki 17:2-6**).
- iii. After the brook dried up God sent Elijah to Zidon to be sustained by a widow (**1Ki 17:7-9**).
- iv. Elijah asked the widow for a morsel of bread only to find out that she was destitute having only a handful of meal and a little oil to make her and her son their last meal before they would die (**1Ki 17:10-12**).
- v. Elijah told her to make him a little cake first and then make one for her and her son, assuring her that the barrel of meal and the oil would not run out until the LORD sent rain (**1Ki 17:13-14**).
- vi. The woman did what Elijah said by faith, and the meal and the oil did not fail (**1Ki 17:15-16**).
- vii. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. A true man of God will say and do things which God commands him to, even though doing so will cause himself harm and loss.
 - b. When a man of God preaches things which cost him financially, God will provide for him by other means.
 - (i) On numerous occasions I have preached things and made decisions in the church, knowing that doing so would cost me a large portion of my income.
 - (ii) And each time the Lord provided for my needs.
 - c. God can provide for our needs by miraculous means.
 - d. God can provide for our needs and deliver us from death in the middle of a famine or a depression (**Psa 33:18-19**).
 - e. Even in the most difficult times, if we give to the Lord first and ourselves second, God will take care of us and provide for us (**Pro 3:9-10; Mat 6:31-33**).
 - f. God will not let His faithful saints starve or go in want (**Psa 37:19, 25; Psa 34:9-10; Pro 10:3**).
 - g. God can provide through unlikely sources.
 - h. God will allow us to go through hardship to test our faith (**Deut 8:16**).

B. God delivered Elijah from being killed by Ahab and Jezebel.

- i. Ahab and been trying to hunt down and kill Elijah for a long time because he blamed him for the drought (**1Ki 18:10**).
- ii. Elijah met with Ahab and told him to bring the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of the groves for a challenge to see who the true God was, Baal or the LORD (**1Ki 18:17-24**).
- iii. The LORD sent down fire from heaven showing that He was the true God (**1Ki 18:36-38**).
- iv. Elijah slew the 450 prophets of Baal (**1Ki 18:40**).

- v. When Ahab told Jezebel that Elijah had killed the prophets of Baal she vowed that she would kill him **(1Ki 19:1-2)**.
- vi. Elijah fled to Beersheba for his life **(1Ki 19:3)**.
 - a. He then went a day's journey into the wilderness and asked God to kill him **(1Ki 19:4)**.
 - b. The LORD appeared to Elijah and communed with him when he was very depressed and hopeless **(1Ki 19:9-14)**.
 - c. God sent him to Damascus to anoint Hazael king over Syria, Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha prophet in his stead **(1Ki 19:15-16)**.
 - d. The LORD comforted him by telling him that He had reserved 7,000 in Israel who had not worshiped Baal **(1Ki 19:17-18)**.
 - e. The LORD had delivered Elijah out of the hand of Ahab and Jezebel.
- vii. After Jezebel had Naboth the Jezreelite murdered, the LORD sent Elijah to pronounce a death sentence on Ahab and Jezebel **(1Ki 21:17-24)**.
 - a. Ahab and Jezebel died just like Elijah prophesied **(1Ki 22:34-38; 2Ki 9:30-37)**.
 - b. Elijah was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire **(2Ki 2:11)**.
- viii. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. We will sometimes be persecuted unjustly and blamed for things for which we were not responsible.
 - b. God will allow us to be outnumbered by our enemies so that we have no possibility of saving ourselves, and we therefore must rely on the LORD for deliverance.
 - c. Great victories in life will often be followed by great suffering, affliction, and depression.
 - d. God will allow us to be cast down but not destroyed **(2Co 4:9)**.
 - e. In our unhappy circumstances God will use us to do great things for Him.
 - f. God will comfort us when we are depressed.
 - g. The LORD will destroy our enemies and deliver us both temporally and eternally to His heavenly kingdom.

19. Micaiah

- A. Ahab king of Israel wanted to go to war with Ramoth-gilead **(1Ki 22:1-3)**.
- B. Ahab talked Jehoshaphat king of Judah into going to war with him against them **(1Ki 22:4)**.
- C. But before going to war, Jehoshaphat wanted to enquire of the LORD **(1Ki 22:5)**.
 - i. He wanted to have wise counsel before he made war **(Pro 24:6)**.
 - ii. He wanted to enquire at the word of the LORD because the scriptures are the best counselors **(Psa 119:24)**.
- D. Ahab gathered 400 prophets and asked them if he should go to war with Ramoth-gilead. They all with one consent said that the LORD would deliver them into his hand **(1Ki 22:6)**.
- E. Jehoshaphat was not satisfied with the response of the "yes men," so he asked if there was a prophet of the LORD to enquire of **(1Ki 22:7)**.

- i. Jehoshaphat knew that the prophets had not spoken from the mouth of the LORD but from their own hearts (**Jer 23:16**).
 - ii. He didn't want to follow a multitude to do evil (**Exo 23:2**).
 - iii. He wanted a second opinion (or a 401st opinion in this case) because he knew that in the multitude of counselors there is safety (**Pro 11:14**).
- F. Ahab admits that there is one more prophet, Micaiah, but he hated him before he always prophesied evil against him (*the truth*, in other words) (**1Ki 22:8**).
 - i. Ahab liked the prophets who prophesied smooth things to him (**Isa 30:10; Jer 5:31; Mic 2:11**).
 - ii. He hated him who reproved him (**Amo 5:10; Pro 9:8; Pro 15:12**).
- G. Ahab sent for Micaiah (**1Ki 22:9**).
- H. In the mean time, all of the false prophets were prophesying smooth things to the kings of Israel and Judah (**1Ki 22:10-12**).
- I. The messenger told Micaiah that all the other prophets declared good to the king and encouraged him to do likewise (**1Ki 22:13**).
 - i. The peer pressure is intense.
 - ii. He is outnumbered 400:1.
- J. Micaiah was undeterred by the pressure and declared that he would speak whatever the LORD told him to speak (**1Ki 22:14**).
 - i. We ought to obey God rather than men (**Act 4:19-20; Act 5:29**).
 - ii. Preachers must preach the word in season and out of season (**2Ti 4:2**).
 - a. Season *n.* - III. Phrases with prep. 15. **in season**. a. At the right and proper time, opportunely. 16. **out of season**. a. Unseasonably, inopportunately; *predicatively*, unseasonable, inopportune. 17. **in season and out of season**: at all times, without regard to what is considered opportune.
 - b. It doesn't matter if it seems to be an inopportune time; preachers must declare the word of God regardless.
 - iii. They must not hold back (**Isa 58:1**).
- K. Micaiah initially mocks the king when he asked him if he would go to war against Ramoth-gilead (**1Ki 22:15**).
 - i. It is apparent that he was mocking the king because of the king's response (**1Ki 22:16**).
 - ii. Micaiah was mocking the other prophets by repeating their foolish words (**1Ki 22:6, 12**).
 - iii. He was being sarcastic like Elijah was with the prophets of Baal (**1Ki 18:27**).
 - iv. Micaiah was answering the king according to his folly (**Pro 26:5**).
- L. After sarcastically answering the king and being commanded by the king to tell him the truth, Micaiah tells him to send his armies home (**1Ki 22:17**).
- M. After hearing the truth, Ahab essentially says to Jehoshaphat "See, I told you so!", being irritated that Micaiah once again prophesied evil concerning him (**1Ki 22:18**).
 - i. Micaiah was damned if he did and damned if he didn't.
 - ii. Ahab rebuked him for telling him what he wanted to hear and hated him for telling him the truth that he didn't want to hear.

- N. Micaiah then explains that the reason the 400 prophets had prophesied a lie to Ahab was because God wanted to deceive him so that he would go to war and die, and to accomplish this the LORD sent a willing, lying spirit into the mouths of Ahab's prophets to tell him what he wanted to hear **(1Ki 22:19-23)**.
 - i. God will send strong delusion to those who love not the truth so that they will believe a lie **(2Th 2:10-12)**.
 - ii. If people want to believe a lie, God will accommodate them **(Isa 66:4; Eze 14:4-9)**.
- O. Telling the truth got Micaiah punched in the face **(1Ki 22:24-25)**.
- P. Ahab then commands that Micaiah be put in prison and fed with the bread and water of affliction until Ahab returned in peace from the battle **(1Ki 22:26-27)**.
- Q. Micaiah told Ahab that if he returned in peace the LORD had not spoken by him **(1Ki 22:28)**.
 - i. Rather than beg for his life or his freedom, Micaiah doubled down on preaching the truth to the king.
 - ii. Declaring the word of God was more important to Micaiah than his personal comfort.
- R. Ahab died in the battle, just as the LORD had intended **(1Ki 22:34-35)**.
- S. The armies returned home in defeat just like Micaiah had told them to **(1Ki 22:36 c/w 1Ki 22:17)**.
- T. There is no mention of what happened to Micaiah after Ahab was killed in battle.
 - i. In fact, there is no mention of his name again in scripture.
 - ii. We can assume that he was released from prison, but we don't know.
 - iii. He may have never been released, or he could even have been executed after his prophecy of the demise of Ahab came true.
- U. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. People who want to do wicked or stupid things generally don't seek counsel from the LORD before plowing ahead.
 - ii. When it is suggested to them that they should seek counsel before moving forward, they will go to people who will tell them what they want to hear.
 - iii. Be wary of advisors who all agree with each other with no dissent from the group.
 - iv. Stupid people hate those who will tell them the truth about their foolish plans.
 - v. Those who are called on to advise a leader will often be pressured to go along with the leader's plans and with the other advice he has received.
 - vi. There is nothing wrong with mocking fools who don't want to hear the truth you have to tell them.
 - vii. Truth-tellers will usually be hated and persecuted by those in power.
 - viii. People will not appreciate a man who tells them the truth, but will often hate him for it **(Gal 4:16)**.
 - ix. Physical assault and imprisonment are sometimes the result of telling the truth uncompromisingly.
 - x. Never back down from telling the truth and doing the right thing, even in the face of persecution.

- xi. It is worth it to stand up for God's truth even if we don't know what the outcome will be of doing so.
- xii. Taking a stand for the truth is always right even if we don't receive recognition for it in this life.
- xiii. If we are not rewarded for it in this life, we will be in the next life (**2Ti 4:7-8; Mat 25:21**).

20. Joash

- A. Judah had a wicked king named Ahaziah who was son-in-law to the house of Ahab (**2Ki 8:25, 27**).
 - i. Ahaziah's mother Athaliah was Ahab's sister (**2Ki 8:26 c/w 1Ki 16:28**).
 - ii. Ahaziah was killed by Jehu (**2Ki 9:27**).
- B. When Athaliah saw that Ahaziah was dead she attempted to kill all of his sons (**2Ki 11:1**) and succeeded with the exception of one.
- C. Ahaziah's sister Jehosheba hid Joash, Ahaziah's only remaining one-year-old son, and his nurse in the bedchamber and spared him from death (**2Ki 11:2**).
- D. He was hidden in the house of the LORD for six years while Athaliah reigned over the land (**2Ki 11:3**).
 - i. When the wicked rise a man is hidden (**Pro 28:12, 28; Jdg 6:2**).
 - ii. A nation is under judgment when women rule over them (**Isa 3:12**).
- E. When Joash was seven years old Jehoiada the priest showed him to the rulers of Judah and the captains of the guard and made a covenant with them (**2Ki 11:4**).
 - i. Jehoiada devised a plan to secure the temple area and the king's house to protect Joash while they crowned him king (**2Ki 11:5-8**).
 - ii. The captains of the guards followed his orders and stood ready with their weapons to protect Joash (**2Ki 11:9-11**).
 - iii. They then crowned Joash and made him king with celebration (**2Ki 11:12**).
- F. When Athaliah heard the commotion, she went into the temple and saw the seven-year-old king Joash and cried "treason" (**2Ki 11:13-14**).
- G. Jehoiada the priest commanded her to be removed from the temple and killed (**2Ki 11:15-16**).
 - i. Athaliah was judged with the judgment she executed on the king's sons (her grandchildren) and tried to execute on Joash (**Deut 19:19; Est 7:9; 1Sa 25:39; Jdg 9:56-57**).
 - ii. The wicked will fall by their own wickedness (**Pro 11:5; Pro 26:27**).
 - iii. Those who live by the sword die by the sword (**Mat 26:52**).
- H. Jehoiada made a covenant with the people to be the LORD's people, and they destroyed the religion of Baal and slew his priest (**2Ki 11:17-18**).
- I. Joash was placed on the throne, and people rejoiced and were in peace (**2Ki 11:19-21**).
 - i. When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice (**Pro 29:2**).
 - ii. When a nation has a good king the people can lead quiet and peaceable lives in godliness and honesty (**1Ti 2:1-2**).
- J. Joash was the only remaining heir to David's throne.
 - i. He is in the royal lineage (through Joseph) of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. Mary's lineage is given in Luke 3 (**Luk 3:23-38**).

- (i) Mary was a descendant of David through his son Nathan (**Luk 3:31**).
 - (ii) Joseph was called "the son of Heli" because he was Heli's son-in-law (**Luk 3:23 c/w 1Sa 24:11, 16**).
 - (iii) Jacob was Joseph's biological father (**Mat 1:16**).
 - (iv) Jesus was a biological son of David through Mary, but He inherited David's throne through Joseph because he was in the royal line through Solomon.
- b. Jesus inherited the throne of David through His step-father Joseph (**Mat 1:6-16**).
- (i) For some reason, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah were left out of Matthew's genealogy (**Mat 1:8**), but they are included in **1Ch 3:11-12**.
 - (ii) Keeping in mind that Ozias in **Mat 1:8-9** is the Greek spelling of Uzziah who also was called Azariah (**1Ch 3:11-12 c/w 2Ch 26:1, 23**), the following chart will show where Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah fit into the genealogy in Mat 1.

Matthew's Genealogy (Mat 1:8-9)	1Chronicles Genealogy (1Ch 3:10-13)
Josaphat (Mat 1:8)	Jehoshaphat (1Ch 3:10)
Joram (Mat 1:8)	Joram (1Ch 3:11)
	Ahaziah (1Ch 3:11)
	Joash (1Ch 3:11)
	Amaziah (1Ch 3:12)
Ozias (Mat 1:8) (Uzziah, Azariah - see above)	Azariah (1Ch 3:12)
Joatham (Mat 1:9)	Jotham (1Ch 3:12)
Achaz (Mat 1:9)	Ahaz (1Ch 3:13)

1. It is not a contradiction for **Mat 1:8** to say that "Joram begat Ozias" because the scripture sometimes refers to grandchildren being the children of their grandfathers (**Gen 46:19-22**).
 2. Such could also be the case with Salah who was said to have been begotten by Arphaxad in **Gen 10:24, Gen 11:12-13**, and **1Ch 1:24**, but apparently was begotten by Cainan who was begotten by Arphaxad (**Luk 3:35-36**).
- ii. If Joash would have been killed along with all the rest of the seed royal, Jesus Christ could not have inherited David's throne.
 - iii. Joash's deliverance was clearly accomplished by the providence of God.
- K. Joash was a good king who reigned for forty years (**2Ki 12:1-2**) and led the effort to repair the house of the LORD (**2Ki 12:4-16**).
- L. Joash was good while Jehoiada lived, but he fell into apostasy after he died (**2Ch 24:15-22**).
- M. There are some lessons we can learn from this.

- i. God can stop the evil plans of the wicked even when they think they have been successful.
- ii. Sometimes God allows innocent people to be killed due to no fault of their own.
- iii. God can use people in our lives to deliver us from death when we are completely helpless and powerless to defend ourselves.
- iv. God can take care of our children when we are not there or able to do so.
- v. God will sometimes let the wicked get away with their evil plots for years before He judges them and delivers the righteous.
- vi. God can use leaders, soldiers, and all types of people to deliver His people from danger or death.
- vii. The wicked will eventually get what's coming to them.
- viii. God may deliver us because He has plans to use us in the future to accomplish great things for Him.
- ix. Beware not to turn away from God after He has delivered you, especially after a person that God used to deliver you dies.

21. Hezekiah

- A. Hezekiah was delivered from Sennacherib king of Assyria.
 - i. Hezekiah began to reign over Judah at 25 years old, and he was a good king **(2Ki 18:1-3)**.
 - ii. He rid the land of idolatry, and he trusted and clave to the LORD like no other before or after him **(2Ki 18:4-6)**.
 - iii. The LORD was with him and blessed his effort to rebel against the king of Assyria and to defeat the Philistines **(2Ki 18:7-8)**.
 - iv. Because he trusted in the LORD and kept His commandments, he had peace for at least 10 years.
 - a. In the fourth year of his reign the northern kingdom of Israel was besieged by the Assyrians and conquered **(2Ki 18:9-12)**.
 - b. It was not until the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign that the king of Assyria came up against him **(2Ki 18:13)**.
 - c. He therefore had at least 10 or more years of peace.
 - v. In the fourteenth year of his reign Sennacherib king of Assyria took all the fenced cities of Judah **(2Ki 18:13)**.
 - a. Before he besieged Jerusalem Hezekiah surrendered to him and offered to pay him a tribute to not destroy him to which Sennacherib agreed **(2Ki 18:14)**.
 - b. Hezekiah did not seek the LORD to know what to do this time as he did later.
 - c. Hezekiah pillaged the house of God which he had just restored in order to come up with enough gold and silver to pay off Sennacherib **(2Ki 18:15-16)**.
 - d. This negotiation with the king of Assyria didn't work because Sennacherib brought a great army against Jerusalem anyway **(2Ki 18:17)**.

- e. Never negotiate with terrorists. Never compromise the house of God to try to appease enemies.
- vi. Sennacherib sent a messenger named Rabshakeh to Jerusalem to threaten and scare the men of Hezekiah **(2Ki 18:18-37)**.
- vii. When Hezekiah was told of the threats of the Assyrians, he was distressed and went into the house of God, and he sent men to the prophet Isaiah **(2Ki 19:1-2)**.
- viii. They delivered Hezekiah's message to Isaiah asking him to pray for them **(2Ki 19:3-5)**.
- ix. Isaiah returned a message to Hezekiah telling him to be not afraid because God would intervene and kill the king of Assyria **(2Ki 19:6-7)**.
- x. Rabshakeh returned to the king of Assyria who sent another proud and threatening letter to Hezekiah **(2Ki 19:8-13)**.
- xi. When Hezekiah received the letter he again went straight to the house of God and prayed to God for deliverance **(2Ki 19:14-19)**.
- xii. The LORD responded by promising that the king of Assyria would not enter Jerusalem nor harm it because God would defend it **(2Ki 19:32-34)**.
 - a. That night the LORD sent an angel who killed 185,000 Assyrians **(2Ki 19:35)**.
 - b. Sennacherib went back to his capital city Nineveh, and while he was worshiping in the house of his god, two of his sons killed him **(2Ki 19:36-37)**.
- xiii. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. When we are faithful to the LORD he will bless us with peace and success in battle.
 - b. When we fear enemies or trouble and forget to seek the LORD, we will suffer for it.
 - c. Never compromise the house of God to try to appease enemies.
 - d. When we are faced with threats or trouble from enemies, the first place we should go is to the house of God to pray to God and seek His deliverance **(1Ki 8:28-30, 33-34, 44-45; 2Ch 6:28-31; 2Ch 20:9)**.
 - e. When we are faced with trouble, we should go to a man of God to seek his prayers and counsel.
 - f. We will face repeated attacks and threats from enemies, and each time we do we should go to the house of God and seek God's help.
 - g. God can deliver us out of seemingly impossible circumstances by miraculous means.
 - h. It matters which church you are a member of.
- B. Hezekiah was delivered from premature death.
 - i. Shortly after being delivered from Sennacherib, Hezekiah became very sick and was told by the prophet Isaiah to set his house in order because he was going to die **(2Ki 20:1)**.
 - ii. Hezekiah was only 39 years old (my age) when he received this news.
 - a. He began to reign when he was 25 and reigned 29 years until his death which means he died at 54 years old **(2Ki 18:2 c/w 2Ki 20:21)**.

- b. He was given 15 more years after being told he would die which means he was 39 (54-15) when he was facing death (**2Ki 20:6**).
 - c. Being only 39 years old makes his reaction to hearing news of his impending death *somewhat* more understandable.
- iii. Hezekiah was distraught at the news of his imminent death and prayed to God with tears asking Him to have mercy on him and spare his life (**2Ki 20:2-3**).
- iv. Before Isaiah had left Hezekiah's place he was told by the LORD to tell him that his prayer was heard and that God would heal him, and he would go up to the house of God (**2Ki 20:4-5**).
 - a. God hears and answers prayers which are made in faith according to His will (**Mat 21:22; 1Jo 5:14-15**).
 - b. Not only did God heal him, but He added 15 years to his life and promised to deliver Jerusalem from the king of Assyria (**2Ki 20:6**).
 - c. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth *much* (**Jam 5:16**).
- v. Isaiah commanded them to take a lump of figs and lay it on the boil, and he recovered (**2Ki 20:7**).
- vi. Hezekiah asked what the sign would be that the LORD would heal him and that he would be able to go to the house of God on the third day (**2Ki 20:8**).
 - a. Hezekiah didn't want to be healed just so that he could live longer to pursue his happiness and worldly pleasures, but so that he could go to the house of God to worship the LORD (**Isa 38:18-22**).
 - b. He wanted assurance that he would indeed be healed and could go back to church.
 - c. Isaiah gave him the option of having one of two miraculous and astonishing signs: the shadow on the sun dial would either go forward or backward 10 degrees (**2Ki 20:9**).
 - d. Hezekiah, wanting to be sure it would be a miracle, asked that the shadow return backward 10 degrees (**2Ki 20:10**).
 - e. The LORD gave him his request and brought back the shadow 10 degrees backward (**2Ki 20:11**).
 - f. This was an even greater miracle than when God stopped the sun in the days of Joshua (**Jos 10:12-13**), because in this case He not only stopped it, but made it move backwards.
- vii. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. Oftentimes great deliverances are short lived before more trouble comes.
 - b. God will allow us to suffer affliction and deliverance early in life so that we will have experience to draw on to help us through future trouble.
 - c. When we face troubling news, if we humbly seek help from God, He will hear and deliver us according to His will.
 - d. Fervent prayers of righteous men will be heard and answered by God when they are according to His will.
 - e. God sometimes answers prayers very quickly.

- f. God will often do more than we ask when our heart is right.
- g. The LORD may extend our lives if we desire such so that we can worship in His house and serve Him.
- h. If the LORD can overrule all the laws of nature to do what would seem to be absolutely impossible, then He is well able to save you out of your distresses.

22. Jeremiah

- A. Jeremiah was ordained by God to be a prophet to the nations before he was even born (**Jer 1:5**).
 - i. God sent him to speak His words to the nation of Judah, his protests of being too young notwithstanding (**Jer 1:6-7**).
 - ii. God told him to not be afraid of the faces of the people because He would deliver him (**Jer 1:8**).
 - iii. Jeremiah was facing a daunting task of prophesying the destruction and rebuilding of the nation (**Jer 1:9-10**).
 - iv. The LORD showed Jeremiah that he would bring enemies from the north to judge Jerusalem (**Jer 1:11-16**).
 - v. The LORD again told him to be strong and preach God's message to the nation and be not afraid of their faces (**Jer 1:17 c/w Eze 2:4-6 & Eze 3:7-9**).
 - a. God had made Jeremiah a defenced city against the whole land of Judah including its kings, princes, priests, and people (**Jer 1:18; Isa 54:17**).
 - b. The whole nation would fight against him, but they would not prevail because God was with him to deliver him (**Jer 1:19**).
 - vi. Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet because he cried unto Israel in the face of opposition from the entire nation which would not listen to him and were destroyed as a result.
- B. The nation of Judah had become entirely corrupt by the time Jeremiah prophesied to them.
 - i. The LORD would have pardoned the city of Jerusalem if even *one man* executed judgment and sought the truth, but there was not even one (**Jer 5:1**).
 - ii. They made a pretense of piety, but were full of deceit (**Jer 5:2**).
 - iii. They refused correction and made their faces harder than rock (**Jer 5:3**).
 - iv. They had forsaken God and were adulterers (**Jer 5:7-8**).
 - v. They were proud and did not believe that the LORD would judge them (**Jer 5:11-12**).
 - vi. They served strange gods (**Jer 5:19**).
 - vii. They were a foolish people without understanding (**Jer 5:21**).
 - viii. They were wicked and treacherous (**Jer 5:26-28**).
 - ix. The land was full of false prophets and corrupt priests, and the people loved to have it so (**Jer 5:31**).
 - x. They were given to covetousness including the religious leaders (**Jer 6:13**).
 - xi. They were thieves, murderers, adulterers, liars, and idolaters who claimed they had no responsibility for their sins (**Jer 7:9-10**).

- xii. They had polluted the house of God (**Jer 7:11**).
- xiii. They were so far gone that Jeremiah was commanded to abstain from praying for them (**Jer 7:16; Jer 11:14**).
- xiv. They burned their children in the fire as a sacrifice to their false gods (**Jer 7:31**).
- xv. They were so wicked that God hated them (**Jer 12:8**).
- xvi. This was the condition of the people whom Jeremiah was sent to prophesy to.
- C. The people told Jeremiah to not prophesy in the name of the LORD to them and threatened to kill him (**Jer 11:21**).
- D. The LORD had promised Jeremiah that He would make the enemy treat him well in the time of evil and affliction (**Jer 15:11**).
 - i. The LORD kept His promise, which we will see later in this study.
 - ii. Remember that God can do the same for us.
- E. Jeremiah was all alone with only the LORD and His word to comfort him (**Jer 15:15-16**).
 - i. Jeremiah would not sit with the assembly of the mockers, but rather sat alone (**Jer 15:17**).
 - ii. He was in pain and felt like God had deceived him (**Jer 15:18**).
 - iii. The LORD again comforted Jeremiah and promised him that He would defend him and deliver him from those who fought against him (**Jer 15:19-21**).
 - iv. In the time of our distress and depression, the word of God is there to comfort and encourage us, just as it was for Jeremiah.
- F. The men of Judah conspired against Jeremiah to condemn and slander him (**Jer 18:18**).
- G. Jeremiah was smitten and put in the stocks because of his prophecy against Israel by Pashur the chief governor of the house of God (**Jer 20:1-2**).
 - i. When Jeremiah was released from the stocks he prophesied that the people of Jerusalem would be slain by the Babylonians and carried away captive to Babylon (**Jer 20:3-5**).
 - ii. He also told Pashur that he and his family would go into captivity in Babylon and die there alone with his friends to whom he had prophesied lies (**Jer 20:6**).
 - iii. Jeremiah was fearless and continued to prophesy against Israel even after being persecuted.
 - iv. Even when he felt deceived and betrayed by God and no longer wanted to preach to the nation, God's word was like a fire in his bones which he could not resist (**Jer 20:7-9**).
- H. The LORD commanded Jeremiah to stand in the court of the LORD's house and prophesy against all the cities of Judah (**Jer 26:2**).
 - i. The priests, prophets, and people then took him saying that he would surely die (**Jer 26:8**).
 - ii. They were angry at Jeremiah for his prophecy and were gathered against him (**Jer 26:9**).

- iii. They brought in the princes of Judah and told them that Jeremiah was worthy of death because he had prophesied against Jerusalem (**Jer 26:10-11**).
- iv. Jeremiah told them that the LORD sent him to prophesy against Jerusalem and the temple (**Jer 26:12**).
- v. He then told them to repent and obey God, and if they did that God would repent of the evil that He pronounced against them (**Jer 26:13**).
- vi. Jeremiah told them to do what they wanted to him, but warned them that if they killed him they would bring innocent blood upon themselves (**Jer 26:14-15**).
- vii. The princes decided that he was not worthy of death because he had spoken to them in the name of the LORD, and they delivered him out of the hand of the priests and prophets (**Jer 26:16-19**).
- viii. The LORD had delivered Jeremiah out of their hand just as He had promised to.
- I. Jeremiah was put in prison in the king's house in the days of Zedekiah for prophesying that God would give Jerusalem and Zedekiah into the hands of the king of Babylon (**Jer 32:1-5**).
 - i. While in prison, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah and promised to show him great and mighty things if he would call unto Him (**Jer 33:1-3**).
 - ii. The LORD apparently delivered Jeremiah from prison (**Jer 37:4**).
- J. King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah and asked him to pray unto God for them (**Jer 37:3**).
 - i. Jeremiah prophesied that the Chaldeans (Babylonians) would come again to Jerusalem and destroy it (**Jer 37:5-8**).
 - ii. He warned them to not deceive themselves into believing that the Babylonians would depart from them (**Jer 37:9-10**).
 - iii. After warning the people, Jeremiah left Jerusalem and went to the land of Benjamin where he was apprehended and accused of being a traitor (**Jer 37:11-14**).
 - iv. The princes were angry with Jeremiah because of his prophecies against them, so they beat him and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe (**Jer 37:15**).
 - a. He was in the dungeon in that prison for many days (**Jer 37:16**).
 - b. Dungeon *n.* - 1. The great tower or keep of a castle, situated in the innermost court or bailey. (To this the archaic spelling **donjon** is now usually appropriated.) 2. A strong close cell; a dark subterranean place of confinement; a deep dark vault.
 - v. Zedekiah called for Jeremiah and asked him secretly if there was any word from the LORD (**Jer 37:17a**).
 - a. Jeremiah told him the same thing he said before which got him previously thrown in prison (**Jer 37:17b**).
 - b. He reasoned with the king and asked where the prophets were who falsely prophesied that the Babylonians would not come against Zedekiah and the land of Judah (**Jer 37:18-19**).

- c. He then asked king Zedekiah to spare him from being put back in the dungeon in the house of Jonathan the scribe where he would likely die (**Jer 37:20**).
 - d. Zedekiah had mercy on him and put him into the court of the prison in the king's house where he was previously and commanded that he be fed with bread daily (**Jer 37:21 c/w Jer 32:2**).
 - e. When a man's ways please the LORD, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him (**Pro 16:7**).
- K. The princes of Judah heard about Jeremiah's prophecy against Jerusalem in which he said that those who stayed in the city would die at the hand of the Babylonian army (**Jer 38:1-3**).
 - i. They besought king Zedekiah that Jeremiah be put to death because they claimed he was weakening the hands of the people and seeking their hurt (**Jer 38:4**).
 - ii. Zedekiah folded like a cheap card table and turned on Jeremiah (**Jer 38:5**).
 - iii. They took Jeremiah and lowered him with cords into the dungeon in the court of the prison where there was no water, and he sunk down into the mire (**Jer 38:6**).
 - iv. Things are looking very bleak and hopeless for Jeremiah at this point.
 - a. It is physically impossible for him to get out the dungeon on his own.
 - b. He will surely die of hunger or thirst in short order.
 - c. He could easily be forgotten and left for dead.
 - v. Ebedmelech, the other Ethiopian eunuch in the Bible, heard about Jeremiah's plight and besought king Zedekiah to save Jeremiah's life (**Jer 38:7-9**).
 - a. The king commanded Ebedmelech to take 30 men and get Jeremiah out of the dungeon (**Jer 38:10**).
 - b. Ebedmelech pulled Jeremiah out of the dungeon with cords and rotten rags, and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison (**Jer 38:11-13**).
 - c. He was not in the best place, but he was certainly in a *better* place.
 - d. Jeremiah was delivered from death by God again.
- L. King Zedekiah again sent for Jeremiah and asked him to answer his question truthfully (**Jer 38:14**).
 - i. Before answering the king, Jeremiah made the king swear that he would not kill him for telling him the truth (**Jer 38:15-16**).
 - ii. Jeremiah told Zedekiah that if he would not resist and go to Babylon his life would be spared and so would the city, but, if he would not go, the city would be destroyed and he would not escape (**Jer 38:17-18**).
 - iii. Zedekiah feared men more than he believed the word of God (**Jer 38:19**).
 - iv. Those who fear men will be snared, but those who trust God shall be safe (**Pro 29:25**).
 - v. Jeremiah encouraged him that if he obeyed the word of God it would be well with him (**Jer 38:20**), but if he would not obey and refused to go to Babylon he would not escape, and the city would be burned (**Jer 38:21-23**).

- a. Unfortunately, Zedekiah did not heed the words of Jeremiah, and his sons were killed in front of him, his eyes were put out, and Jerusalem was destroyed and burned (**Jer 39:4-8**).
 - b. Whoso despises the word shall be destroyed (**Pro 13:13**).
 - vi. Zedekiah kept his word and told Jeremiah to not let anyone know what he had told him (**Jer 38:24**).
 - a. Zedekiah instructed Jeremiah to lie if the princes asked what he talked with the king about and tell them that he asked to not be returned to Jonathan's house to die there (**Jer 38:25-26**).
 - b. Jeremiah lied as the king commanded him and the princes left him alone (**Jer 38:27**).
 - c. Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians (**Jer 38:28**).
 - d. The Lord delivered him from death yet again.
- M. The Babylonians came and besieged Jerusalem for a year and a half before conquering it (**Jer 39:1-2**).
 - i. Zedekiah did not listen to the counsel of Jeremiah and fled the city by night instead of remaining and submitting the king of Babylon (**Jer 39:4**).
 - ii. He was captured, his sons were killed before his eyes, his eyes were put out, and he was carried to Babylon (**Jer 39:5-7**).
 - iii. The city was burned and destroyed and those who remained in the city or had fallen away to the Babylonians were carried away to Babylon (**Jer 39:8-9**).
 - iv. The poor of the land which had nothing were left in the land of Judah and given vineyards (**Jer 39:10**).
 - v. God saved Jeremiah from death while the nation was judged.
 - a. When Jeremiah was found by the Babylonians, Nebuchadnezzar charged the captain of the guard to take care of him and do as Jeremiah said (**Jer 39:11-12**).
 - (i) What other prisoner of war gets treated like that?
 - (ii) When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him (**Pro 16:7**).
 - (iii) He that is diligent in his business shall stand before kings (**Pro 22:29**).
 - b. At the order of the Babylonian princes, Jeremiah was removed from the prison and carried home and dwelt among the people (**Jer 39:13-14**).
 - c. The nation was so far gone that Jeremiah could only deliver himself by his righteousness while the rest of the nation was judged (**Eze 14:14**).
 - d. While Jeremiah was in the prison he relayed a message from God to Ebedmelech, who saved his life previously, that he would be spared and not killed like the rest because he trusted in God (**Jer 39:15-18**).
 - vi. Jeremiah was offered the opportunity by Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard to go to Babylon or to stay in Judea (**Jer 40:1-4**).

- vii. Jeremiah chose to go to Judea and dwell among the people of the land, so the captain of the guard gave him food and a reward and let him go (**Jer 40:5-6**).
- N. Jeremiah prophesied unto the Jews which were left in Judah after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and told them to remain in Judah and not go down into Egypt (**Jer 42:9-18**).
 - i. They didn't listen to Jeremiah and took the entire remnant in Judah including Jeremiah down into Egypt (**Jer 43:1-7**).
 - ii. While there, Jeremiah prophesied against the Jews who went to Egypt and told them that they would all die in Egypt (**Jer 44:11-14**), except for those who would escape (**Jer 44:14**).
 - iii. While in Egypt, Jeremiah also prophesied against Egypt and its king (**Jer 46**), the Philistines (**Jer 47**), Moab (**Jer 48**), the Ammonites, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, and Elam (**Jer 49**), and Babylon (**Jer 50-51**).
 - iv. To my knowledge there is no record of what happened to Jeremiah after he was taken to Egypt.
 - v. He may have been one of the ones who escaped (**Jer 44:14**) and went back to live on the land that the LORD told him to purchase (**Jer 32:6-10, 15**), but there is no certain proof of that.
 - vi. According to tradition from extrabiblical sources, Jeremiah was stoned to death in Egypt.
 - a. "After Gedaliah was assassinated, Jeremiah was taken against his will to Egypt by some of the Jews who feared reprisal from the Babylonians. Even in Egypt he continued to rebuke his fellow exiles. Jeremiah probably died about 570 BCE. According to a tradition that is preserved in extrabiblical sources, he was stoned to death by his exasperated fellow countrymen in Egypt." (Encyclopedia Britannica, *Jeremiah*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jeremiah-Hebrew-prophet>).
 - b. There is no Biblical proof that Jeremiah was martyred in Egypt.
- O. There are some lessons we can learn from the life of Jeremiah.
 - i. God sometimes calls young men to perform great tasks for Him, and He promises to sustain them during them.
 - ii. We must never be afraid of the angry or sneering looks we get from people whom we are commanded to reprove.
 - iii. Just because everyone is against you doesn't mean you're wrong.
 - iv. God will sometimes pardon a city if even one man seeks the truth and executes judgment.
 - v. A lot of people pretend to be godly, but are deceitful.
 - vi. Most people would rather hear a lie that makes them feel good than the truth which hurts.
 - vii. Some people are so wicked that they should not be prayed for.
 - viii. If you stand for the truth, you will be lonely.
 - ix. Men will conspire to destroy those who stand for and proclaim the truth.
 - x. Bold preachers can expect to be put in prison.
 - xi. The Lord can deliver his people from prison by those who are sympathetic to them.

- xii. After being persecuted and imprisoned and then delivered by God from prison, the LORD will sometimes allow us to go back.
- xiii. If a preacher condemns his own nation for its sin, he will be called a traitor.
- xiv. If we are in prison or suffering affliction for proclaiming the truth, and we are given a second chance to change our message, we must be steadfast in the truth regardless if it means staying in prison.
- xv. Don't be afraid to ask your captors for mercy - they might just deliver you or make your situation easier to bear.
- xvi. If our ways please the Lord He will make our enemies at peace with us.
- xvii. Those who are friendly toward us will often turn on us when they face pressure from others.
- xviii. God can deliver us from situations which seem humanly impossible to be saved from.
- xix. God will use acts of godly deception to deliver His people.
- xx. Those who disobey God out of fear will be destroyed while those who obey will be spared.
- xxi. God can save the righteous from a judgment that the rest of a nation suffers.
- xxii. God will make those who trust Him find favor in the eyes of foreign invaders.
- xxiii. God will allow us to suffer captivity repeatedly if it is His will.
- xxiv. While in prison, never stop preaching repentance and righteousness.
- xxv. God will bless those who stay where the church is regardless of the cost, and God will punish those who move away from the church for some perceived benefit or safety.
- xxvi. God's faithful people are sometimes martyred despite their faithfulness.

23. Jehoiachin

- A. Jehoiachin, king of Judah, was an evil king (**2Ki 24:8-9**).
- B. He was taken captive when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem before he later destroyed it when Zedekiah was king of Judah (**2Ki 24:10-18**).
- C. After he spent 37 years in prison in Babylon, the new king of Babylon released him from prison, spoke kindly to him, and placed him on a throne above the other kings in Babylon (**Jer 52:31-32**).
- D. He was fed by the king all the days of his life until his death (**Jer 52:33-34**).
- E. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. There are harsh and long-lasting consequences for sin.
 - ii. God is merciful to the just and unjust (**Mat 5:45**).
 - iii. God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy (**Rom 9:15**).
 - iv. God can move men to have mercy on us and show us kindness for no apparent reason.
 - v. Sometimes God will let us suffer for a long time before He delivers us.
 - vi. When deliverance finally comes, it often comes very quickly (**Gen 41:14, 40-44; Exo 12:31-33, 39-41**).
 - vii. The Lord can bring men out of prison to reign (**Ecc 4:14**).

- viii. No matter how low we get, the Lord can raise us up to very high places **(Psa 113:7-9)**.

24. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

- A. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made an enormous image of gold **(Dan 3:1)**.
- i. Image *n.* - 1. An artificial imitation or representation of the external form of any object, esp. of a person, or of the bust of a person. a. Such an imitation in the solid form; a statue, effigy, sculptured figure. (Often applied to figures of saints or divinities as objects of religious veneration.)
 - ii. He likely got the idea from the image that he saw in his dream which Daniel interpreted **(Dan 2:31-33)**.
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar was represented by the image's head of gold **(Dan 2:36-38)**.
 - b. He apparently decided to make an imitation of that image made entirely of gold **(Dan 3:1)**.
 - iii. The image was enormous, being about 90ft (60 cubits) tall and 9ft (6 cubits) wide.
- B. Nebuchadnezzar called all of the rulers in Babylon to attend the dedication of the golden image he made **(Dan 3:2)**.
- i. They all came and stood before it **(Dan 3:3)**.
 - ii. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were advisors to the king which stood before him **(Dan 1:19-20)** and were set over the affairs of the province of Babylon **(Dan 2:49)**.
 - iii. They either were not present at the dedication, or if they were they did not bow down to the image **(Dan 3:12)**.
 - iv. The peer pressure would have been intense for them to attend the dedication and worship the image along with the rest of the rulers of Babylon.
 - v. Notwithstanding, they would not go along with the crowd **(Exo 23:2)** as the rest of the story will reveal.
- C. All the people of the empire were commanded to fall down and worship the image when they heard the orchestra of music playing **(Dan 3:4-5)**.
- i. The musical instruments were used to get their attention and to stir their emotions in order to prompt them to worship the idol.
 - ii. If that didn't work, a threat of death was issued for those who would not worship the image to "encourage" them to do so **(Dan 3:6)**.
 - a. Satan will use this same strategy when he sets up his one world government and religion **(Rev 13:15)**.
 - b. "History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes." – Mark Twain
 - iii. When the music started playing, all the people from every nation and language under Nebuchadnezzar's dominion fell down and worshipped his idol **(Dan 3:7)**.
 - a. He had in essence created a one-world religion which brought together all the people of the empire.
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar was imitating Lucifer who wanted to like the Most High and be worshipped by all men **(Isa 14:12-14; Mat 4:9; 2Th 2:4; Rev 13:3-4)**.

- c. Satan has made use of music instruments in his religion for thousands of years (**Rev 18:22**).
 - iv. "Here were the charms of music to allure them into a compliance and the terrors of the fiery furnace to frighten them into a compliance....Note, That way that sense directs the most will go; there is nothing so bad which the careless world will not be drawn to by a concert of music, or driven to by a fiery furnace. And by such methods as these false worship has been set up and maintained." – Matthew Henry commenting on Daniel 3.
- D. Some busybodies reported to Nebuchadnezzar that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not serve his gods nor worship his golden image (**Dan 3:8-12**).
 - i. These were people would be called "Karens" today.
 - ii. Busybodies are evil people and are for good reason classified with murderers (**1Pe 4:15**).
- E. Nebuchadnezzar was in a furious rage when he learned of their refusal to worship his golden image (**Dan 3:13**).
 - i. It is perilous condition to be the object of a king's wrath (**Pro 14:35; Pro 16:14; Pro 19:12; Est 7:7-10**).
 - ii. Godly men cannot fear the wrath of the king (**Heb 11:27**), but must fear God instead (**Heb 12:28-29**).
 - iii. Those who fear men will be snared (**Pro 29:25**).
 - iv. We must trust in God and not fear what man can do unto us (**Psa 56:1-4**).
- F. Nebuchadnezzar inquired of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to find out if the accusation against them was true (**Dan 3:14**).
 - i. In this the king was showing prudence.
 - ii. God's law doesn't allow for men to be punished before they can answer for themselves (**Joh 7:51**), and neither should the laws of civil government.
- G. Before he gave them a chance to answer, he gave them a chance to recant and worship his idol without facing death for their prior refusal (**Dan 3:15a**).
 - i. If they would not worship the image, they would be burned alive in the fiery furnace (**Dan 3:15b**).
 - ii. The king proudly taunts the three men, mocking God's ability to deliver them (**Dan 3:15c**).
- H. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king firmly, but respectfully (**Dan 3:16**).
 - i. They were not worried, troubled, anxious, or concerned about standing before the king and declaring to him that they would not worship his idol.
 - ii. Careful *adj.* - 1. Full of grief; mournful, sorrowful; also (of cries, etc.), expressing sorrow. *Obs.* 2. Full of care, trouble, anxiety, or concern; anxious, troubled, solicitous, concerned.
- I. They declared that God was able to deliver them, and He would if He chose to; but if not, they would not serve his gods nor worship his golden image (**Dan 3:17-18**).
 - i. The Lord will deliver the righteous in time if trouble if they trust in Him, if it is His will to do so (**Psa 37:39-40**).
 - ii. But regardless whether God delivers us or not, we must obey Him rather than men (**Act 5:29**).
 - iii. If we perish, we perish (**Est 4:16**).

- J. Nebuchadnezzar was furious and commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than normal (**Dan 3:19**).
- K. If there is one thing which tyrants hate, it's faithful children of God who are not afraid of them and who will not compromise their faith by obeying them rather than God.
- L. He commanded his most mighty soldiers to bind them and cast them into the furnace, which they did (**Dan 3:20-21**).
- M. The fire was so hot that it killed the soldiers who threw the three men into it (**Dan 3:22**).
 - i. Men will reap what they sow (**Gal 6:7**).
 - ii. The wicked will fall by their own wickedness (**Pro 11:5**).
 - iii. "I was just doing my job" is not an excuse that works with God.
 - iv. Police officers, soldiers, and all individuals who enforce mask wearing, vaccine mandates, vaccine passports, etc. had best remember this.
- N. After the men went down into the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar was astonished when he saw them walking in the midst of the furnace unharmed by it (**Dan 3:23-25**).
 - i. There was an angel (**Dan 3:28**), whom the king mistook for the Son of God (**Dan 3:25**), who was in the furnace with them protecting them.
 - ii. The Lord sometimes uses His angels to protect us from danger (**Psa 91:11-12**).
- O. Nebuchadnezzar called them out of the fire and they came out in the presence of all completely unharmed by it (**Dan 3:26-27**).
 - i. Not a single hair of their head was singed, nor were their clothes burned, nor even was the smell of fire on them (**Dan 3:27**).
 - ii. The Lord promises us that we will not be burned when we walk through the fire of affliction (**Isa 43:2**).
- P. Nebuchadnezzar then blessed the true God (**Dan 3:28**).
 - i. He had confessed a short while before this that the Jews' God was a God of gods (**Dan 2:47**), but he apparently soon forgot.
 - ii. The "conversion" of men in powerful places is often not genuine.
- Q. The king then made a decree that anyone in his entire realm who spoke against the true God would be cut in pieces and their houses would be made a dunghill (**Dan 3:29**).
 - i. The king recognized that no God can deliver His people like the true God (**Dan 3:29**).
 - ii. The Lord is known for His mighty deliverances of His people and for His judgments (**Psa 106:8; Eze 38:23; Psa 9:16**).
- R. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were then promoted in the government of Babylon (**Dan 3:30**).
 - i. When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him (**Pro 16:7**).
 - ii. The Lord will not only deliver us from persecution, but He will also promote those who trust in Him to a higher position than they had before they were persecuted (**Psa 75:6-7**).
- S. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. To whom much is given, much shall be required (**Luk 12:47-48**).

- a. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were given much wisdom and were made officials in the Babylonian government, and therefore they were given a major test of faith.
 - b. If you have been given much faith and understanding, then expect to that God will require more from you.
- ii. Peer pressure is a powerful force which we must learn to stand up against if we are to be the servants of God.
- iii. The devil will use our emotions and our fears to try to tempt us to disobey God.
- iv. Those who do not go along with the crowd should expect to be the target of busybodies who will try to destroy them.
- v. Those in authority over us who are friendly toward us will often turn on us when we take a stand because of our faith.
- vi. We must never compromise on our convictions even when the stakes are high.
- vii. We must make sure to answer respectfully but firmly when answering to authorities concerning our faith and convictions.
- viii. We must always remember that God is able to deliver us, but we must be resolved to hold fast to our beliefs and convictions even if He doesn't deliver us.
- ix. We must never be afraid of men who have the power to harm us.
- x. God is still able to deliver His people by miraculous means.
- xi. God can bring us through a very perilous trial unscathed.
- xii. If we hold fast to the faith during persecution, we can be a witness for God to our persecutors.
- xiii. God can turn our persecution into a blessing for us in the long run.
- xiv. If we humbly serve God and hold fast to our faith, God will exalt us in due time (**1Pe 5:6-7**).

25. Daniel

- A. Daniel was delivered in his youth for being faithful.
 - i. As a young man, because he was skilful in wisdom and cunning in knowledge, Daniel was chosen to stand before king Nebuchadnezzar after the Jews were carried captive to Babylon (**Dan 1:3-7**).
 - ii. He that is diligent in his business shall stand before kings, not mean men (**Pro 22:29**).
 - iii. Daniel was a man of principle and conviction and purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the king's meat (**Dan 1:8**).
 - a. He worked out a deal with the prince of the eunuchs to eat pulse and drink water for 10 days and then to be examined (**Dan 1:9-14**).
 - b. Pulse *n.* - 1. The edible seeds of leguminous plants cultivated for food, as peas, beans, lentils, etc.
 - c. At the end of the 10 days, Daniel and his friends where in better shape than those who ate the king's food (**Dan 1:15**).
 - d. Daniel was able to eat his own diet from then on (**Dan 1:16**).

- e. Because of his wisdom and understanding, Daniel served in the government of the Babylonian empire until the Medes and the Persians conquered it (**Dan 1:17-21**).
 - iv. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. It pays to focus on gaining understanding and wisdom at a young age.
 - b. It is important to make sure your children (especially your sons) get a quality education (not necessarily a college degree) which will open up opportunities for them in the future.
 - c. If you work hard and set your eyes on being wise, the Lord will promote you, even when in a state of captivity.
 - d. With every advancement in our lives, there will be challenges to prove us if we will fear God and keep His commandments, or compromise to get by.
 - e. It's always best to try diplomacy first when faced with a confrontation.
 - f. If we hold fast to our convictions, even when they are opposed to the will of the king or government, God will bless us and deliver us.
 - g. If we hold to our principles, we will be recognized and promoted by men.
- B. Daniel was delivered from death in the lions' den.
 - i. As part of God's judgment of Babylon, it was conquered by Darius the Median (**Dan 5:30-31**).
 - ii. Because of Daniel's wisdom, faithfulness, and good reputation, he was made ruler over the entire realm of the Medes and Persians, including 120 princes and two other presidents, by king Darius (**Dan 6:1-3**).
 - iii. He that is diligent in his business shall stand before kings, not mean men (**Pro 22:29**).
 - iv. Because of his favor with the king, he was envied by the presidents and princes who sought to find occasion against him concerning his work in the kingdom (**Dan 6:4a**).
 - a. A man will be envied by his neighbor when he does good work (**Ecc 4:4**).
 - b. Men hate those who are better and more righteous than themselves (**Mar 15:10**).
 - c. Envy is one of the most injurious things a man can suffer (**Pro 27:4**).
 - v. The presidents and princes could find no fault or error in Daniel because he was faithful (**Dan 6:4b**).
 - a. Daniel had a good report of them that are without (**1Ti 3:7; 3Jo 1:5-6, 12**).
 - b. Daniel had a good name which is exceedingly valuable (**Pro 22:1; Ecc 7:1**).
 - vi. His enemies realized that if they were going to find anything to accuse Daniel of, it would have to be something concerning the law of God which put him at odds with the laws of the land (**Dan 6:5**).

- a. Daniel was not going to suffer because he was a sinner or a criminal, but because he was a faithful follower of God (**1Pe 4:14-16**).
 - b. When a man suffers for righteousness he is blessed and acceptable with God (**1Pe 2:19-20**).
- vii. The men then conspired to convince the king to make a decree that for 30 days anyone who made any petition to any God or man except the king would be cast into a den of lions (**Dan 6:6-7**).
 - a. This was framing mischief by a law (**Psa 94:20**).
 - b. These wicked men were using flattery to coerce the king into signing the decree (**Psa 5:9**).
 - c. Having all men come to him with their petitions instead of God would make the king feel very special.
 - d. They were spreading a net for the king to catch him and get him into a situation he couldn't get himself out of (**Pro 29:5**).
- viii. These men used a flaw in the law of the Medes and Persians which stated that a law could not be altered once enacted to ensure that the king could not go back on his decree once signed (**Dan 6:8, 12, 15**).
- ix. The king foolishly signed the decree (**Dan 6:9**).
 - a. To be without knowledge is not good, and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth (**Pro 19:2**).
 - b. This was apparently a weakness among the Medo-Persian monarchs (**Est 3:8-11**).
- x. When Daniel knew that the decree was signed, he went into his house and prayed toward Jerusalem with the windows open just like he had always done (**Dan 6:10**).
 - a. We ought to obey God rather than men (**Act 5:29**).
 - b. Daniel didn't protest the evil law in the street or intentionally make himself a target.
 - c. But he also did not stop doing what God commanded him to do.
 - (i) He didn't stop praying to God while the decree was in force.
 - (ii) Neither did he go hide somewhere and secretly pray to God.
 - d. He just kept doing what he always had done.
- xi. When his enemies saw him praying in violation of the law, they reported him to the king (**Dan 6:11-13**).
 - a. They first set the king up to not be able to defend Daniel by asking him about the decree that he signed.
 - b. When he affirmed that he signed it and that it could not be rescinded, they then told him what Daniel had done.
 - c. This was cunning craftiness.
- xii. The king was very displeased with himself and tried his hardest to deliver Daniel, but he was bound by the law of the Medes and Persians (**Dan 6:14-15**).
- xiii. The king was forced to order Daniel to be cast into the lions' den, but he trusted that Daniel's God would deliver him (**Dan 6:16-17**).

- xiv. The king went home and couldn't sleep because he was worried about Daniel, and he went to the lions' den early in the morning to see if Daniel was still alive (**Dan 6:18-20**).
- xv. God had sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths because he was innocent (**Dan 6:21-22**).
- xvi. The king ordered Daniel to be brought up out of the den, and he was unharmed because he believed in his God (**Dan 6:23**).
 - a. He that calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved (**Rom 10:13**).
 - b. Those who believe in the LORD will be established (**2Ch 20:20**).
- xvii. The king commanded that the men who accused Daniel, along with their wives and children, be thrown into the lions' den where they were brutally killed by the lions (**Dan 6:24**).
 - a. Those who dig a pit will fall into it (**Pro 26:27**).
 - b. God punishes people with the same punishment they thought to do to others (**Mat 7:2; Deut 19:16-20; Est 7:9**).
- xviii. King Darius then made a decree extolling the God of Israel who had delivered Daniel (**Dan 6:25-28**).
- xix. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. If we are diligent and faithful we will be exalted by God.
 - b. When men do well and are promoted, others will hate and envy them for it.
 - c. We should live a life above reproach so that if someone is going to accuse us of something, it will have to be a false accusation.
 - d. If our enemies can't find a legitimate fault in us they will make something up or make a law that we cannot abide by because of our faith.
 - e. Never assume that because you are being faithful and living an upright life before God that you will not have enemies who will try to destroy you.
 - f. Sometimes even good kings or people in authority can be manipulated into harming the people of God.
 - g. We must always obey God rather than men, regardless of the cost.
 - h. If we are forbidden by law to worship God or practice our faith, we must do it anyway and not fear the consequences.
 - i. When we are persecuted, we must believe that God is able to deliver us and that He will if it is His will.
 - j. Our enemies will eventually reap what they sow and be judged by God.
 - k. If we are faithful during persecution, we can be a witness to those in high places and possibly effect their conversion.

26. Jews in the days of Esther

- A. During their exile, the Jews were dispersed throughout the Medo-Persian empire.
- B. Among the Jews was a man named Mordecai who had a young cousin named Hadassah (later named Esther) whom he raised as his own daughter (**Est 2:5-7**).

- C. Esther ended up becoming the queen after the former queen was deposed by the king (**Est 2:16-17**).
- D. A man named Haman was promoted above the other princes in the realm (**Est 3:1**).
- E. The king commanded his servants to bow before Haman, but Mordecai refused because he was a Jew, and bowing down to a man was forbidden by God (**Est 3:2-4**).
 - i. We ought to obey God rather than man (**Act 5:29**).
 - ii. Mordecai would not compromise regardless of the consequences (**Est 5:9**).
 - iii. He was eventually rewarded and exalted for his faithfulness (**Est 8:15; Est 9:3-4; Est 10:3**).
- F. Haman was full of wrath when he found out that Mordecai would not bow to him and set out to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom (**Est 3:5-6**).
- G. Haman went to the king and talked him into destroying all the Jews (**Est 3:8-9**).
 - i. The king foolishly gave his consent to it without even knowing who he agreed to genocide (**Est 3:10-11**).
 - ii. Haman had framed mischief by a law (**Psa 94:20**).
 - iii. The king had hearkened to lies which showed that his servants were wicked (**Pro 29:12**).
- H. Haman had devised this wicked plot in the 1st month of the year (**Est 3:12**).
 - i. He had cast Pur, which was a lot, to determine when to destroy the Jews, and the lot landed on the 12th month (**Est 3:7 c/w Est 9:24 c/w Est 3:13**).
 - ii. The LORD had providentially given the Jews 11 months to buy them time and to prepare to defend themselves.
 - iii. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD." (**Pro 16:33**)
- I. The copy of the decree went out and the city of Shushan was perplexed (**Est 3:14-15**).
- J. As Christians we will sometimes be perplexed when we find ourselves in a difficult situation, but we should never be in despair (**2Co 4:8**).
- K. There was great mourning among the Jews when they learned of the decree (**Est 4:1-3**).
- L. Esther heard of the lamentation and sent to learn what had happened (**Est 4:4-7**).
 - i. Mordecai told her to go to the king and make supplication for her people (**Est 4:8**).
 - ii. Esther told him that she could be killed for approaching the king uninvited (**Est 4:11-12**).
 - iii. Mordecai told her that if she did nothing her and her father's house would die, but God would deliver the Jews by another way (**Est 4:13-14a**).
 - a. He told her that it was possible that she had been put in her position for such a time as that (**Est 4:14b**).
 - b. We must remember that we likewise have been put in the place and time we are in by God to do what He has for us to do.
 - c. It is our time to resist the powers of darkness who are attempting to close down churches and keep us in fear.
 - iv. Esther determined to go into the king, not regarding her own life (**Est 4:15-16**).

- M. Long story short, Mordecai was exalted to a place of honor (**Est 6:10-11**), Haman's plot was exposed, and he was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai (**Est 7:9-10**).
- N. Mordecai was then set over the house of Haman (**Est 8:1-2**).
- O. The Jews were granted by the king the right of self-defense to fight off the mercenaries who were hired by Haman (**Est 8:11**).
- P. The Jews destroyed those that tried to destroy them (**Est 9:1-6**), and Haman's ten sons were killed and hanged on the gallows (**Est 9:7-10, 14**).
- Q. The other Jews in the provinces slew 75,000 of their enemies (**Est 9:16**).
- R. They made a national holiday to commemorate their great deliverance (**Est 9:17-23**).
- S. Mordecai was made second in command of the entire Medo-Persian empire (**Est 10:3**).
- T. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. God can protect us when we are living in a country or a culture which is hostile to us.
 - ii. We must always obey God rather than men, regardless of the consequences.
 - iii. God will bless those who serve him without compromising their faith.
 - iv. The wicked will eventually fall into the pit which they have digged and will reap what they have sown.
 - v. Pride goeth before destruction.
 - vi. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.
 - vii. God can overrule wicked laws which are passed to persecute His people.
 - viii. God controls circumstances so that the outcome benefits His faithful people.
 - ix. God can save His people from their enemies when they are greatly outnumbered.
 - x. God can put His children in high places in government and use them to deliver His people.
 - xi. We were born for the time in which we live, and we should boldly fight the battles that God has put us in.
 - xii. If we are faithful over the little God has given us, He will make us ruler over many things (**Mat 25:21**).

27. Judah from Babylonian captivity

- A. Jerusalem was destroyed, and the people of Judah were taken captive to Babylon because of their sin and rebellion against God (**2Ch 36:14-20**).
- B. They spent 70 years in Babylon (**2Ch 36:21**).
- C. After the 70 years were fulfilled, the LORD put it into the heart of Cyrus the king of the Medo-Persian empire to issue a decree that the Jews would return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city and the temple (**2Ch 36:22-23; Isa 44:28**).
- D. They spent a long time mourning the loss of their city and country while in Babylon (**Psa 137:1-9**).
- E. They rejoiced greatly when they were allowed to return (**Psa 126:1-6**).
- F. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. There are severe and long-lasting consequences for sin.

- ii. Judgment for sin may last for one's entire life.
- iii. The punishment for spiritual crimes such as idolatry and false religion is often political oppression and physical suffering.
- iv. Previous generations sometimes escape the judgment of God in this life while future generations suffer for their folly.
- v. The LORD always keeps His promises.
- vi. The LORD can use secular leaders to deliver His people from oppression and bondage.
- vii. Suffering is only temporary for God's children (**Psa 30:5**).

28. Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Jews when they were rebuilding Jerusalem

- A. When the Jews returned to Jerusalem in the days of Ezra to rebuild the city and temple they faced many challenges.
 - i. Their adversaries tried to hinder their rebuilding effort by attempting to join them and work against them from the inside (**Ezr 4:1-2**).
 - a. A classic tactic of Satan is to infiltrate a church and destroy it from within (**Act 20:29-30**).
 - b. Don't be ignorant of his devices (**2Co 2:11**).
 - ii. Their leaders did not fall for that deception and declined their offer (**Ezr 4:3**).
 - iii. Their enemies then hired lawyers to frustrate their purpose and trouble them in building (**Ezr 4:4-6**).
 - a. They lobbied Artaxerxes king of Persia and told him that Jerusalem was a rebellious city and if it was rebuilt the Jews would not pay their taxes to the Persian empire (**Ezr 4:11-16**).
 - b. The king issued an order for the Jews to cease rebuilding the city and temple (**Ezr 4:17-24**).
 - iv. After king Darius came to power, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah goaded the people to begin rebuilding the temple again (**Ezr 5:1**).
 - a. Zerubbabel the governor and Jeshua the high priest then restarted the rebuilding of the temple (**Ezr 5:2**).
 - (i) Their adversaries immediately again attempted to stop the rebuilding by questioning them as to who gave them authority to do so (**Ezr 5:3-4**).
 - (ii) God's eye was upon them and would not allow them to be stopped (**Ezra 5:5**).
 - b. Their adversaries then wrote a letter to Darius asking him to verify if King Cyrus had indeed given them permission to rebuild the city (**Ezr 5:6-17**).
 - (i) Darius commanded that the records be searched and the decree of Cyrus was found (**Ezr 6:1-5**).
 - (ii) Darius then commanded that the Jews be left alone to rebuild the house of God (**Ezr 6:6-7**).
 - (iii) In addition to that he gave order that money and supplies be given to the Jews to complete the work and also that animals be given them to sacrifice (**Ezr 6:8-10**).

- (iv) Darius also decreed that anyone who would try to hinder the rebuilding would be killed (**Ezr 6:11-12**).
 - (v) The rebuilding of the house of God was then finished (**Ezr 6:13-15**).
 - c. The LORD put into the heart of king Artaxerxes to give what was necessary to beautify the house of the LORD (**Ezr 7:27-28**).
- v. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. When we try to do the work of the LORD, there will always be adversaries (**1Co 16:9**).
 - b. Our enemies will try to creep into the church to destroy us from the inside (**Gal 2:4; Jud 1:4**).
 - c. In order to be delivered from our enemies, it's important to be wise, prudent, and discerning to perceive their wicked intentions.
 - d. Satan will sometimes try to prevent us from doing the Lord's work by using lawyers who file lawsuits against us.
 - e. Enemies will lobby the government to pass laws to persecute us and prevent us from serving God.
 - f. Our enemies will make us out to be enemies of the government or the people.
 - g. True men of God must provoke the brethren to continue serving God in the face of laws which forbid them from doing so.
 - h. God can use rulers in the same government which oppressed us to later issue commands that will deliver us.
 - i. If our work is of God, He will see to it that we prevail.
- B. In the days of Nehemiah, the Jews likewise faced many obstacles when they worked to finish rebuilding Jerusalem.
 - i. Nehemiah was the cupbearer of king Artaxerxes (**Neh 1:11**).
 - ii. When he found out about the suffering of the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem to rebuild and how the walls of Jerusalem had been burned with fire, he was grieved (**Neh 1:1-4**).
 - a. When the king saw that Nehemiah was sorrowful and enquired as to why, he asked the king if he could go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the city (**Neh 2:1-5**).
 - b. The king granted him his request and provided him timber to rebuild the wall (**Neh 2:6-8**).
 - iii. When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, his adversaries Sanballat and Tobiah were grieved that he came to seek the welfare of the children of Israel (**Neh 2:9-10**).
 - a. They laughed at them and mocked them when they heard of Nehemiah's plan to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem (**Neh 2:19**).
 - b. Nehemiah was undeterred and remained resolute in the faith (**Neh 2:20**).
 - iv. When they continued to rebuild, their enemies again mocked them and tried to discourage them (**Neh 4:1-3**).
 - a. Nehemiah responded to the reproach by praying to God for help (**Neh 4:4-5**).

- b. The people had a mind to work and they just keep building despite the adversity (**Neh 4:6**).
- v. This made their enemies even more furious and they conspired to fight against them to hinder the rebuilding effort (**Neh 4:7-8**).
 - a. Nehemiah prayed to God and set a watch (**Neh 4:9**).
 - b. He set up armed men to protect the workers (**Neh 4:13, 16**).
 - c. He also armed the men who did the work on the wall so that they could defend themselves (**Neh 4:17-18**).
 - d. Nehemiah trusted that God would fight for them and bless their efforts (**Neh 4:20**).
- vi. When mocking and fighting against Nehemiah and the Jews didn't work, next they attempted to prevent him from building by trying to distract him by getting him to meet with them (**Neh 6:1-2**).
 - a. Nehemiah saw through their ruse and told them he was doing a great work and didn't have time to waste with them (**Neh 6:3**).
 - b. They tried again four more times, but Nehemiah remained steadfast (**Neh 6:4**).
- vii. They tried slandering Nehemiah to scare him, but he saw through it (**Neh 6:5-9**).
- viii. They hired a false prophet to try to get Nehemiah to meet him in the temple, but he likewise saw through that as well (**Neh 6:10-14**).
- ix. Despite all the wiles of their adversaries, they finished building the wall to the disappointment of their enemies (**Neh 6:15-16**).
- x. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - a. If we are grieved for the suffering of God's people and pray earnestly to God, He will hear and deliver them according to His will.
 - b. Sometimes deliverance is only a request away.
 - c. God can use unbelieving rulers to deliver His people.
 - d. When we are doing the LORD's work, there will be adversaries.
 - e. Our enemies will mock and scorn us to try to prevent us from doing God's work.
 - f. We must be undeterred by the mocking and derision of men.
 - g. When mocking doesn't work, our enemies will sometimes resort to physical violence.
 - h. God will bless our efforts to defend ourselves with weapons and force when necessary.
 - i. God helps those who help themselves.
 - j. Our enemies will try to distract us from the work that God has called us to do.
 - k. Each of us must always remember that, "I am doing a great work" (**Neh 6:3**), and therefore we must not waste our time with those who would try to draw us away from it.
 - l. If we are diligent, the LORD will bless our work and deliver us from the attacks of our enemies.

29. Seafaring men

A. The Bible gives a vivid description of seafaring men being delivered from a perilous storm at sea in **Psa 107:23-30**.

- i. Those who sail on the open oceans come face-to-face with the power of God in nature (**Psa 107:23-24**).
- ii. It is God who causes great storms at sea (and on land as well) (**Psa 107:25**).
 - a. The waters obey His powerful voice (**Psa 29:3-4; Pro 8:29**).
 - b. God controls the weather (**Job 37:5-6, 9-13; Psa 78:47-48; Psa 147:15-18; Psa 148:8**).
- iii. The storm at sea is so fierce that the soul of the sailors is melted because of trouble (**Psa 107:26**).
 - a. The ship is taken to great heights and deep lows.
 - b. The stress they are under makes them feel like their heart is melting in heat (**Psa 22:14; Psa 119:28**).
- iv. They work as hard as they can to escape the storm until they don't know what to do next (**Psa 107:27**).
- v. Finally, in their desperation, they cry unto the LORD and He saves them out of their distresses (**Psa 107:28; Psa 107:6, 13, 19**).
 - a. The disciples experienced this when they were with Jesus in a storm at sea (**Mar 4:37-38**).
 - b. Peter when sinking in water and being buffeted by boisterous wind cried out to Jesus to save him, which Jesus did (**Mat 14:24-32**).
- vi. The LORD answered their prayers and calmed the storm (**Psa 107:29**).
 - a. Jesus did the same thing when the disciples besought Him to save them from the tempest (**Mar 4:39**).
 - b. This is just one more proof that Jesus Christ is God (**Mar 4:41**).
- vii. This brought them joy, peace, and quiet as they made it to their desired haven (**Psa 107:30**).
 - a. The sailors made it to their desired haven.
 - (i) Haven *n.* – 1. A recess or inlet of the sea, or the mouth of a river, affording good anchorage and a safe station for ships; a harbour, port.
 - (ii) If we cry unto the LORD for Him to deliver us out of our distresses, we will be brought to our figurative haven.
 - (iii) Haven *n.* - 2. *fig.* A place of shelter, safety, or retreat; a refuge; an asylum.
 - b. We should pray that the LORD will deliver us from our oppressive rulers who cause us turmoil so that we can lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty (**1Ti 2:1-2**).
 - c. The key to a quiet and peaceful life is working righteousness by living according to the word of God (**Isa 32:17-18**).
- viii. Stories of God's deliverance of His people should cause us to praise the LORD for His goodness and His wonderful works to the children of men (**Psa 107:31**).
- ix. There are some lessons we can learn from this.

- a. The LORD will allow us to face fearful things so that we will come to recognize His mighty power.
- b. God can use weather events to try us (tornadoes, hurricanes, snow and ice storms, extreme cold, blistering heat, floods, droughts, forest fires, etc.)
- c. God will allow us to be tried in the furnace of affliction to the point we feel like we can't take it anymore.
- d. The LORD will continue to afflict us with trouble until we quit trying to save ourselves and cry out to Him for help.
- e. God will give us trials that put us at our wits' end to the point where we don't know what to do.
- f. The LORD will allow us to be driven to the point of desperation until we cry out to Him for deliverance.
- g. God will answer fervent cries to Him for help.
- h. After we have suffered a great trial and learned our lesson, God will give us peace.

30. Jesus as a baby

- A. Some time after Jesus' birth, but prior to Him being two years old, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem to worship Him **(Mat 2:1-2)**.
- B. When King Herod found out about the King of the Jews being born he was troubled **(Mat 2:3)**.
- C. After consulting with the chief priests and scribes and learning that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, he sent the wise men there and told them that when they found him to bring him word so that he also could worship Him **(Mat 2:4-8)**.
- D. They went to the house where Jesus was staying and worshipped Him and gave Him gifts **(Mat 2:9-11)**.
- E. God warned them in a dream to not return to Herod and to instead go home another way **(Mat 2:12)**.
- F. God then warned Joseph in a dream to take Jesus and Mary down into Egypt until the death of Herod because he would seek to destroy Jesus **(Mat 2:13)**.
- G. Joseph did as God told him and kept Jesus in Egypt until after the death of Herod **(Mat 2:14-15)**.
- H. When Herod found out what the wise men did, he ordered all the boys two years old and under in Bethlehem and the surrounding areas to be killed **(Mat 2:16-18)**.
- I. After Herod died, God told Joseph in a dream to bring Jesus and Mary back into the land of Israel **(Mat 2:19-21)**.
- J. Joseph was afraid when he learned that Herod's son was reigning in his place, so, being warned of God again in a dream, he went into Galilee and dwelt in Nazareth **(Mat 2:22-23)**.
- K. Jesus was delivered from death through the providence of God when He was a little, defenseless child.
- L. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. Even good and godly people will face great trials and danger.
 - ii. Sometimes our trials will begin at a very young age when we are helpless to defend ourselves.

- iii. Great troubles often come on the heels of great blessings.
- iv. Sometimes envious and wicked rulers will conspire to destroy the people of God, but God is well able to protect them.
- v. God can providentially deliver us from harm or death which we didn't know was coming and could have done nothing to prevent.
- vi. God can provide means for poor, powerless people to escape a perilous situation.
- vii. God can use unlikely people or places to deliver His children.
- viii. God can protect us in the midst of a very dangerous political climate.

31. Jesus from His enemies' 19 attempts to kill Him

- A. In Jesus' first public sermon He reproved the Jews for not receiving Him as the Messiah who was prophesied in their scriptures (**Luk 4:16-24**).
 - i. He gave them two examples of faithful Gentiles whom God had shown mercy to instead of Israelites (**Luk 4:25-27**).
 - ii. This kindled their wrath and they tried to kill Him by casting Him headlong off the edge of a cliff (**Luk 4:28-29**).
 - iii. Jesus passed through the midst of them and got away (**Luk 4:30**).
 - iv. There is a time to flee (**Mat 10:23**).
- B. After Jesus healed a man with a withered hand on the sabbath day the Pharisees held a council with the Herodians to plan how to destroy Him (**Mat 12:10-14 c/w Mar 3:6**).
 - i. When Jesus knew of the conspiracy, He withdrew Himself from that place (**Mat 12:15; Mar 3:7**).
 - ii. There is a time to flee.
- C. According to the Pharisees, Herod sought to kill Jesus (**Luk 13:31**).
 - i. Jesus knew His time was not yet come, and therefore He was not worried about Herod's designs (**Luk 13:32-33**).
 - ii. Neither should we fret about the potential threats we face.
- D. When Jesus healed an impotent man on the Sabbath who had been unable to walk for 38 years, the Jews persecuted Him and sought to slay Him (**Joh 5:5-9, 16**).
 - i. They were not able to carry out their plans at this time.
 - ii. It was not yet Jesus' time to die.
- E. Jesus defended His healing of the impotent man by saying that He was working just like His Father worked (**Joh 5:17**).
 - i. The Jews sought to kill Him again because He claimed God was His Father, making Himself equal with God (**Joh 5:18**).
 - ii. Jesus was not afraid of their murderous intent, but rather rebuked them for their unbelief (**Joh 5:38-47**).
- F. After Jesus had preached some hard sayings to the people in John 6, He remained in Galilee for a while and stayed away from Jewry because the Jews sought to kill him (**Joh 7:1**).
 - i. This was a time to lay low, not to antagonize His enemies.
 - ii. There is a time to be confrontational, but not every time.
 - iii. Jesus later went back down to Judea and disputed with the Jews and exposed their design to kill Him (**Joh 7:19**).

- a. Like typical lying cowards, they denied the accusation (**Joh 7:20**).
 - b. Everyone knew of their wicked plot though (**Joh 7:25**).
 - iv. Jesus later again exposed their plan to kill Him (**Joh 8:37-40**).
- G. Jesus told the Jews that they didn't know the Father who had sent Him (**Joh 7:28-29**).
 - i. For this they again tried to take Him to kill Him, but they were not able because His hour was not yet come to be crucified (**Joh 7:30**).
 - ii. God was turning their hearts like a river of water to accomplish His will (**Pro 21:1**).
- H. When the Pharisees heard that many of the people believed on Jesus, they and the chief priests sent officers to take Him (**Joh 7:31-32**).
 - i. After listening to Jesus speak like no other man they had ever met, the officers returned to the chief priests and Pharisees without Jesus (**Joh 7:45-46**).
 - ii. The proud Pharisees berated them, accusing them of being deceived (**Joh 7:47-49**).
 - iii. Jesus again had been delivered out of their hands by God.
- I. Jesus said that He was before Abraham and referred to Himself as "I am," clearly claiming to be God (**Joh 8:58**).
 - i. The Jews responded by trying to kill him again by casting stones at him (**Joh 8:59a**).
 - ii. Jesus escaped their attempted murder by first hiding Himself and then going out of the temple through the midst of them (**Joh 8:59b**).
 - iii. There is a time to hide.
 - iv. Sometimes the best place to hide is in plain sight.
- J. Jesus again claimed to be God when He said, "I and my Father are one" (**Joh 10:30**).
 - i. The Jews responded by again trying to kill Him by stoning (**Joh 10:31**).
 - ii. They claimed that He was a man who tried to make Himself God (**Joh 10:32-33**).
- K. Jesus exhorted them to believe on Him because of His works which proved that He was in the Father and the Father was in Him (**Joh 10:38**).
 - i. They yet again tried to take Him and kill Him (**Joh 10:39a**).
 - ii. He again escaped out of their hand because His time was not yet come (**Joh 10:39b**).
 - iii. He left that area and went away beyond Jordan to get away from them and be around those who believed on Him (**Joh 10:40-42**).
- L. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead many of the Jews believed on Him (**Joh 11:41-45**).
 - i. Some of the Jews went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done (**Joh 11:46**).
 - ii. The chief priests and the Pharisees therefore gathered another council to decide what to do about Jesus (**Joh 11:47-48**).
 - iii. Caiaphas the high priest said that it was expedient for the preservation of the nation that they kill Jesus (**Joh 11:49-50**).

- iv. He didn't realize that he was prophesying that Jesus would die for the elect within the nation of Israel and for the children of God scattered abroad (**Joh 11:51-52**).
 - v. From that day forth they took counsel to put Him to death (**Joh 11:53**).
 - vi. In response to this conspiracy Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews (**Joh 11:54**).
 - vii. There is a time to hide, and this was one of those times.
 - viii. As the Passover drew close, many went to Jerusalem and were looking for Jesus because the chief priests and Pharisees had given commandment that anyone who knew Jesus' whereabouts was to tell them that they might apprehend Him (**Joh 11:55-57**).
 - ix. They were not able to take Him at that time because His time was not yet come.
- M. Jesus spoke a parable against the chief priests and elders and set them up to condemn themselves (**Mat 21:33-41**).
- i. Jesus identified them as the builders who rejected Him, the chief cornerstone, and prophesied of their demise (**Mat 21:42-44**).
 - ii. When the chief priests and Pharisees perceived that He spoke of them they sought to lay hands on Him and kill Him (**Mat 21:45-46**).
 - iii. They were not able to do so because they feared the people who took Him for a prophet (**Mat 21:46; Luk 20:19**).
 - iv. "When the people fear the government, there is tyranny; when the government fears the people, there is liberty." - Unknown
- N. When they couldn't kill Jesus, they sent forth spies who feigned themselves just men in order to catch Him saying something for which they could deliver Him to the governor to be put to death (**Luk 20:20**).
- i. They tried to get Him to say that people shouldn't pay their taxes which would have gotten Him in trouble with the law (**Luk 20:21-22**).
 - ii. Jesus perceived their deceitfulness and outsmarted them (**Luk 20:23-25**).
 - iii. They had nothing to accuse him of and held their peace (**Luk 20:26**).
 - iv. Jesus was delivered out of their hands by His wisdom and discernment.
- O. When Jesus cast the moneychangers out of the temple for the second time near the end of His earthly ministry, the scribes and chief priests sought how they might destroy Him (**Mar 11:15-18; Luk 19:47**).
- i. They feared Him because of how the people were astonished by His doctrine (**Mar 11:18**) and very attentive to hear Him (**Luk 19:48**).
 - ii. They envied Him because of His fame and sound preaching (**Mar 15:10**).
 - iii. Jesus left the city that evening (**Mar 11:19**).
 - iv. There is a time of war (**Ecc 3:8**), but not every time.
- P. Two days before the Passover the chief priests, scribes, and elders assembled with Caiaphas the high priest and consulted how they might take Jesus by subtilty and craft and kill Him (**Mat 26:1-4; Mar 14:1**).
- i. Subtilty *n.* - 3. Cunning, craftiness, guile; = *subtlety* 3.
 - ii. Subtlety *n.* - 3. Craftiness, cunning, esp. of a treacherous kind; guile, treachery.

- iii. Craft *n.* – II. Intellectual power; skill; art. 2. a. Skill, skillfulness, art; ability in planning or performing, ingenuity in constructing, dexterity. 4. a. In a bad sense: Skill or art applied to deceive or overreach; deceit, guile, fraud, cunning.
- iv. They had to use craftiness and deception because Jesus had done nothing wrong.
- v. They decided not to try to kill Him on the feast day because they feared the people (**Mat 26:5**; also see: **Mar 12:12**; **Luk 20:19**).
- Q. As the Passover drew nigh the chief priests and scribes again sought how they might kill Jesus (**Luk 22:1-2**).
 - i. Satan entered Judas, one of Jesus' 12 disciples, and prompted him to go to the chief priests and offer to betray Christ to them for money (**Luk 22:3-6**).
 - ii. Judas was a friend of Jesus (**Mat 26:50 c/w Psa 41:9**).
 - iii. Sometimes the devil will use our closest friends to try to destroy us.
- R. Once they had arrested Jesus the chief priests, elders, and all the council sought for false witnesses to accuse Him so they could put Him to death (**Mat 26:59**).
 - i. They could only find two false witnesses, but their testimony did not agree together (**Mat 26:60-61 c/w Mar 14:55-59**).
 - ii. They finally asked Jesus to tell them if He was the Son of God (**Mat 26:62-63**).
 - iii. When Jesus affirmed that He was the Son of God they accused Him of blasphemy and determined that He was guilty of death (**Mat 26:64-66**).
 - iv. They were close to being able to put Jesus to death, but were not yet able.
 - v. The penalty for blasphemy was stoning (**Lev 24:16**), but God had decreed that Jesus would be killed by crucifixion (**Psa 22:16**; **Zec 12:10**; **Zec 13:6-7**) which the Jews didn't have authority to do (**Joh 18:31-32**).
- S. The next morning the chief priests and elders again took counsel to put Jesus to death (**Mat 27:1**).
 - i. They bound Him and took him to Pilate, the governor of the Jews (**Mat 27:2**).
 - ii. The chief priests and elders accused Him before Pilate, but Jesus answered nothing (**Mat 27:11-14**).
 - iii. Pilate knew that they had delivered Jesus to him because of envy and therefore tried to release Him (**Mat 27:15-18**).
 - iv. The chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude to ask that the murderer Barabbas be released and Jesus destroyed (**Mat 27:19-21**).
 - v. When Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus, they cried that He should be crucified (**Mat 27:22-23**).
 - vi. Pilate tried to absolve himself from any guilt prior to scourging Jesus and delivering Him to be crucified (**Mat 27:24-26**).
 - vii. After putting a crown of thorns on His head, mocking Him, spitting on Him, and beating Him (**Mat 27:27-34**), they crucified Jesus (**Mat 27:35**).
 - viii. After suffering the wrath of God for several hours on the cross, Jesus died (**Mat 27:50**).

- T. None of the previous attempts at murdering Christ were successful because God had determined that He would be killed in a certain way at a certain time at a certain place (**Luk 22:22; Act 2:23; Act 4:25-28**).
 - i. Satan and his followers tried 18 times to kill Jesus, before finally being successful on the 19th attempt.
 - ii. God delivered Him from death each time until the appointed time and manner of His death was come.
 - iii. After Jesus was killed, God raised Him from the dead and set Him at His right hand far above all principalities and powers (**Eph 1:20-23**).
- U. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. Religious people, and specifically professing Christians, will often be our greatest persecutors.
 - ii. There is a time to fight and a time to flee.
 - iii. No good deed goes unpunished by the wicked.
 - iv. God will not allow our persecutors to be successful in their persecution of us if it is not His will.
 - v. Don't be afraid to rebuke your persecutors when necessary.
 - vi. There is a time to lay low and not to antagonize our enemies.
 - vii. There is a time to be confrontational, but not every time.
 - viii. Our enemies will try divers methods of persecuting us.
 - ix. If we speak the truth meekly, we can sometimes win over our persecutors.
 - x. There is a time to hide.
 - xi. Many are the afflictions of the righteous.
 - xii. Don't be afraid to boldly preach the gospel even when you know you will be persecuted for it.
 - xiii. It helps to have friends in the community so that persecutors in government will be hesitant to provoke the public to anger.
 - xiv. Be careful what you say when you have enemies because they will use your words against you.
 - xv. Our enemies will use subtlety and deceit to persecute us.
 - xvi. Sometimes the devil will use our closest friends to try to destroy us.
 - xvii. The devil will use false witnesses to falsely accuse us to get us in trouble with the law.
 - xviii. God will allow our persecutors to afflict us and even kill us if it is His will.
 - xix. Ultimately though, even if we are killed, we will be victorious over death (**Rev 12:11; Rev 2:10; 1Co 15:54-55**).

32. Peter from prison

- A. Peter had been used by God to open the door of faith unto the Gentiles (**Act 15:7 c/w Act 14:27 c/w Act 10:1 – 11:18**).
- B. The next thing which happened to Peter that is recorded was that Herod put him in prison after he killed James with the sword (**Act 12:1-4**).
 - i. High mountains are often followed by deep valleys.
 - ii. One moment Samson is glorying, saying, "heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men" (**Jdg 15:16**).

- iii. The next moment he is lamenting to God, "Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?" (**Jdg 15:18**).
 - iv. Such is life in this world.
- C. Herod imprisoned Peter because he saw that it pleased the Jews when he killed James (**Act 12:3**).
 - i. Politicians will do just about anything if they think it will score them political points with their constituents.
 - ii. "It has been said that politics is the second oldest profession. I have learned that it bears a striking resemblance to the first." - Ronald Reagan
 - iii. Pilate likewise delivered Jesus to be killed to placate the Jews, even though he knew He was innocent (**Mat 27:20-26**).
 - iv. When we see travesties of justice like this, just remember that God sees it too, and He will recompense the wicked for what they have done (**Ecc 5:8 c/w Rom 12:19**).
- D. Herod delivered Peter to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him (**Act 12:4a**).
 - i. Quaternion *n.* – 1. A group or set of four persons or things.
 - ii. Soldier *n.* – One who serves in an army for pay; one who takes part in military service or warfare. b. A man of military skill and experience.
 - iii. Peter was therefore guarded by 16 highly trained and heavily armed men.
 - iv. It was humanly impossible for him to escape from prison.
- E. Herod intended to bring him forth after Easter to the people (**Act 12:4b**).
 - i. The use of the word "Easter" for the Passover is not a corruption in the KJV.
 - a. It is simply another name for the Passover.
 - b. Easter *n.* – 2. The Jewish Passover. (cites Act 12:4 in the KJV)
 - c. The Passover was referred to as Easter in English Bible versions which preceded the KJV, such as in the following verses.
 - (i) "And the Iewes Easter was nye at hande, and many went out of the countrey vp to Hierusale before the Easter, to purifie them selues." - *Joh 11:55 – Bishops Bible, 1568*
 - (ii) "Vpon ye xiiij. daye of the first moneth ye shal kepe Easter." *Eze 45:21 – Coverdale Bible, 1535*
 - (iii) "Purge therfore the olde leuen that ye maye be newe dowe as ye are swete breed. For Christ OURE ESTERLAMBE is offered vp for vs." *1Co 5:7 – Tyndale Bible, 1534*
 - (iv) "Purge out therfore the olde leuen, that ye maye be new dowe, like as ye are swete bred. For we also haue an EASTER LAMBE, which is Christ, that is offred for vs." - *1Co 5:7 – Tyndale Bible, 1534*
 - (v) "...For Christ oure EASTERLAMBE is offered vp for vs." - *1Co 5:7 – Matthew's Bible, 1549*
 - ii. Herod had no qualms about leaving a man of God to suffer in prison in order to not disrupt a national holiday being celebrated by his persecutors.
 - iii. The situation was ironic.

- a. The Jews were celebrating the Passover which was a type and shadow of Jesus Christ who was the fulfillment of what the Passover typified.
 - b. The man who was preaching to them about the "lamb of God" whom their Passover celebration pointed to was put in prison for their pleasure during that celebration.
- F. While Peter was kept in prison, "prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him" (**Act 12:5**).
 - i. We are to pray without ceasing, in every situation, throughout the day, habitually (**1Th 5:17**).
 - ii. God honors diligent, continual, faith-filled prayers made with importunity (**Luk 18:1-8; Luk 11:1-10**).
 - iii. Importunity *n.* – Troublesome pertinacity in solicitation.
 - iv. How especially important it is for us to pray fervently for our brethren when they are going through a hard time.
- G. The night came that Herod planned to bring Peter out of the prison and most likely execute him like he had done to James (**Act 12:6**).
 - i. That night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers bound with two chains.
 - ii. Even in life's most trying times, the Lord gives His beloved sleep (**Psa 127:2**).
- H. An angel of the Lord appeared in the prison who awoke Peter and told him to get up, and at the same time his chains fell off his hands (**Act 12:7**).
 - i. This is the second time that Peter was going to be delivered from prison by God using an angel (**Act 5:17-20**).
 - ii. God has assigned angels to protect and watch over each of His children (**Mat 18:10; Psa 91:11-12; Heb 1:14**).
- I. The angel told Peter to get his clothes and shoes on and follow him (**Act 12:8**).
 - i. Peter did as he was told despite thinking it was not really happening and that he was seeing a vision (**Act 12:9**).
 - ii. They walked out of the prison with no resistance from the guards, and the angel departed from him (**Act 12:10**).
 - iii. When Peter came to himself, he was then certain that God had sent His angel and delivered him out of the hand of Herod and the Jews (**Act 12:11**).
 - iv. This is a picture of salvation.
 - a. God saves us from prison and death by His grace and power.
 - b. It is only after we have been saved that we can know and understand what the Lord did for us.
- J. As soon as Peter was freed from prison, the first place he went was the place where the church was gathered (**Act 12:12**).
 - i. This was not the first time that Peter, being let go, went to his own company (**Act 4:23**).
 - ii. The first place that we should desire to go to when we are freed is to church to worship God with the brethren.
 - a. This applies to when we are freed from sin and false doctrine when we are first converted.
 - b. This also applies to being freed from prison when persecuted.

- iii. This tells us a lot about Peter's character and priorities.
 - a. He didn't avoid the church in an attempt to avoid future persecution.
 - b. He didn't go visit his family first.
 - c. His first thought was to go to be with the brethren.
 - iv. What brethren do out of desire, not out of compulsion, tells me a lot about their zeal for the Lord and His truth.
 - v. "Every normal man has a "company," however small, where he feels at home and to which he will return when he is tired of being alone. The important thing about a man is not where he goes when he is compelled to go, but where he goes when he is free to go where he will. The apostles went to jail, and that is not too revealing because they went there against their will; but when they got out of jail and could go where they would they immediately went to the praying company. From this we learn a great deal about them. The choices of life, not the compulsions, reveal character. A man is absent from church Sunday morning. Where is he? If he is in a hospital having his appendix removed his absence tells us nothing about him except that he is ill; but if he is out on the golf course, that tells us a lot. To go to the hospital is compulsory; to go to the golf course, voluntary. The man is free to choose and he chooses to play instead of to pray. His choice reveals what kind of man he is. Choices always do." - A.W. Tozer
- K. Peter knocked on the door and a young girl named Rhoda went to the door and heard Peter's voice, but was too excited to let him in, and instead went and told the others (**Act 12:13-14**).
 - i. Her emotions stopped her from thinking straight and letting Peter in.
 - ii. They didn't believe her and told her she was crazy (**Act 12:15**).
 - a. Although they had been praying for Peter's release from prison, when it actually happened they didn't believe it.
 - b. God is merciful to our human weakness and sometimes answers the prayers of those who are weak in faith.
 - iii. Peter kept knocking (**Act 12:16**).
 - a. This is good reminder to us to keep knocking until the door is opened (**Mat 7:7-8**).
 - b. Persistence pays.
 - iv. When they finally let Peter in and saw him they were astonished (**Act 12:16**).
 - a. Astonished *ppl.* – 1. Bereft or sensation; stunned, benumbed. 2. Stunned or paralyzed mentally, bereft of one's wits; stupefied, bewildered.
 - b. If they would have believed that God was going to deliver him, or at least that God could deliver him at any time, they would not have been stunned when He did.
- L. Peter told them how God had brought him out of the prison (**Act 12:17**).
- M. When Herod found out that Peter was escaped, he commanded that the soldiers be put to death (**Act 12:18-19**).
 - i. Let this be a lesson to anyone who takes part in the persecution of God's people.

- ii. "I was just doing my job" doesn't cut it with God.
- N. There are some lessons we can learn from this.
 - i. Even the greatest of the saints will face persecution.
 - ii. Expect trials and tribulations after God gives you great blessings.
 - iii. The powers that be will persecute us just to please those who have influence over them.
 - iv. It is often people who claim to be God's people who are our most troublesome persecutors.
 - v. God can deliver us out of a situation which seems humanly impossible.
 - vi. God hears and answers the prayers of his faithful people which they make for persecuted saints.
 - vii. The LORD will often wait until the 11th hour to deliver us to try our faith.
 - viii. God uses angels to deliver us from trouble, and we often don't realize it.
 - ix. If we are in prison or forced to be away from church, the first place we should desire to go once freed is back to church to be with the people of God.
 - x. God is merciful to His children who are weak in faith and will sometimes hear their prayers for deliverance despite their spiritual weakness.
 - xi. Those who persecute the saints will be judged by God in due time.