

LIGHT KEEPER

Bible Study Guide

volume 2

James

Numbers

John

Psalms (1)

1 Chronicles

2 Chronicles

Ecclesiastes

Daniel

Revelation

All quotes are from the New King James Version, although the *Lightkeeper* texts can also be read with other Bible translations.

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It is a beautiful spring day at the North Sea. A flock of sheep grazes peacefully on the dyke. The warming spring sun is hidden behind a thin veil of clouds.

And the lighthouse? It has long since become obsolete.

It lives on as a nice picnic spot for hikers and cyclists. Why? Because it is no longer needed.

Not so with you, if you want to follow the Lord Jesus:

Christians are to let their “light ... shine before men” – to shine for Jesus Christ, giving direction to others by living as Jesus lived. This is a great challenge, but at the same time the most beautiful and meaningful task in the world!

In order for you to succeed, this *Lightkeeper* wants to help you to stay close to the Lord Jesus every day and to live your life with Him. And that only works when the Bible, the Word of God, has a well-established place in your life, thus keeping your light burning!

Wishing you God’s blessing and much joy in reading your Bible every day!



Jesus says to His disciples: “Let your
light so shine before men.”
(Matthew 5:16)



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Facts and Figures

Author: God

Writers: 40 men who wrote God's message as moved by the Holy Spirit.

Time of Writing: From 1500 BC until approx. 100 AD.

Place of Writing: Mainly Israel, but also Rome, the island of Patmos and many other places.

Addressees: All people.

Subjects: Origin of the world, mankind, the people of Israel, Jesus Christ (the main subject), the future and much more.

Specialities: So many that they can't be listed. The main one: The Bible is God's message for you!

Origin:

The books of the Bible were written by 40 different authors over a span of around 1600 years. As opposed to an ordinary book, the writing of the biblical books took place in a completely different way, because God the Holy Spirit dictated to the authors word for word what they should write. Of course they didn't act in a mechanical fashion, but each of them had, for example, his own style of writing, although he was led by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible says about itself: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ..." (2 Timothy 3:16). You should make sure you remember this well, since so many people nowadays criticise the Bible. No other book has been attacked so many times, but in vain.

Contents:

The Old Testament (OT) tells us about the creation of the world, the fall of man into sin, and about God's dealings with men. The central topic is the history of the people of Israel.

The OT contains 39 books, beginning with the **5 books of Moses** (also called "the law"). The first book of Moses, Genesis, is the book of beginnings. The other four books tell us how God made the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to be the people of His covenant.

In the **historical books** (Joshua to Esther) you can read about God's ways with the Israelites: They were unfaithful. God punished them and called on them repeatedly to repent. They demanded a king. The kings they demanded later on led them to worship idols, so

God dispersed them among the heathen. A small number of them later returned into the occupied land of Israel.

The **poetical books** (Job to Song of Songs) tell us about the experiences of a believer: suffering and fear, but also joy about God's redemption. These books point us again and again to God's love and are full of encouragement.

The **prophets** (Isaiah to Malachi) contain God's messages to His people through their prophets. God shows them clearly that He is almighty. He promises them the Messiah (the Christ). It is through Him that God, in the future, will redeem a small part of the people of Israel and forgive them. Then the Messiah will reign in peace and righteousness.

Law

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

Historical books

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Poetical books

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

Prophets

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

The New Testament (NT), the second part of the Bible, was written in the first century AD. It contains 27 books.

The **four gospels** (Matthew to John) give us a comprehensive biography of Jesus Christ. They also tell us that He is the Messiah, foretold by the OT prophets. Each gospel presents us with a particular feature of His unique person. All of them finish their book with a detailed account of how Jesus died on the cross and rose again the third day.

The **Acts of the Apostles** tells us how the good news of Jesus Christ spread. Beginning at Jerusalem and Samaria, it soon spread into many parts of the Roman Empire – into Europe.

The **21 letters of the New Testament** explain the Christian doctrine. Of special importance for the understanding of the Christian church are the **13 letters of Paul** (Romans to Philemon). The doctrine of the sinner's justification by grace is made clear here. The eight other letters (Hebrews to Jude) explain other important aspects of the doctrine of Christianity and encourage the Christian to live out their faith consistently, in spite of difficult circumstances.

The NT closes with the **Book of Revelation**. Its subject is the judgment of God which will come upon the godless world. And it also speaks about the wonderful future for all who know Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

Gospels and Acts

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Acts

Letters of Paul

Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon

Other letters

Hebrews
James
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude

Revelation

He is the central person of the Bible. He also wants to be the most important person in your life.

The Bible is first of all God's message for you. Millions of people have experienced how the God of the Bible has changed their lives dramatically.

You will also find that God will speak to you through reading His Word and will challenge you to think about your life.

And there's more: God offers you a completely new life – eternal life: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The best thing would be if you were to get to (better) know and love the living God: to understand that you are guilty before God and need to have your sins forgiven; and that you need to have a substitute Who, out of love to you, took God's punishment on Himself – Jesus Christ

We hope that the *Lightkeeper* will whet your appetite to read the Bible. Some tips:

1. Read every day!
2. Read the whole Bible! If you follow the *Lightkeeper* plan, it will take you 6 years.
3. Read thoughtfully and with curiosity! Ask yourself: "What was the intention of the writer? What did the people concerned think and feel?"
4. Make a few notes after reading, as many readers of the Bible do.
5. Don't get stuck on difficult passages, but explore what you can easily understand. This is more than enough!



God has shown you clearly in the Bible Who He is, so that you can get to know Him personally!

Quiet time – how it works

Read your Bible every day if you want to get to know God better and live a happy Christian life!

Reserve a certain time each day. Some call this “Quiet time” or “Devotion”. You can organise your quiet time like this:

1 Ask God to help you as you read the Bible and to show you what is important for you today.

2 Read the Bible and think about what you have read!

3 Now you can open your *Lightkeeper* next to your Bible and read it.

Each day is structured in the following way:

t Main text. Here you will find a short text explaining what you have just read in the Bible.

? Questions. Now you can check what you have understood from your reading. Some questions are designed to make you think about your life. These are indicated by a “♦” and are not numbered. If you are too tired to answer the questions in the morning, you could also do that during the day or in the evening. The answers to the numbered questions are provided from page 450 onwards.

i Explanation of some other detail. This gives a short explanation of difficult or interesting concepts, names or facts. There is also an index to these from page 506 onwards.

! Food for thought. When you read your Bible you will find that God is speaking to you. “Food for thought” should stimulate you to think about what God might want to tell you.

4 Thank God for what He has shown you in your reading. Talk with Him in prayer about everything – about your plans, worries and problems, about your relatives, friends and school mates or colleagues. And don’t forget to thank Him!

How Bible passages are referred to

5 Put what you have read into practice, so that you make progress in your faith!

How Bible passages are referred to:

- “Nehemiah 8:10” means: Nehemiah, chapter 8 verse 10.
- “Nehemiah 8:1-11” means: Nehemiah, chapter 8 verses 1 to 11
- “Nehemiah 4:9-5:5” means: Nehemiah, chapter 4 verse 9 to chapter 5 verse 5
- “Nehemiah 8:1+8” means: Nehemiah, chapter 8 verse 1 and verse 8

Because it’s OK to read the *Lightkeeper* with different Bible translations, you may find alternative words in round brackets “()”



God will bless you richly when you read the Bible and will cause you to grow in faith!



Your quiet time is the breakfast for your spiritual life!

vol 1

Luke
Leviticus
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

this volume

James
Numbers
John
Psalm
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ecclesiastes
Daniel
Revelation

vol 2

Acts
Deuteronomy
Job
Jude
Hosea
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Peter
2 Peter
Psalms (3)

vol 3

Matthew
Isaiah
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Song of Solomon
Genesis
Psalms (2)
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah

vol 5

Exodus
Romans
Proverbs
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Hebrews

vol 4

Mark
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 John
2 John
3 John
Ezekiel
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Psalms (4)
Psalms (5)

vol 6

Facts and Figures

Author:

James (Jesus' brother)

Time of Writing:

Possibly around 45 AD

Place of Writing:

Unknown

Addressees:

The twelve tribes of Israel in the dispensation

Subject:

Faith and works

Peculiarities:

54 out of the 108 verses in this epistle contain an imperative

«Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.»

James 1:17

Structure

Chapter 1:2-18

Faith and its challenges

Chapter 1:19-2:26

Faith and works

Chapter 3:1-18

Faith and words

Chapter 4:1-5:6

The divided heart

Chapter 5:7-20

Perseverance and hope

How it started:

It isn't known when the letter of James was written. It is quite possible that this letter was written very early in the Christian testimony. Maybe it's the oldest writing of the New Testament generally. The writer James was a brother of the Lord Jesus (Mark 6:3). At first he didn't believe, but after the resurrection he belonged to those who believed (John 7:5; 1 Corinthians 15:7).

The recipients of this letter are Israelites who lived in the dispersion – that means those who didn't return to Palestine after the Babylonian captivity.

James addresses believing and unbelieving Israelites, although of course he focuses mainly on the believers.

What it's all about:

The Israelites who believed in Jesus Christ found it difficult to understand the nature of the Christian faith. At the beginning of Christianity, especially Christians from a Jewish background had very close contact with their countrymen who were not Christians. They hung onto the Law of Moses and the religious ordinances received from their forebears. But James writes about a Christian's practical life of faith. According to James, faith is lived and shows itself in good works.

How about today?

Questioning the nature of your faith is very important. Christian faith has nothing to do with theories, but it is a practical thing and should have visible consequences in your life.

If you read the letter of James carefully, you will gain much valuable advice for your day-to-day life as a Christian.

Maybe James would have summarised his letter for you like this: "Demonstrate your faith!"



In the epistle of James are many parallels to the so-called Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7.



The epistle of James shows you that true faith is living and evident.

The test of faith



Christians are not exempt from trials. These are part of God's dealings with you. God uses them for your training. He wants you to make progress in your faith (vv2-3). If everything goes well, faith often remains a theory. You are challenged to live your faith day by day. Through trials, you can prove the reality of your faith. The problem with trials, though, is that they often last a long time. Therefore, you need patience and endurance (v4). You are likely to have many questions when you are in difficulties: you question their reason and purpose. You need wisdom. Ask God for it (v5). James shows that there is a wide variety of trials. For one it may be poverty, and for another maybe something else (vv9-11). It doesn't matter what

your circumstances are – allow God to lead you and trust Him. One day there will be an end to all trials. Then your endurance will be rewarded (v12).



1. Why are trials (challenges) important for your faith?
2. What does God do if you ask Him?
3. What conditions for answered prayer are mentioned?



In God's eyes, **wisdom** has nothing to do with intelligence. Somebody is wise if they practically apply to their lives what they have understood from God's Word.



Put your whole trust in the Lord Jesus. He will help and reward you.

Temptation by evil



James now shows us another kind of trial which doesn't come from

God. These are temptations originating from yourself, from your heart, in which lust arises, enticing you and pulling you away (vv13-14). If you follow lust, sinful actions follow (v15). Sinful lusts never come from God, but always from within yourself. Only good things come from God (v17). For example, as a Christian, you have received new, eternal life from Him (v18). Now you are called to act in the power of this new life and not according to the lusts of the flesh (vv19-21). Put into practice what you find in the Bible (v22). The Word of God is compared to a mirror (v23). It shows you what you are like and teaches you to do what is good (vv24-27). The

tongue what you say deserves special attention. – Do your words and actions agree? It was so with the Lord Jesus (see John 8:25).



4. What is the cause of these temptations?
5. Which characteristics of God are emphasised in verse 17?
6. How should you deal with the Word of God?
- ◆ You look daily into a **mirror** to check on your appearance and to change it. The question is: Do you also look daily into the "mirror of the Word of God"? And: How do you react if you notice that you have a "sin stain"?



Put all uncleanness away and receive the Word of God willingly.

Love towards your neighbour



Believers know the Lord of glory. This must have an influence on their

behaviour towards others (v1). Man often has different benchmarks than God. Riches, social standing, etc., take a high place with people (vv2-4). God, on the other hand, places special value on your heart. Read 1 Samuel 16:7.

– How do you judge others? Many people who don't count for anything in this world are chosen by God to be rich in faith (v5). Their characteristics are love towards God (v5) and love towards their neighbour without partiality (vv8-9). These things belong together. Love towards others can be practically seen through merciful deeds (v13).



7. What does God think about preferring those who are rich?

8. Which piece of furniture is mentioned in today's text?



So many **laws**!
1. The royal law (v8): The Lord Jesus will one day come in glory onto the earth to establish the kingdom of God. One characteristic feature of this kingdom is love. It should characterise Christians today.
2. The law of Sinai (vv9-11): If you transgress one commandment you have transgressed the whole law. No man can fulfil it; only the Lord Jesus could do this.
3. The law of liberty (v12): Believers possess a nature which joyfully does what God wants. To be told to do something that you actually want to do – that is true liberty.



**Do you already know God's mercy?
If so, also show it towards others.**

Faith and works



Real faith and good works belong together. Just a profession of faith, without

reality, can't save (v14). You may talk much about faith, but it has to be shown by works, otherwise faith is dead (vv20+26). Works are the fruits of faith (compare Matthew 7:16-20).

Only faith in the perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ saves; but your works confirm or show to others the genuineness of your faith (v18).

Works of faith are not necessarily "good works" in the usual sense. Abraham was about to kill his son and Rahab committed treason. However, both were acts of faith, recognised as such by God and rewarded. Abraham proved his love to God and Rahab her love to the people of God. – How are these things with you?



9. Read Proverbs 11:24-26. Why is it worthwhile to give something to someone in need (vv15-16)?

10. If you compare verse 21 with Romans 4:2, you will notice an apparent contradiction. How can you explain it?



**Don't just talk about your faith.
Live it!**

The tongue



Those who teach others about the Word of God have a great

responsibility before God. Such teachers have to be especially careful that their words agree with their actions. But it should be so with you too (vv1-2)!

Little things can have a great effect: the horse's bridle, the ship's rudder and a small fire. Our tongue is a small part of our body, but it has great influence and can do a lot of damage (vv3-6). No one in their own strength can tame the tongue (vv7-8), which shows itself as very inconsistent sometimes (vv9-12). To use your tongue properly you need wisdom (v13). This is the ability to use the tongue in the right way and at the right time. James

here distinguishes between worldly wisdom and wisdom from God and points out their characteristics (vv14-18). In the Lord Jesus you find all seven characteristics of wisdom from above, as listed in verse 17.



11. How can the tongue be set on fire? And: What does

this mean?

12. Which four examples of opposite pairs does James use to point out that good and bad should not come out of the same mouth?

13. What are the characteristics of wisdom from God?



"Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips." (Psalm 141:3)

Are you a friend of the world?



It is often difficult to practically display "wisdom from above". If it

doesn't happen, fights follow. These come from your lusts and desires (v1), which have great influence on your life of faith and your prayers. As a result, these are neglected or performed with a wrong attitude (v3). – What are you more interested in: worldly and earthly things or divine and heavenly things? What do you pray for and how?

There is no link between the worldly and the heavenly realm (v4). The Bible gives urgent warning against taking an indecisive position between God and the world. May it not warn in vain (v5)!

Envy or jealousy as well as pride are not from God. From Him comes grace, which He gives so that believers don't live in

conflict with one another but humble themselves (v6). James then shows seven steps which will help you achieve the right attitude to life (vv7-10). As far as your dealings with other people are concerned: Learn to make a difference between the person and the action. Judge what is wrong, but try to win the other person. God will judge the heart and motive of the other (vv11-12).



14. Can you complete the following sentences

from memory?

"Whoever therefore wants to be a _____ of the world makes himself an _____ of God."

"God resists the _____, but gives _____ to the _____."



Is it obvious in your life whose side you are on?

All about trading and earning money



As a young person you will have plans and goals for your future life. That's quite normal. But have you ever asked the Lord Jesus about His will for your life? He has a plan and a task for your life. He knows your future and wants the best for you. Live every day in the consciousness of His presence (vv13-16). Do the good things the Lord Jesus shows you – at school, at home, and at work (v17).

Pursuing riches and possessions is a wrong attitude. If your life consists only of these things, the results are often a hard heart and a lack of compassion towards others (vv1-6). The rich people mentioned here even gained their wealth in a wrong way – at the

expense of others. They had to realise that earthly riches pass away. It isn't a sin to be rich, but it is a danger. Use what you have in the realisation of your responsibility before the Lord.



15. With what does James compare our life?



The **rich** people mentioned by James had accumulated so much that they lost count of what they actually had: Their riches were corrupted, their clothes were being eaten by moths and their precious metals were corroding (vv2-3). However, those who share their possessions gather up treasure in heaven which cannot be destroyed (Matthew 6:19-21 and 19:21).



What is important to God should also be important to you.

"Just be patient!"



Christians often suffer difficulties in the world, but they know that

their Lord will come soon and reward their faithfulness. Until then, you need patience and perseverance, just like a farmer waiting for the harvest (vv7-8).

The prophets and Job provide a valuable object lesson with regard to perseverance and patience. For example, patience is necessary if others don't want to believe your words. Don't try to put greater emphasis on your words with swearing, but simply always speak the truth (v12). Personal and corporate prayer are very important: Prayer is mentioned seven times in verses 13-18.

But there are also situations where it is needful that

something is "done": If someone wanders from the truth, he should be led back (vv19-20).



16. Is the sick person in verse 14 healed by being anointed

with oil?

17. In order to encourage his readers to pray, James presents to his readers one person who prayed. Who is it, what did he pray for and what answers did he get?



Patience is rewarded. Pray in faith for others and help them.

Facts and Figures

Author:

Moses

Time of Writing:

During the Israelites' journey through the wilderness

Place of Writing:

Unknown

Addressees:

The people of Israel

Topic:

God leads his people through the wilderness (world)

Peculiarities:

Due to the people of Israel's disobedience and little faith, an eleven day journey through the wilderness turns into a journey of 40 years.

«Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, after that the children of Israel would journey.»

Numbers 9:17

Structure

Chapter 1-10:10

The people of Israel at Mount Sinai

Chapter 10:11-20:29

The journey through the wilderness from Sinai to Kadesh: 37 years and 11 months

Chapter 21-32

In Moab at the Jordan River: 9 months and 10 days

Chapter 33-36

Looking back and looking forward to the Land of Canaan (Israel)

How it started:

In the Book of Genesis, God tells us about how the world was made and how life began. Many biblical principles are found there for the first time. We also find a detailed report about the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel), the progenitors of the nation of Israel. Exodus tells us about the slavery of this nation in Egypt and their liberation, in order that they might sacrifice to God. In Leviticus, the various sacrifices and instructions for priestly service are presented.

The Book of Numbers deals with the journey through the wilderness: The chosen people have to walk through the wilderness into the promised fertile land of Canaan (today's Israel).

What it's all about:

The Book of Numbers first of all describes how the nation of Israel lived during their wilderness journey. God prescribes exactly how the Israelites should order their camp and their journey through the wilderness. Only a few important events of the 40-year journey are reported here (chapters 10-25 and 31).

Eleven days' journey would have been enough to cross the wilderness (Deuteronomy 1:2). But God punishes the people for their disobedience in that all Israelites who were older than 19 years at the time of the exodus were going to die in the wilderness – apart from Caleb and Joshua. You will read during the next few days what this disobedience was.

The journey through the wilderness becomes a time of testing: Will the people be obedient to God?

How about today?

The New Testament compares the life of a Christian in this world to the wilderness journey. That's why the Book of Numbers is especially relevant to young Christians. As you are studying this book, you will notice that the temptations in your day-to-day life are in principle no different from those of the people of Israel in the wilderness.

But that's not everything: The Book of Numbers is also about a people – the "people of God". In the same way, you are not on your own today as a Christian, but you know other Christians with whom you meet to worship the Lord Jesus, to listen to the Word of God and to pray. This book of the Bible often deals with how God wants His people to live together. The equivalent in the New Testament is the first letter to the Corinthians.



Numbers:
a book taken from real life



**The Bible is the best map for your
life's journey!**

Fit for battle



The Book of Numbers begins shortly after the erection of the tabernacle. God wants a people who are worshippers and soldiers at the same time, as there are enemies lying in wait for the people. Soldiers are counted by tribes – every man who is at least 20 years old at the time of counting. Today, the Lord Jesus is also looking for people who will fight for Him. Christians don't fight against other people, but they stand up for the truth of the Bible despite opposition. But you don't have to wait until you are 20 years old. Pray today that the Lord Jesus will help you to read the Bible daily and to pray, in order to be a good "soldier" for God.



1. Why are the people under 20 not counted?
2. Are there people today who profess to be Christians and who are not suited for the Christian battle?



Censuses often took place among God's people. On the first occasion, redemption money had to be paid for each person (Exodus 30:11-16). In the same way you must accept the Lord Jesus as your "redemption money" (Mark 10:45), in order to belong to the heavenly people of God. In the Book of Numbers you read of two counts which were carried out at God's instruction – here and in chapter 26.



God is looking for people who stand up faithfully for His truth.

To become active for the Lord Jesus



Every single tribe is counted. During the counting process, the order which will determine both the life in the camp and the desert journey becomes obvious. The difference in the number of men of fighting age between the individual tribes is remarkable. Today there are also great differences in the people of God. Many are willing to serve the Lord Jesus from a young age. Others need a bit longer until they find an interest in the Bible and in following the Lord. However, it isn't important what others do for the Lord Jesus. You are responsible before Him for your life and for your service.



3. Which tribe is counted twice, i.e. as two separate tribes?
4. What are the names of the 12 sons of Jacob (Israel)? Clue: Read also Genesis 35:23-26.



The individual tribes were counted by **families**. God had first of all instituted marriage and then introduced the family through the command to multiply. God directs His interest again and again to families, or houses, to save them. Examples: The Passover lamb was killed for a house (Exodus 12:3); Noah built the ark for the saving of his house (Hebrews 11:7); and Lydia and the Philippian jailor were saved together with their houses (Acts 16:14-15+27-34).



Don't look at what your friend is doing – the Lord Jesus wants you!

To serve the Lord Jesus



God chooses one tribe of the people for the special tabernacle

service: Levi. For that reason this tribe camps right next to the sanctuary. The Levites formed a kind of ring around the tabernacle.

Levitical service is an illustration of the service believers may do for the Lord Jesus today. And the tabernacle with its various objects points to the Lord Jesus.

We as Christians carry the Ark if we hold up the truths concerning the Lord Jesus (for example that He is God and Man at the same time, that He is the only Saviour, and much more).



5. What is the fundamental condition to be able

to do a service for the Lord Jesus?

6. Which tribe is not counted?



The Bible speaks of many different kinds of service.

Everything that is done for the Lord Jesus – even if it is drying up at home “for mum” – is considered a service by Him. If the Lord Jesus wants you to do something and you are obedient and do it – that is **service**, and it doesn't matter whether it's something that seems to be great or small. Any service is precious to the Lord Jesus if you do it in obedience.



Open your eyes: The Lord Jesus wants to use you.

Ordered conditions



The order of the camp is determined in the second chapter.

God divides the people into four sub-camps, consisting of three tribes each. In chapter 3, the Levites are divided into their houses and assigned to one sub-camp each.

1 Corinthians 14:33 tells us that God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. This can also be seen in the order of the camp of the Israelites during their wilderness journey.

Your life should also take an ordered course. Regular Bible reading and prayer are part of that and regular attendance at meetings as well. But there also needs to be obedience towards your parents and fulfilment of your daily responsibilities.



7. In every tribe there was a prince. Is there still a kind

of “prince” today, among the people of God?

8. Is there a good reason why the people had to camp in an orderly fashion? What do you think?



Be sure to develop these good habits in your Christian life: reading the Bible, praying and meeting with other Christians.

The Lord in the centre



God doesn't only stipulate the layout of the camp, but

also the order in which the individual tribes should start off. Two of the four sub-camps were to march before and two were to be behind the tabernacle. The tabernacle therefore was in the centre of the procession.

The Ark of the Covenant is a special pointer to the Lord Jesus. It was made of wood – a symbol of the humanity of Jesus, and was completely covered with gold – a symbol of His deity.

Just as with the people of Israel, where the Ark of the Covenant was in the centre, the Lord Jesus should also be the centre of our lives – in our personal lives and also in the church.



9. What does it mean when the Lord Jesus is the centre of your life?

10. Is there also a practical reason why the tabernacle was transported in the centre?



A **banner** is a kind of flag which served as a point of reference for a camp. We don't know the shape and appearance of these banners. For comparison: Ships today also travel under the flag of a certain country. That means that they are subject to the government of that country and travel under their protection. They belong to that country.



It honours the Lord Jesus if He has the first place in your life.

To serve the Lord and the believers



The priests – Aaron and his sons – belonged to the tribe of

Levi, which was responsible for looking after the sanctuary. While the priests' responsibility concerned mainly the animal sacrifices, the other Levites had the task of maintaining the tabernacle and its utensils and carrying them through the wilderness.

We as Christians may do both: worship God (priestly service) and serve our fellow Christians, as well as do practical service (Levitical service).



11. Leviticus 10:1-3 gives a more detailed report on

the judgment on Nadab and Abihu. Why does God judge them immediately?

12. How old are the youngest Levites when they are counted?



The **tabernacle** is also called tabernacle of the LORD (Leviticus 17:4), tabernacle of the Testimony (Numbers 1:50), tent of the Testimony (Numbers 9:15), sanctuary of the LORD (Numbers 19:20), house of God (Judges 18:31), house of the LORD (1 Samuel 1:7), tabernacle of the LORD (1 Samuel 1:9), tabernacle of witness (Acts 7:44), and the earthly sanctuary (Hebrews 9:1).



The Lord Jesus wants to own you 100%.

Everyone to their task



The three sons of Levi – Gershon, Kohath and Merari – were

allocated various tasks, together with their families. These are described in detail in chapter 4.

The Levites couldn't choose what they did; they were allocated their service. What a mess the Levites would end up in if everyone did just as they pleased!

It's no different today. What you should be doing as a Christian is not necessarily attractive and interesting, but just what the Lord Jesus tells you to do. He is the true "chief over the leaders" (v32) Who has been put over all service. And He alone is able to determine the service of each individual as part of the whole group.



13. How many Levites are counted altogether?

14. Compared to the other tribes, is this a great number?



The **east (where the sun rises)** (v38) is very important in the

Bible. The beautiful garden of Eden was situated in the east (Genesis 2:8). Sadly, because of man's sin, "the east" became a place of distance from God (Genesis 3:24, 4:16, 11:2, 13:11). Because of the continuing idolatry, the glory of God left the temple towards the east (Ezekiel 9:3, 11:23). But God returned – in the person of the Lord Jesus: the Dayspring (rising of the sun) from on high (Luke 1:78). When the Lord Jesus appears in glory, His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, situated east of Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:4).



Be careful to follow the instructions of the Lord Jesus, even if they don't seem attractive to you.

Too few servants



God takes on the Levites instead of all the firstborn.

Really every

firstborn in Israel should have been separated from his family and been given over to God. But God makes the Levites "firstborn" in their place. However, the number of firstborn is higher than that of the Levites by 273. These 273 have to be "redeemed" – i.e. have their freedom bought – with money.

You have already seen that the Levites point us to today's servants of God. Every believer is called to be a servant of God. There are always too few servants if Christians want to control their own lives, instead of giving their lives over to God. – What are you doing with your life?



15. Why was it necessary for redemption money

to be paid for 273 firstborn Israelites?

16. How many shekels of redemption money had to be paid per head and how much was that altogether?



Redemption:

Several passages in the Old Testament talk about people being redeemed. For every firstborn person, an animal had to die – pointing to the redemption work of the Lord Jesus.



Have you already done something for the Lord Jesus today?

Beginning to serve



You learned in chapter 3 that all male Levites of one month and

above were to be counted. The remaining male Israelites of at least 20 years of age were counted to be soldiers.

Now you read in chapter 3 that the Levites could only start their service at the age of 30 years. There is also an additional restriction: those of 51 years and above should cease their service.

Every Christian goes through periods of growth and maturity during the course of their life with the Lord Jesus. It may be that God has different tasks and opportunities for service for you in each chapter of your life. This will become clear to you through constant fellowship with God (Bible reading and prayer).



17. What is done with the veil when the camp starts to

move?

18. Why does the Ark of the Covenant have to have poles inserted before being transported (v8)?



The **dye of the blue** cloth (v6) was extracted from sea

snails secreting a liquid which, when exposed to air, turns violet; then when exposed to sunlight it turns blue like the sky. All articles in the sanctuary were covered in blue cloth. This points us to the heavenly origin of the Lord Jesus.

A unique service



The Kohathites carry the various articles of the tabernacle,

and the Gershonites the carpets and coverings of the sanctuary. The Merarites have to transport the boards, bars, pillars and sockets. In that way, each one has their own particular job.

Today as well everyone has their own personal task. You have a different task from that of your fellow-believers. You don't need to copy anyone. Just do what God gives you to do – most of the time directly on your doorstep.

The most important thing is to follow “the command of Aaron” (v27), i.e. to be obedient to the Lord Jesus (of Whom Aaron is a type or picture) in everything.



19. The Kohathites were not allowed to see the holy things

they had to carry. How was this made possible?

20. Do you know the event during the reign of David, when a man touched the Ark of the Covenant to prevent an accident and had to die? See 2 Samuel 6. Which verses contain this event?



Oil is mentioned again and again in the Old Testament.

It can be concluded from Zechariah 4:3+6 that oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Oil was needed for the lampstand, for example (v16). In the same way Christians can only be a testimony to the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.



As a Christian, you have free access to God. Take advantage of it!



What can you do for the Lord Jesus?

Working together



The last few verses of the fourth chapter summarise the counting of the Levites. The total number of the Levites counted for service is given as 8,580.

They certainly don't all work at the same time. They take turns carrying the tabernacle items. In the same way, the servants of the Lord Jesus today can complement each other. It is also impressive that Moses and Aaron work together (v41) – a very important characteristic of God's servants: They help each other and work together.



21. Find some examples from the Bible where servants worked together.

22. Find examples where believers worked against each other.



The task of the Levites was to “**bear burdens**” (v47).

Everyone had to carry items of the tabernacle, according to their ability. Today also, one can “**carry**” more, and the other less. The Lord Jesus gives you tasks which correspond to your abilities (compare Matthew 25:15).



Be careful: Serving doesn't mean trying to be better than others, but complementing each other!

Not to do anything in secret



The first few verses of chapter 5 show us that lepers and other unclean people are not allowed to stay in the camp of Israel (vv1-4). The following verses deal with confession of sins and restitution (repayment) which must exceed the value of the guilt (vv5-10).

The bigger part of the chapter then shows us how to deal with a sin that has been committed in secret – adultery. God tells the Israelites exactly what to do (vv11-31). – Have you had experience of sins which no one sees – apart from God? There are sins which a young person commits behind the backs of his parents, his siblings or his friends, maybe again and again. What is needed is

repentance, i.e. turning to God, and honest confession.



23. Do you know what leprosy in the Bible symbolises?

24. What reason is given for why those who are unclean cannot remain in the camp?



Restitution (v8) concerns people, while **atonement** (v8) deals with the sins. Man has become an enemy of God and must have peace with God (atonement). His sins, however, stand between himself and God. The sins must be “covered”, so to speak (the Hebrew word for atonement). Both are done through the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross.



Confess secret sins, and stop committing them!

Totally for the Lord



An Israelite could set himself apart for the LORD for a certain time – to

be available only for God. The LORD rejoices in this. Three things characterise such a Nazirite: He doesn't drink any wine, he has long hair, and he doesn't touch a dead body. If you want to live consistently for the Lord Jesus, it won't feel like a sacrifice to go without earthly joys (wine), to practise submission and not seek your own glory (long hair), as well as to keep away from the defilements of sin (dead bodies). To be a Nazirite was voluntary. It's the same today. But the Lord Jesus is happy with you if you want to live totally for Him. He will then give you a joy inside that's there to stay. You won't miss out on anything!



25. What is the meaning of the word, "Nazirite"?

26. What is the difference between earthly and worldly joys?



Long **hair** is a symbol of submission and dependence. You read in 1 Corinthians 11:14 that it is a dishonour for a man to have long hair. So if a man wants to devote his life to the Lord Jesus today, it doesn't mean that he should allow his hair to grow long. The commandments concerning the Nazirite contain spiritual instructions.



Separation means:
Living only for the Lord Jesus!

The wonderful sacrifice of the Lord Jesus



When the Nazirite's time of setting himself apart was

finished, he was required to offer various sacrifices to God:

- A burnt offering – the foundation of any devotion to God is the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, which has glorified God perfectly.
- A sin offering – we were all sinners who needed the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus in order to be saved.
- A peace offering – we can only devote ourselves to the Lord Jesus if we maintain fellowship with Him on the basis of His work.
- Other sacrifices which speak of the glory of the devotion and work of the Lord Jesus.

– What does the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross of Calvary mean to you personally?



27. Which Nazirite from the Book of Judges do you know?

28. Who do the sacrifices of the Old Testament point to? Do you know a passage from the New Testament that confirms this?



In the Old Testament we find again and again that people made **vows** (a vow is a kind of oath).. But James 5:12 tells us that we should not swear with any kind of oath at all today.



All your blessing rests on the work of the Lord Jesus!

Giving relief



Chapter 7 takes us back for a moment to the setting up of the tabernacle in Exodus 40. These offerings are a beautiful answer to the “blessing of Israel” in chapter 6:24-26. The offerings of the princes of Israel come so unexpectedly for Moses that God has to encourage him to accept them. The 6 carts and 12 oxen are a relief for the Levites. You may also contribute something to the “relief” of the servants of God, for example through practical help or through financial support. Only the Kohathites, who carry the holy things of the tabernacle, don’t receive any help. If it concerns the person of the Lord Jesus, it is important to be very, very careful: Human aids easily hide His glory.



29. The Kohathites have to carry the holy things of the tabernacle on their shoulders (v9). Where can you find the detailed list of these? You read it a few days ago.
30. Years later, a king transports the Ark of the Covenant without heeding this commandment. Who is it and how is the Ark transported? Remember question 20.



If the Old Testament speaks about **offerings**, it doesn’t always mean blood offerings as those mentioned in Leviticus 1-7, which are burnt on the altar of burnt offerings. As today’s passage shows, there are also offerings for the LORD which, in the end, are of use to people (for example the so-called heave offering).



How can you make the service of others easier for them?

Giving something to God



These verses list the 12 offerings of the 12 princes of the individual tribes. These offerings are all identical. They are gifts which the princes bring as a second offering in addition to the gift mentioned in the first nine verses. Princes are people especially favoured and chosen by God. They carry a special responsibility. Now they bring something for God which is above the gifts given by the rest of the people of Israel. Today the Lord Jesus can also expect more from those to whom He has given more responsibilities and gifts. Don’t ever forget this when the Lord Jesus wants to use you for His service.



31. Make a list of the things offered by the princes. What were these supposed to be used for? You could make a table with two columns.
32. A lamb in its first year (v21) is also mentioned at a very important time of the history of the people of Israel (at the beginning). Where?



For many centuries, the **value of money** was calculated by weight. The **shekel** was a “money weight”. It’s not always easy to determine today’s equivalent of these old measures and weights. The shekel probably weighed between 10 and 13 grams, depending on whether it was a royal shekel, a common shekel or a shekel of the sanctuary.



Giving thanks to God today also means bringing “offerings”.

Thanking God



The 12 princes bring precious vessels filled with meal offerings,

as well as a number of animals as a gift for the dedication of the altar. Bringing a silver bowl symbolises thankfulness for the redemption experienced by the believer.

Silver was paid as redemption money by each Israelite that was counted, so that he was allowed to live. The value of the blood of the Lord Jesus is much higher than that of silver and gold.

– Have you already thanked the Lord Jesus for your salvation? Or do you still have to make a U-turn and confess your sins, in order to experience salvation?



33. For a meal offering, fine flour was mixed with oil (v37). What is oil a symbol of? You read about it a week ago. 34. Does the lamb (v39) have anything to do with the Lord Jesus?



The **meal offering** is the only offering mentioned in Leviticus 1-5 that doesn't involve any blood. It points to the perfect life of Jesus. It consisted of fine flour (Leviticus 2:1): The Lord Jesus was perfect in His life – without any impurity or imperfection. In addition, the meal offering was anointed with oil (see question 33).



Thank the Lord Jesus daily for your salvation.

No useless repetition



You are probably wondering why the offering of each of the 12 princes is listed separately in exact detail, although all 12 bring exactly the same. Wouldn't it have been enough to list the 12 names in one verse?

Obviously not! There is no useless repetition for God. He values the offering of each individual so much that He doesn't only want to mention it for the first one, but for each one.

It's the same today: If you want to devote your life wholly to the Lord Jesus, you won't be the first one who has ever wanted to do this. But the Lord Jesus values this desire in you as much as He did with the very first one. For God, this is not repetition. – Are you prepared to give Him all of your life?



35. There are other occasions which appear to be only “repetitions”, for example the life of Hezekiah. Do you know how often it is described in the Bible?

36. The silver bowl weighed 70 shekels (v67). The number 7 occurs again and again in the Bible: What is its significance?



One pan of the offerings was of **gold**. Gold is a symbol of the glory of God. In the tabernacle, everything was made of gold. It is said of the New Jerusalem: She had “the glory of God” and this “city was pure gold” (Revelation 21:11+18).



To worship God also means to recognise His glory and to talk to Him about it.

God joins together



At the end of this chapter the Holy Spirit lists all the gifts of dedication again. Each of the princes could have said: "I'm bringing so little – can God really use it for the great, majestic sanctuary and especially for the whole nation?"

You must remember: God joins the gifts of the individuals together to form a whole. If you do something for the Lord Jesus, it may seem little compared to the many needs among the people of God. Is it really worth it? Yes, God joins together the work of all those who serve Him!

Moses was often in the sanctuary (v89). There he had fellowship with God. – You can also, figuratively, be "in the sanctuary" if you have fellowship with God and the Lord Jesus.



37. The nation of Israel consists of 12 tribes, and therefore there are 12 princes. You find the number 12 here in the passage about the offerings again and again. What is its significance?

38. What are the characteristics of the burnt offering? What is its symbolic meaning with regard to the death of the Lord Jesus?



In the Old Testament we read repeatedly of **dedications**: the tabernacle (Exodus 40); the altar (Exodus 29); the temple (1 Kings 8); and also the second temple (Ezra 6). Everything is for God and belongs to God – this is shown at the dedication.



It isn't important how great or little what you do for God seems to you. Just do it!

To enjoy fellowship



Leviticus 16 shows that only the High Priest was allowed to go into the Holiest, and this only once a year on the Day of Atonement. You can conclude from chapter 7:89 that there was one exception: Moses is often in the Holiest. There God speaks to Moses, and there Moses speaks to God. In other words, Moses has fellowship with God in the sanctuary. You may also, figuratively, be "in the sanctuary". That's the case if you have fellowship with God and with the Lord Jesus.



39. What do you imagine it means to be "in the sanctuary" today?

40. What is meant by the "ark of the testimony" (v89)?



In ancient times, **lamps** were nothing more than small flat bowls with a spout on the side where the wick was placed. These lamps were fed by oil. After two to three hours, the lamps had to be refilled with oil. Because the light of these lamps was not very bright, they had to be placed onto a lampstand either singly, or in multiples.

The **candlestick** of the tabernacle, golden and with seven arms, points to the person of Christ, the Light of the world. Today Christians should be a light for the Lord Jesus in the world.



Are you a light for the Lord Jesus?

Thorough cleansing



Before the Levites are able to start their service, they must be

cleansed by the sprinkling of the water of purification, the total removal of any body hair and the washing of their clothes (v7). Lastly, a number of sacrifices must be brought. It's the same today. If you want to serve the Lord Jesus, you must first be cleansed: Everything that comes from the flesh, the sinful nature (of which the hair is an illustration), must be removed, and your way of life (as illustrated by the clothes) must also be cleansed.

Any service is only possible because the Lord Jesus died on the cross for us.



41. Why do you think the Levites had to stop their service

at 50 years of age (v25)?
42. Were they then out of work?



Here you read of a **wave offering** (v21). It seems that

it describes an offering which had been put into the hands of the priest, who then moved them from side to side to "show" this offering to God.

Christ has died



Just as the Passover feast marked the beginning of the

exodus from Egypt, it also stands at the beginning of the actual journey through the wilderness, of which you read from chapter 10 onwards. The rules for the Passover feast have not changed during the 12 months since the exodus (v3).

In His mercy, God helps the Israelites: If anyone can't eat the Passover, not through their own fault (v10), he may eat the Passover one month later than originally planned.

It's the same today: God will show you ways in which you can cleanse yourself if you have become defiled. There is always a way for repentance and confession. Walk in it!



43. In which month and on what day was the Passover to be celebrated?

44. How can you become "defiled" as a Christian today?



The **Passover** (= pass over) (v2) of Exodus 12 was a

lamb which was killed instead of all the firstborn in the houses of the Israelites. 1 Corinthians 5:7 tells us that the Passover lamb points to the Lord Jesus, Who died for us on the cross of Calvary. There, He bore the judgment of all those who believe in Him.



You can only serve the Lord Jesus if you exercise self-judgment and confess your sins daily.



Have you already thought of your redeemer today? Have you thanked Him?

God leads His people



Now you get to know about two important things: the pillar of cloud

and of fire, and the trumpets. The pillar of cloud during the day shows the people where they should camp or where they should go. The pillar of fire takes on this job at night (vv15-23).

The two trumpets make it clear – depending on when they are blown – whether the congregation of Israel should gather, begin their journey or go into battle (v3+5+9). If only one trumpet is blown, only the princes should gather (v4). Just as at that time the pillar of cloud represented the presence of God among the people, nowadays the Holy Spirit lives among all believers, in the assembly (church). And as the people received instructions

through the trumpets, today the Bible shows believers what they should do.



45. How is it made clear to the people that they should

begin their journey or that they should camp?

46. What material are the trumpets made of?



The Word “**assembly**” (**church**) in the New

Testament is the translation of the Greek word “ecclesia”. It sometimes describes all believing Christians in one place, sometimes all believers alive at a certain point in time worldwide, and sometimes all Christians, beginning at Pentecost until the rapture.



The Bible is the perfect standard for your whole life!

Looking to the Lord Jesus



The time has come: The people start moving. 49 days after

the tabernacle was set up, the people begin their journey. They follow the pillar of cloud and are obedient to God's instructions.

It is nice to see that Moses wants to take his brother-in-law Hobab with him (you can also invite relatives to walk with God!). But the reason Moses gives is a bit strange: Hobab should be their “eyes” (v31). Had Moses forgotten that God wanted to lead them by the pillar of cloud? Only for a moment, though, it seems – as we soon see that it is the Ark of the Covenant to which Moses gives greatest significance (vv33-36).

– Who do you allow to guide you: relatives, your own eyes, or the Lord Jesus and His word?



47. Of whom and in what way is the Ark of the Covenant a

symbol?

48. The Ark went before the people. What was the distance between it and the people?



The **rear guard** (v25) consists of those who walk

right at the back. In the case of the people of Israel it was the tribes of Dan, Asher and Naphtali.



Don't trust in people, but in God!

No complaining



The people have just started their journey – and they have already

begun to complain. God's answer is judgment. Many of the people are killed. Sadly, things don't stop here. More complaining follows. The mixed multitude, travelling with Israel, was craving different food. And the rest of the people also remember with longing the good food in Egypt. Did they really forget so quickly how they were groaning and crying when they were still in slavery (Exodus 2:23)? – Do you know something of this? Everything your class mates are “allowed” to do seems to be attractive. But do you really want to return to what you did before you were converted? Don't you remember how sad and troubled you were?



49. Can you recognise what the people are actually complaining about (v1)?
50. Reading verse 2, you can notice that there is something missing in the people. What do you think God expects of His people in such a situation?



The **manna** (v7) is the food which God had prepared for the people of Israel for their wilderness journey. We know from John 6:32 that it points to the Lord Jesus Who had come from heaven in order to give eternal life to us. It further speaks of the daily food of a believer. As a Christian, you feed your spiritual life if you think about the Lord Jesus.



Before you start complaining, ask yourself what you can give thanks for!

Is the load too heavy?



The people don't stop complaining. This is getting too much, even for Moses. He can't stand it any more – or so he thinks. And he complains to God. Is his accusation justified? Hadn't God assured Moses that He would help him in everything (Exodus 3:12)? Maybe you have also tried to motivate your friends. Even if your efforts are unsuccessful, don't give up! Go to your Lord. Ask Him to help you. He will do it. God is gracious with Moses and wants to put 70 men at his side (v16). At the same time, God must punish the people because they have despised Him.



51. What's the problem with Moses? Why is the burden of the people too heavy for him (v14)?
52. God announces to Moses that He will give the people the desired meat. How does Moses react to this?



The “**bosom**” (v12) is the fold of a garment held together by a girdle. This fold also served as a kind of pocket, accessible through a slit in the garment. People used to carry all kinds of things in their bosom – shepherds even carried their young lambs.



Cast your burdens on God. He is ready to help you.

God's honour counts



God gives the 70 men of the same spirit that is on Moses

(v25). These begin to prophesy (v26). But two of them have not gathered with Moses and the other 68, despite God's instruction. Yet they still prophesy (v27).

Joshua doesn't want to allow this; he takes it to be contempt for Moses. However, we see again the humble disposition of Moses, who fights only for God's honour – not his own (vv28-29).

– Do you also sometimes defend someone you like? Or even yourself? Ask yourself the question whether this is zeal for the Lord Jesus. If it's only about you looking good, then don't defend yourself. It's only the Lord's honour that counts!



53. Can you think why God is angry with the people (v33)?

54. How much did a person gather who had gathered the least number of quails?



Quails seem to be the smallest of the birds that can be hunted. They served as food for the Israelites. At certain times they fly in large swarms, one to two metres above the ground.



Don't fight for yourself or another person – only fight for the Lord Jesus!

No envy!



A new problem: Miriam and Aaron are envious of Moses because

of his prominent position. They give his Ethiopian wife as a reason for their disapproval.

It is difficult to say whether they refer to Zipporah or a second wife of Moses. What is clear, though, is that Moses' brother and sister are envious of him. God answers by an act of judgment on Miriam, who becomes a leper. After Aaron has repented, God heals Miriam again – which is the first known case of someone being healed of leprosy in Israel.

As a Christian you are also in danger of being envious of the gifts of others, in spiritual things as well! This is sin and it mars fellowship with your Lord. Rejoice over everyone

who is used by the Lord Jesus. And just do what He wants you to do.



55. What is an important characteristic of

Moses?

56. Why and for how long do the people have to wait in Hazeroth until they can start their journey again?



The word **leprosy** in the Bible describes a variety of diseases.

Leprosy is described in detail in Leviticus 13-14. It is important for us today to know that leprosy is an illustration of sin. Leprosy leads to death – just as with sin.



Rejoice over everyone who is used by the Lord and has received gifts from Him.

Trust is good ...



The sins of the people multiply. In the last chapter it was envy,

leading to leprosy. The subject here is unbelief. Following God's instructions, Moses sends twelve men to Canaan in order to spy out the land (vv2-3). The people want to have an overview of the land they are going to conquer (Deuteronomy 1:22). Why didn't they just trust God, Who had told them that the land was good?

– Do you recognise this kind of behaviour in your own life? God promises that He wants to help you and be with you. But you don't really trust His promise 100%
If we are able to do something for ourselves, we sadly often don't wait on the guidance of the Lord Jesus.



57. Who actually wants the people to send out spies?

58. Are the spies able to tell after their journey whether the land is fertile?



You may wonder why it needed two men to carry the cluster of **grapes**, as we don't know of such big grapes in Europe. But the area around Hebron, where these grapes were cut off in the valley of Eshcol, is renowned for unusually large grapes.

To be faithful to God



After 40 days, the spies return into the wilderness.

They admit that the land is very fertile, but they complain bitterly about the giants in the land and their strong fortifications. As a result, all the people murmur against Moses and Aaron and want to return to Egypt. Only one of the spies – Caleb – opposes the others and trusts in the power of God. Later another one joins him – Joshua. But even together with Moses and Aaron they can't achieve anything as far as changing the people's mind is concerned. Maybe you are the only one at school or at work who is on the side of the Lord Jesus and the Bible. But being part of a majority doesn't matter. What matters is to be on the right side! Don't ever forget this!



59. What arguments do Caleb, Joshua, Moses and Aaron

bring up to persuade the people to go up into the land? 60. Why don't the people listen to the four men? Who influences them?



The **tearing of clothes** (v6) was a tradition in Israel,

which especially expressed sorrow (Joshua 7:6; Job 1:20) but also repentance (1 Kings 21:27) and abhorrence (Jeremiah 36:24). It is emphasised that the High Priest should not tear his clothes (Leviticus 10:6).



It's much better to wait than to act in impatience.



Be faithful to the Lord Jesus and true to your faith!

Confession – forgiveness



Because of the murmuring of the people, God appears in His

glory as judge. He wants to destroy the people. Only the intense prayer of Moses leads to God changing His plan. He only judges the responsible section of the people. None of those who are twenty years or older at the time are allowed to enter the land of Canaan. It is only because of Moses that the people are not destroyed immediately.

Moses' pleading achieves the result that God forgives the unrighteousness of the people (vv19-20). This reminds us of the Lord Jesus, Who alone was able to bring about forgiveness for the sins of His people, believers in Him, and has done so. Thank Him for it!



61. What reasons for the judgment of the people does God

mention?

62. Why was Caleb allowed to enter the land of Canaan?



Moses prayed to God for **forgiveness** (v19). Forgiveness

presupposes an honest confession. If you confess your sins to God, He will forgive you – and not only the sins you can remember, but all of them (1 John 1:9).



Have you already confessed your sins to the Lord Jesus? Don't wait till tomorrow!

Judgment – blessing



The judgment on the people is terrible:

- The 10 unfaithful spies must die immediately (v37).
- The people suffer serious defeat in their battle against the Amalekites and the Canaanites (v45).
- All those of at least 20 years of age have to die in the wilderness (v29).
- Those under 20 have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years before they can enter the land (v33).

The wilderness journey and the judgment upon the Israelites speak to everyone today who professes to be a Christian. At that time, there were some among the people of God who didn't reach the goal (the land of Canaan) because they were disobedient and unbelieving

– and those who don't believe and obey the gospel today will also miss the goal (heaven).



63. How do the people react to God's judgment

(v40)?

64. Do the people repent?



To join yourself outwardly to the people of God is not enough. Only those who personally accept the gospel message will reach "the goal".

God's grace



God has just had to exercise judgment. Many Israelites are

never going to see the land of Canaan, because of their unbelief. And just in this place, God inserts a chapter beginning with the phrase: "When you have come into the land you are to inhabit ..." (v2). This gives an impression of God's grace and mercy. He doesn't give up on anybody, and this is true today as well. Have you committed a serious sin, or do you find yourself in a crisis? You should know that God stands by you. He can't overlook sin, but He cares about you. That's why He doesn't allow you any peace until you have returned to Him. This is something to cling to.



65. The grain offering consisted of fine flour and oil (v4).

What is fine flour a symbol of?
66. What is a drink offering (v7)?



In the Promised Land, Canaan, the people were to

bring God an **animal sacrifice**. An animal was slaughtered and then burnt on the altar. These blood sacrifices speak symbolically of the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross. Beside these blood sacrifices, there were also sacrifices without blood, like the grain offering. These speak of the perfect life of the Lord Jesus.



God is faithful – He can't deny Himself.

Sin requires a sacrifice



In today's passage, God makes a difference

between "unintentional sin" and "presumptuous sin". For unintentional sins, there are sacrifices which are killed in place of the sinner. However, anyone who sins presumptuously has to be executed. There is no sacrifice for him.

Today, though, there is no sin so serious that the work of the Lord Jesus is not enough for it. If we come to Him in all sincerity and confess our sins, He will forgive us. Of course, it is very sad if you are a Christian and you sin on purpose. Is there a sin in your life that you commit again and again? Let go of it!



67. Why is it so bad that the man gathered wood on the Sabbath (v32)? Clue: Read Exodus 20:8-11.
68. Why is it necessary that the whole congregation stones him (v36)?



The Israelites were to make a **tassel** on the corners of their clothes. This was a kind of decoration and was made of blue thread. This was to help the Israelites to continually remember God's commandments. – You also should not forget the Word of God!



Every sin is forgiven, if there is an honest confession.

Jealousy and presumptuousness



In chapter 12 you read about Miriam and Aaron's envy.

Today you learn where jealousy leads to. Korah, Dathan and Abiram are dissatisfied with their tasks. Korah is a Kohathite and therefore has one of the noblest tasks anyway. But he wants to be a priest. It seems that Dathan and Abiram are envious of the position of Moses. They all rebel against Moses and Aaron and, in so doing, against God. As opposed to Miriam and Aaron, they don't repent. Because of that, their destruction is certain. It may happen to you that you envy someone because of their abilities or their position. If that's the case, confess your guilt.



69. What does it mean when Korah and his followers say that the whole congregation is holy (v3)? Think back on chapter 3!

70. What happens to the sons of Korah? Clue: You won't find the answer in today's passage.



There is holy **anger** and unholy anger. Moses' anger (v15) was holy anger before God. A believer can also express holy anger. But this can easily turn into fleshly anger, if you stop thinking exclusively of God's honour and personal emotions come into it. Therefore: "Be angry, and do not sin" (Ephesians 4:26).



If envy arises in your heart, make sure you are aware of it and confess this sin!

To turn away



God now assembles the congregation of Israel and

Korah's followers. He appears in His glory as a judge in order to execute judgment. In connection with that, He introduces a way of behaviour which is extremely important, even today: The congregation must turn away from the tents of the godless men – depart from them (v26), in order that they won't be judged with the bad crowd.

The Word of God calls this principle "sanctification" or "separation". The principle of 2 Timothy 2:19 remains true, even today. There, the old Apostle Paul explains to his young co-worker Timothy that everyone who belongs to God has to keep their distance from all that is evil.



71. Can you explain why Korah's followers had to appear with censers?

72. How can the people be saved from dying with Korah's followers?



The **pit** (or "**sheol**" in some translations) is the realm of the dead. The Old Testament doesn't make a distinction between Hades (the place where unbelievers are after their death) and Paradise (the place for believers after their death).



Still in this day, separation is God's principle by which you can avoid what is evil.

Learning from mistakes



The censers used by Korah's followers (v39) were to be

preserved. God wants to use them as a continual reminder of the presumptuousness of Korah. – Do you know moments in your life where God has used a significant event to make you aware of your wrong behaviour? Remembering this can help you not to commit the same sin again.

Have the people learnt from this experience? No! Now they accuse Moses and Aaron, saying that the judgment on Korah's followers is their fault. Only the remarkable intervention of Moses on behalf of the people and the intervention of the High Priest Aaron save the people.



73. In chapter 16, God twice orders Moses and

Aaron to turn away from the congregation of Israel. How do they both react to this?

74. How many Israelites die because they have murmured against Moses and Aaron?



Censers were used by the priests to offer incense on the golden altar of incense. On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest brought incense in these censers into the tent of meeting.



What have you learnt from the sins you have committed?

Grace keeps



Those who know the Bible well call this chapter the "heart"

of the book of Numbers. God confirms publicly the priesthood of Aaron. Only his rod brings forth buds. Life comes out of a dead piece of wood. This rod reminds us of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and the priestly service He now performs in heaven for us. He lives there to intercede for us and to save us through all difficulties.

The Israelites now realise how bad things are for them (vv12-13). But God has given them the service of the priest, and on the basis of this grace they will reach the goal. It's the same with us. No believer would reach the goal in heaven without the priestly service of the Lord Jesus.



75. Why does God want to publicly confirm the

priesthood of Aaron?
76. Where is Aaron's rod kept (v10)? Clue: Read Hebrews 9:4.



In Israel, **almonds** are one of the earliest fruits in spring. That means that the budding rod of Aaron is a pointer to Jesus Christ as "firstfruits" or "firstfruits of those that sleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20+23) – again a pointer to the resurrection.



Remember that only the risen Lord Jesus is able to bring you into heaven.

God supplies all need



The first seven verses of this chapter provide the answer to the question of the

people: "Shall we all utterly die?" (Chapter 17:13). God's clear answer is: "No! I have made provision for you. I have given you priests and Levites for service. And I will also supply enough food for the priests." If there is a problem, it isn't God's fault, but it is due to the failure of the people – their rebellion.

It's the same with us: You can blame yourself for many of your difficulties. But don't forget that the Lord Jesus is always at your side. He has provided for everything. Just trust Him!



77. What do you think it means that the priests should "bear the iniquity of the sanctuary" (v1)?

78. Who is an outsider (v4)?



The **heave offering** (v8) is a voluntary offering which was "heaved" for God or served as provisions for the Levites and priests. The materials brought by the people for the tabernacle were also counted as heave offerings (Exodus 25:2).



When in difficulties, trust in your Lord! He will help you, if you allow Him to.

God provides for His servants



The priests and Levites are not to have their own inheritance in the land of Israel.

But they don't need to worry, because they are going to be provided for by means of the "tithes" of the people. They themselves were to offer the tenth part of this to the Lord. Today every believer is a priest and a servant. Yet there are Christians who give up their secular job (for example, missionaries) in order to serve the Lord Jesus full time. They need financial support. And they themselves will give "the best" to the Lord.

– Have you ever given something of what has been entrusted to you for the work of the Lord Jesus?



79. The Levites and priests don't have a portion or inheritance among the children of Israel. And yet they do have a portion and inheritance: which one?

80. "But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Do you know where in the letter to the Hebrews you can find this verse? Clue: It's nearly at the end of the letter.



The people of Israel gave God **tithes**, i.e. the tenth part of the harvest and any other income was put at the disposal of the Levites and priests. Christians don't have such a legal obligation. Considering their personal responsibility, they should give to God liberally, voluntarily and gladly of their possessions (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).



Give the Lord Jesus and His servants the best of what you were given to own!

The red heifer



Chapter 19 of Numbers and the 16th chapter of Leviticus are

the central chapters of the respective books of the Bible. In Leviticus 16 you find the Day of Atonement. There the question is answered how it is possible that a holy God can live among a sinful people and how such people can approach Him. Chapter 19 here deals with the way God has provided for the people if someone has been defiled by contact with a dead body: It is by the sacrifice of a red heifer. This is very important during the wilderness journey, as there will have been many occasions on which someone died. It is noticeable that all those who have anything to do with the sacrifice of the red heifer become unclean. That shows

how serious defilement by sin is for a Christian.

– Are you conscious of how much the Lord Jesus had to suffer for the sins which you would commit as a believer?



81. What is done to the red heifer?

82. What is done to its ashes?



The **red heifer** which had been chosen for the cleansing was not allowed to display any imperfections and was never to have carried a yoke (v2). This speaks symbolically of the Lord Jesus, Who was completely perfect – Who didn't know the bondage of sin and therefore was able to become the unique sacrifice for cleansing from sin.



Open your eyes to how serious sins are in the eyes of God!

Purification



The Israelites were defiled by touching a dead person, or objects

that had been in contact with a dead body.

– What can you learn from that? As a Christian, you can be defiled by everything that is sinful. God doesn't want you to isolate yourself out of fear and to withdraw from the world like a monk. But He wants you to remain clean in your daily contacts, experiences and thoughts. And what if you have still defiled yourself? That's where "purification" comes in. With the Israelites, that took seven days. Although sin is forgiven at once, it takes some time until joy is restored.



83. Verse 13 describes a particular judgment over a certain person. Who is judged and why?

84. Which principle, which you find repeatedly throughout the Bible, is presented in verse 22?



Water is a symbol of the Word of God (Ephesians

5:26), and the slaughtered red heifer of the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross. For us, the application of the **water of purification** means this: By reading the Bible, the Lord Jesus shows me that He had to die for my sinful actions, for my unclean thoughts. This leads me to judge what is wrong, so that I can again enjoy fellowship with the Lord Jesus.



"Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." (2 Corinthians 7:1)

Moses fails



These verses continue the account of the wilderness

journey. Moses and Aaron's sister, Miriam, dies. And then something happens which is one of the most tragic events in this book: Moses, the man who is described as the meekest man on earth (chapter 12:3), loses his self-control and disobeys God (vv8+11-12). He is not allowed to enter the land because he doesn't speak to the rock, but strikes it. The closer a person is to God, the higher the standard that God applies. This is an important principle to remember. Despite all of this (murmuring of the people, Moses' sin), God blesses His people (He gives them water).



85. What kind of rod is it with which Moses strikes the

rock?

86. What is the reason that Moses and Aaron are disobedient and Moses strikes the rock?



It can be concluded from the New Testament that the

rock is a symbol of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4). In Exodus 17:6, Moses was to strike the rock: a symbol of Christ stricken by God on the cross. But now Moses was to speak to the rock, because Christ has died "once for sins, the just for the unjust" (1 Peter 3:18). God's judgment is so severe, because Moses spoils this illustration.



A deeper understanding and greater gifts mean also more responsibility.

The death of Aaron



The continuation of this chapter is also very sad.

The Edomites

don't allow the Israelites to journey through their land. You can't expect unbelievers and nominal Christians to be friendly to you when you take the side of the Lord Jesus. Then Aaron dies and his son Eleazar takes on the function of the High Priest. You may also have sorrowed by the graveside of a friend or close relative. But be assured that the Lord Jesus will never leave you. Always hold on to this knowledge.



87. Why shouldn't the Israelites go to war against

the Edomites and take their land away? Clue: You find the answer in the first few verses of Deuteronomy 2.

88. What is the other "great sin" which is recorded of Aaron? Clue: At the time, Moses was on Mount Sinai to receive the tablets of the law.



Edom is the derogatory name for Esau because

of his red-coloured hair and because he sold his rights of the firstborn for a meal of (red) lentils. The name Edom was later used for Esau's descendants. The area of the Edomites is situated on Mount Seir.



When friends leave you, remain close to the Lord Jesus!

Murmuring – again!



The 21st chapter marks the last great part of the wilderness

journey. Sadly, reading these verses, you won't come to the conclusion that the people have learnt anything from their failures. God has helped the Israelites time after time – you read this yet again in the first three verses. But what is their answer? Renewed murmuring, this time because of supposedly worthless food (v5). In judgment God sends fiery serpents which kill the people. Only by Moses' prayer for them and by looking at the bronze serpent can the people be saved.

– Don't you sometimes feel the same: discontented despite God's repeated help? May these verses serve as a warning to you. Remember: Thankfulness keeps you from stumbling.



89. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,

even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Do you know where in John's Gospel you can find this verse? 90. What do the Israelites mean by "worthless bread" (v5)?



The **bronze serpent** was a means for the Israelites to be saved

when they were bitten by a snake. The serpent being lifted up is a symbol of the Lord Jesus lifted up on the cross, where He was made sin for us so that we would be made the righteousness of God in Him.



Only the Lord Jesus can save you from eternal death. Take Him as your Saviour!

Refreshment and victory through God



Before the start of two further difficult battles, God gives

marvellous refreshment in the wilderness: The people don't have to ask for water because God Himself gives it to them. Water is a symbol of the Word of God – we need to be strengthened by the Word before we can be involved in spiritual battles.

Now the people fight against two powerful armies of the Amorites: against the army under King Sihon of Heshbon and against the army under King Og of Bashan. This victory becomes known everywhere (Joshua 2:10). Many people talk about it – but who joins himself to the true God of Israel?

It's the same today: It isn't enough to marvel over God's

actions. You must repent and confess your sins. Only in taking that step can you become a child of God.



91. Verses 17 and 18 talk about a song.

When did the people of Israel sing for the first time? 92. Deuteronomy 3:11 tells us that Og had a gigantic bed – with which he, so to speak, perished. What is the warning you can take from this?



Mount Pisgah (v20) is the mountaintop from which Moses

was permitted to see the land of Canaan (Deuteronomy 3:27). Another passage speaks of Mount Nebo. It appears that both belong to the highlands of Moab.



Beware of idleness!

God doesn't contradict Himself



In the next three chapters you meet one of the strangest

characters of the Old Testament: Balaam. He is a well known soothsayer and at the same time a prophet. Most of all he loves money. He is mentioned three times in the New Testament – each time as a warning.

The enemies of God's people have meanwhile grown afraid of Israel. That's why the Moabite Balak tries to "bribe" Balaam to do something against the Israelites. This works only on the second attempt, when he offers even more honour and money. You must be surprised that God gives His consent this second time. He does it so that Balaam himself will gain experiences and learn where

his self-willed thoughts lead him. – Have you ever had to have such bitter experiences?



93. Balaam is mentioned in the New Testament in 2 Peter 2:15 and Revelation 2:14. He is mentioned one other time. Do you know where?

94. Why is Balaam's action in verse 19 a challenge of God?



Soothsaying is an attempt to predict future events with magic or occult practices, or to influence events by such means. The Israelites were strictly forbidden by God to have anything to do with such things (Leviticus 19:26).



Keep your hands off anything to do with the occult!

Taught by an animal



You can divide Balaam's story in chapters 22-25 into the following

sections:

- Chapter 22:1-21: the debate between Balaam and Balak
- Chapter 22:22-41: the debate between Balaam and God
- Chapter 23-24: The debate between Balaam and the people from God's point of view
- Chapter 25: The debate between Balaam and the people in the way they actually live.

God uses an animal, a donkey, to teach Balaam a lesson. In your case, it may be unbelieving classmates who show you that you are doing something wrong. That's embarrassing! But it's also instructive. You do well to

take note of the accusations of unbelievers and allow them to touch your conscience.



95. What is the first talking animal in the Bible?

96. What do you think: Is Balaam's confession of guilt from his heart – is it honest (v34)?



It is the **Angel of the LORD** Who meets Balaam (v31). That is God Himself. This becomes clear, for example, from Genesis 22, where "LORD" and "Angel of the LORD" are used in turn.



If unbelievers correct you, accept it even if it hurts!

God blesses His people



In the next two chapters you read of four prophecies of Balaam. It is of

prime importance to see that Balaam finds himself in the wrong company. He had already eaten meat that had been offered to idols, which Balak had given him – an abomination in God's eyes. Remember: If you are a Christian, God wants you to have unmistakable boundaries, for example in your dealings with unbelievers. Read also 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. Balak wants Balaam to curse the people of Israel, who he considers to be a danger to him. But God doesn't allow this, because He watches over His people. So Balaam has to bless, even if the practical condition of the people is bad. But God sees the people, according to His plan, as one separated to Him from the nations – a people without number.



Bad friends invariably draw you away from God. Separate from them!



97. Balaam is a godless man – but still the LORD puts

a word into his mouth (v5). Later in Israel, there is a godless king who is not according to God's heart, of whom it is also said that he prophesied. Do you know which king that was? Clue: You read about him in 1 Samuel.

98. Long before Balaam, there was another man who received the message that the people would be like the dust of the earth in number. Who was that? Clue: You find it in Genesis.



On the one hand, **Balaam** desires money and fellowship with the sinful world; on the other he also wants a part with those who have been blessed. This doesn't work – and neither does it work in your life!

A righteous people



You can imagine that Balak is anything but satisfied with

the blessing of his enemy Israel. The world hates the people of God. It's still the same today. As a Christian you are a "foreign object" in this world. The world will never be satisfied with you, even if you conform to it. It notices that you don't belong. Balaam utters a second blessing over Israel: God's justification. God doesn't see unrighteousness in His people (v21) – even though the people committed and still commit one sin after the other! As a Christian, you can know that you have been justified on the basis of the work of the Lord Jesus and that therefore no one can accuse you (Romans 8:33-34). You

are righteous – as far as your position before God is concerned. Make sure your practice is consistent with it!



99. Which event is often mentioned when the history

of the people of Israel is considered (vv21-22)?

100. Who is going to be on the top of mount Pisgah soon after (v14)?



The New Testament shows that **Balaam** does not remain

alone with his evil: There are those who follow his foolish ways (2 Peter 2:15), have given themselves up to his error (Jude 11) or have taught his doctrine (Revelation 2:14).



Live your life in righteousness – as someone who has been made righteous!

Order and beauty



In the meantime, Balaam notices that sorcery is not possible now.

However, we don't read that he is sorry for his previous behaviour and repents.

– How about you? Don't allow your curiosity to cause you to be involved in occultism! Confess such sins immediately and pray for help to avoid it at all costs.

In this third prophecy Balaam speaks of the beauty and order of the people of Israel. That's how God sees it. It is also important for Christians to see the beauty in their brothers and sisters which God has given them in Christ.



101. As what kind of text would you especially describe this third prophecy?

102. Balaam mentions two animals which are also referred to in the second prophecy. Which ones are they?



In the Bible, the term “**prophecy**” means:

- speaking from the presence of God. The prophet is the mouthpiece of God
- foretelling of future events.



Don't allow your curiosity to cause you to be involved in something evil!

Messiah Himself



Now follows the fourth and last prophecy of Balaam. It is shocking to see such a gifted man who doesn't have genuine life from God. Your great abilities are also of no value if you don't believe in the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour! At the end, Balaam sees the coming of Messiah, the star Who will crown the glory of Israel. In fact, the Messiah, the Christ (that's the Greek word for Messiah), has already come. But He was rejected and killed. Yet He will appear once more, as the Lord of lords and King of kings.



103. Who is meant by “Him” at the beginning of verse 17?

104. Who is meant by “Edom”?



If “God **the Most High**” is mentioned in the Old

Testament, you can be certain that it refers to the future Millennium. God is called by that name for the first time in Genesis 14:18, in connection with Melchizedek, who is a picture of the King and Priest, Jesus Christ, in the reign of peace.

The greatest glory of the people of God is their Lord: Jesus Christ!



“Worship Him.” (Psalm 45:11)

Sexual immorality and idol worship



Balaam has disappeared from the scene. We read only later

that he gave a very effective suggestion to Balak who had hired him (chapter 31:16): to invite the Israelites to eat sacrifices offered to idols and to commit sexual sins along with them.

The end result of fellowship with the world will be idol worship and sexual immorality – sin. Fight against these developing in your life!

It's good if there are such people as Phinehas, who take a stand for God. – Are you known as such a one who takes God's Word seriously in everything, and stands up for the truth and, in doing so, helps others?



105. What is "Baal of Peor" (v5)?

106. What is God's promise for Phinehas – and Who is he a type of?



At the time of this act of faith

Phinehas must have been a young man. If you remember that he became High Priest at the end of the time of the conquest of Canaan (Joshua 24:33) – he was the grandson of Aaron and the son of Eleazar – and that he is also mentioned in the Book of Judges, he can't have been very old at the time described here. Even as a young person you can be an example!



Even if you are young, be an example like Phinehas!

A new test



Now follows an important test for the people. God instructs Moses

to count the people again. Has their number increased? Or has it remained the same?

For you it is also important to check from time to time: "Am I still close to my Lord? Have I grown spiritually? Or has my growth been stagnant? Have I even gone backwards? Has my time spent in prayer decreased?" The Lord Jesus wants you to be a happy and useful disciple. For this you need these regular check-ups! The Bible says to "examine" yourself.

Although two of the leaders in Korah's revolt were Reubenites, the tribe has only "shrunk" by 6%

The sin of this revolt was so serious that God has to mention it again here.



107. Which chapter mentions the first counting of the

people?

108. By how many people has the tribe of Reuben decreased compared to the first count?



The **sons of Korah** play an important role in the Bible.

Their descendants were singers in the temple at the time of David and Solomon. In addition they wrote 11 psalms, one of them being Psalm 45, the wonderful psalm about the King of Israel, the Lord Jesus. Why didn't they die with their father? Because they took a stand for God!



Have you got to know the Lord Jesus better recently?

More or less



Every single tribe is counted. Just imagine Moses and Eleazar

walking from one tribe to another. Everyone's waiting in anticipation: Has our number grown, or decreased? We can apply this to today: The Lord Jesus examines our spiritual condition.

In the count of the people you can calculate for yourself that the tribe of Simeon now numbers 37,100 men fewer than at the beginning, while Manasseh, as an example, has 20,500 more. This is food for thought.



109. Which ones of God's promises can you see as partly fulfilled in the tribe of Judah? Read Jacob's blessing for Judah in Genesis 49:8-11.

110. What is special about the family of Zelophehad (v33)?



The tribe of **Judah** was the largest tribe, at the first count as well as at the second. From it would come King David and the other kings. The Lord Jesus could also trace His human family tree back to Judah.



Confession of sins and departing from them is the precondition for spiritual growth.

Resting



While the tribe of Manasseh has greatly increased, the tribe of Ephraim has suffered a marked loss. Is that the reason why the tribe of Manasseh is now counted before the tribe of Ephraim? Because as far as the order of the count is concerned, this is the only difference to the first time the people were counted.

A further difference to the first count is that chapter 26 also mentions the families. Isn't that designed to point us to the fact that God knows the family-name of each individual who is going to enter the land? Because those who are counted here are the same ones who, soon after, will enter the land of Canaan.

In the same way, the Lord Jesus knows every individual

who is on their way to heaven today. – Are you one of them?



111. What is the general trend (apart from the tribe of Levi)? Has the number of Israelites increased or decreased? Read one verse further than today's passage. 112. Which tribe has the fewest people? Clue: Get an overview of the chapter up to verse 50.



Ephraim and Manasseh are sons of Joseph (Genesis 48:17-20). When Jacob blesses his sons, Ephraim – the younger – receives more blessing from God than Manasseh. But the condition for receiving the blessing is obedience towards God.



It's the same with you: God can bless you if you are obedient! What matters is your faithfulness!

Inheritance and reward



The count is nearly finished. It is not to be dismissed as

being of no importance, as it determines the size of the inheritance in the land of Israel. In the same way, your life today decides how great a reward you will receive at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10).

The Levites are also counted. They have increased by 4.5% As with the Reubenites, their past is not passed over quietly. Here it is the death of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron. God never forgets when a man rebels against Him and doesn't repent. But neither does He forget those who faithfully take His side!

There are only two men who saw Egypt and who are also going to see Canaan: Joshua

and Caleb. – God will never forget your faithfulness!



113. What kind of inheritance do the Levites receive?

114. Where does the count take place?



In the Old Testament you come across the idea of a “**lot**” again and again (v56). The first occurrence is in Leviticus 16 in connection with the Day of Atonement. Proverbs 16:33 tells us that God guides the outcome of the lot in such a way as is according to His thoughts. That was the way men asked God for guidance. Christians don't cast lots any more because they are led by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.



You are working for your reward now. Once you are in heaven, it will be too late!

Activity of faith



These five women are really a motivating example! Since

they don't have a brother, the family of their father is not entitled to an inheritance in Israel.

They don't agree with that. They want to have an inheritance and they want to keep that inheritance for their father.

Be encouraged to claim your inheritance – the things you find in the Bible – for yourself and defend it! A woman is not disadvantaged. On the contrary! As far as energy of faith is concerned, she can be an example for others.



115. To which tribe did the five daughters of

Zelophehad belong?
116. What did the five women say about their father?



The Old Testament **inheritance laws** are very different

from what is common today. The land – the inheritance – belonged to the family, not to the individual. The oldest son received a part that was twice as large as that of his brothers: this was his right of the firstborn (Deuteronomy 21:17). If the man didn't have any sons, the inheritance was passed on to his daughters. If he didn't have any children, his brothers or nearest relatives received it.



Energy of faith is rewarded by God!

A successor



Moses now has to face an important moment: God tells him that his

death is imminent. It is to be admired with what selflessness Moses thinks of the people. He immediately asks God to give the Israelites a new leader.

It isn't surprising that it is Joshua who is chosen by God to be Moses' successor. He is the servant of Moses. He is the one who didn't leave the tent of meeting when the people sinned in the matter of the golden calf. He was even with Moses on the mountain. As a young man, he led the people of Israel in the battle against Amalek. And so on ...

The Lord Jesus wants to use you for His people: Start from early on to read the Bible and to be busy for God in little things. Faithfulness counts!



117. What is the reason that Moses is not allowed to enter the land?

118. So far God had been speaking to the people through Moses, not through the High Priest. What is going to change now (v21)?



It is Moses' desire that the people shouldn't be like **sheep** without a shepherd (v17). You can find this expression in the Bible on a number of occasions. Jesus sees the people "like sheep not having a shepherd" (Mark 6:34). That's why He came – as the Good Shepherd Who gives His life for the sheep. Joshua is therefore a type of the Lord Jesus Himself.



You set the course for your later spiritual life while you are still young!

Something for God



In the next two chapters, a whole range of sacrifices are mentioned, and which have to be brought at regular times – daily, weekly, monthly or on feast days. The special feature of these offerings is that they are to be offered "as a sweet aroma to the LORD".

The offerings always speak of the Lord Jesus. The typical meaning presented in these offerings is not that we are saved by the Lord Jesus, but that He in every aspect brings joy to God.

A sacrifice has to be brought every morning and every evening. The work of the Lord Jesus, on the other hand, is a once for all work (Hebrews 10:11-12). It speaks before God continually – from evening to morning and again to evening.

Its effect is eternal. Worship God for it!



119. What is meant by an "offering made by fire" (v8)?
120. In what way is the offering food for God (v2)?



The **beginning of months** (v11) is the first day of the year.

This beginning has changed from before the time of the Passover – now it's the month Abib. Depending on the year, it corresponds to our March or April. On this day a sacrifice was to be brought. You can also especially praise God at the beginning of a year, that He has brought you through the past year and that He will continue to carry you through the current one.



Remember that the Lord Jesus lived, and gave His life, to bring joy to God.

Feasts for God



Verses 16-31 deal with three feasts, which are:

- The Passover of the LORD (v16): It points to the Lord Jesus who died as a substitute for believers.
- The feast of unleavened bread (v17): It lasted for seven days and symbolises the whole life of a believer after their conversion: a life lived in holiness!
- The Feast of Weeks (v26): The name indicates that this is the feast of Pentecost and is directly linked to the feast of firstfruits. Christ is the firstfruits – and all who believe in Him are, as He is, fruit for God.



121. Why do we always read about sacrifices in the Old

Testament? Why does God emphasise them so much? 122. In which letter in the New Testament are the Old Testament sacrifices mentioned again and again?



The **burnt offering** (v19) points to the aspect of the work of

the Lord Jesus which was only for God. Of course, the Lord Jesus has redeemed us. But His foremost reason was to glorify God. He wanted to fulfil God's will. So He died on the cross as a sweet aroma to God.

Israel finds their way back



In these verses, three further feasts of the LORD are

presented:

- The feast of trumpets (v1): It is a symbol of God calling back His unfaithful people one day. They will again be His people.
- The Day of Atonement (v7): The Lord Jesus returns, and the people of Israel will realise that they have crucified the Lord Jesus and will repent.
- The Feast of Tabernacles (v12): Then the people will share in the joy of the Millennium through the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

The feasts here are presented from the point of view of God, Who will be completely satisfied through all this.



123. On certain feast days, no “customary work”

was allowed to be done. On which day of the week were the Israelites generally not allowed to work?

124. What is the sin offering a symbol of?



With a burnt offering, a meal offering was always

offered as well. The **meal offering** (v3) points to the perfect, pure life of Jesus. The Lord Jesus could only accomplish the work on the cross because He Himself was and lived without sin, pure and perfect.



The work of the Lord Jesus is valid for all eternity.



God rejoices over every sinner that repents.

It's going downhill



You have again come to a chapter which, as it seems, is full of repetition, just like chapter 7. But God has His reasons for everything that is recorded in the Bible. Remember this, even if some may tell you something else! The Bible is the inspired Word of God. That means that you can be absolutely sure that it is God's message to you – word for word!

This passage deals with the eight sacrifices on the eight days of the feast of tabernacles. The number of bulls offered decreases each day. This may be because this feast points us to the Millennium, where there will be more and more people who will be subject to the Messiah merely out of fear (Psalm

18:45), but who are not real believers.



125. Why does God emphasise repeatedly that the animals for sacrifice should be without blemish?

126. Did the people have only prescribed sacrifices?



The **bull** is one of those animals which were sacrificed as a burnt offering as well as a peace and sin offering. It is a symbol of strength (Proverbs 14:4). The Lord Jesus has offered Himself to God with all His strength.



Remember: The Bible is inspired by God, word for word!

The oath



Today's subject is voluntary vows and oaths.

Note that the vow of a man cannot be reversed. On the other hand, the vow of a woman can be reversed by the husband or father – being the responsible person for his house. The person concerned has to take her vow seriously – she herself can't take anything back.

Even today, it is according to God's thoughts that the man is the head of the woman (1 Corinthians 11:3). He presides over his family and keeps his children in submission (1 Timothy 3:4). That's the God-given responsibility of a husband and a father. Do you make it easy for him by displaying the right attitude as son, daughter or wife?



127. Should Christians confirm what they say by an

oath?

128. "When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; ... pay what you have vowed – better not to vow than to vow and not pay." Do you know where to find these verses?

Clue: See Ecclesiastes 5.



Jesus Christ gave Himself willingly. Thank Him for it!

Revenge



The people of Israel had to take revenge on the Midianites, who had enticed the people to sin. This is a special battle – not a battle for conquering. This becomes clear by the fact that it isn't Moses or Joshua who leads the army but the priest, Phinehas. This battle concerns the holiness of God and the restoration of the purity of the people.

You read about the sad end of Balaam (v8). That's what happens to someone whose association with God is merely outward!

The warriors are not consistent in their killings. They allow the reason for their fall – the women – to live. Remember to get rid of the roots of a sin! Otherwise it will easily become another occasion for sin.



129. Why is Balaam mentioned again in this chapter?

130. Which offering does Moses refer to in verse 20 when he speaks of “purifying”?



Revenge was something that God had ordered in the Old Testament when someone had done something wrong or had attacked the rights of God. But for a Christian the following is true: “do not avenge yourselves, ... ‘Vengeance is Mine, ...’ says the Lord” (Romans 12:19).



Don't take revenge yourself, but commit yourself to Him Who judges righteously (1 Peter 2:23).

Grace despite failure



It is surprising that God shows so much grace in respect of

this war of revenge, which is necessary because of the sin of the people. The people carry away much plunder.

If you are consistent in judging the results of sinful motives in your life, you will find that you will reap blessing.

Women who are still virgins are allowed to be taken as part of the plunder.

Watch your heart! Don't fall in love with an unbeliever – even if you think it's very likely that he or she is going to be converted! The Lord Jesus shows you His will, especially in such an important matter.



131. What has to go through the fire first before it is purified with water?

132. Why is the tribute to the LORD called a “heave offering” (v41)?



“And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are fetters.” (Ecclesiastes 7:26)

Gratitude for protection



It's good to see that the officers of the people are grateful. They

notice that in their battle against Midian they have not lost one single man – a miracle! As a response to this protection, the officers want to give God a voluntary offering. God gladly accepts it through Moses and Eleazar. You have probably also experienced God's special protection. Don't forget to thank and praise Him for it. God has a right to such thanks. He wants to receive it from you as a voluntary offering. But God doesn't only want "sacrifices of praise", but He also rejoices when you make material sacrifices (Hebrews 13:15-16).



133. How much gold has been brought as a heave offering altogether?

134. How many kilograms of gold is that?



In the Old Testament you read again and again of the "**congregation**" or "**assembly**". This doesn't mean the same as a New Testament assembly (congregation, church – Greek: "ecclesia"). This didn't exist in the Old Testament. What is meant is just the sum of the Israelites, or a getting together of the people.



Do you have an open wallet – not simply for your own desires, but for the Lord Jesus to use?

Good or bad example?



Two tribes approach Moses with the request to remain east

of the Jordan River. This place seems to be just right for their cattle. God conquered the enemies here, too, didn't He? That's the reason they ask why they couldn't stay there. Moses tells these tribes that their behaviour will have an influence on the other tribes. They may become discouraged. You should remember the same: Whatever you do, it influences your surroundings, either for good or for bad – at school with your unbelieving class mates, and among other Christians, your believing friends. Make sure you are a good example!



135. Reuben and Gad came up with this idea together. It seems that they had discussed this subject previously. Can you think why these two tribes were able to speak together a lot? Clue: Remember chapter 2:10ff. 136. Why is Moses' reaction so severe?



"**This side**" and "**the other side**" are expressions which you will read again and again – from this chapter onwards right into the Book of Joshua. The position of the people in relation to Jordan is important in order to understand this expression correctly. Now the people were still this side of Jordan – i.e. east of it. The land of Canaan, not yet conquered, was therefore "the other side". Later, from the point of view of the land, it is the other way round.



Are you content with less than what God has intended for you?

The families are left on their own



The men of Reuben and Gad are prepared to go to Canaan,

together with the rest of the people, to free it from the enemies. During that time they won't be with their families. Moses accepts their offer – not because he really thinks it's good, but because God doesn't forbid it.

However, the soldiers of both tribes will leave their families on their own for many years. Who will care for them? Who will bring up the children? That's the price for their selfish act. God had intended something better for them. Much later, these two and a half tribes on this side of Jordan will be the first to be taken into captivity by the Assyrians.



137. Why does half the tribe of Manasseh stay there

as well (v33)?

138: What does sunrise (v.19) mean?



Animal herds were usually kept out in the open. During the

night they were kept in **folds** (v24), i.e. walled or fenced, but not covered, shelters. Sometimes watch towers were built near folds in order to have a better overall view.

Looking back



The first 49 verses list all the places in the wilderness where the people

of Israel had camped. We read of 41 stages. Just a little less than half of these places are not listed in detail here in Numbers, but in the Book of Exodus.

You get the impression that God – and also Moses – reviews all these places at the end of the desert journey. – Isn't this also an encouragement for you to review your life from time to time? Where have you dishonoured God? And where have you honoured Him? What consequences has this had for your personal life with the Lord Jesus?



139. Do you know what happened in Marah (v9)?

140. What happens in Rephidim (v 14)? Clue: You read about it in connection with Moses' serious sin.



The expression "**the children of Israel**" (v1) was another

name for the people of Israel. Israel was the name given to Jacob by God (Genesis 32:28). He was the father of twelve sons who are the forefathers of the whole nation. Therefore, later it wasn't just the twelve sons, but the whole people who were called "children of Israel".



The family is the first place for mission and service!



Take time to look back and see the way the Lord has worked in your life.

Driving out – destroying



God now commands Moses to encourage the people to drive

out all the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. It is especially important to destroy the idols and places of idol worship. God warns the people not to spare the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. Otherwise they and their practices would be a continual temptation and danger for them.

It's the same in your life. If you don't deal with the root of individual sins, they will again and again come up and torment you – like thorns. Destroy the sin – root and branch – by confession and repentance! The Lord Jesus will help you to avoid these things if you ask Him to.



141. Can you think of a city which the Israelites conquered in a very special way? Clue: See Joshua 6.

142. In the New Testament you can read of a man who received a thorn (v55) for his flesh, not because he had sinned, but so that he wouldn't sin. Who is he?



Idolatry is a sin which is condemned in nearly every book in the Old Testament. People would bow down before images of wood, stone or other materials, instead of worshipping the only true God. At the end of his first letter, John also warns of idolatry. For you today, idolatry might be seen as other people or other things (for example money, fashion, a hobby or a computer) being more important to you than the Lord Jesus.



Deal with the root of your sin: Confess it and leave it!

Using energy



After looking back in chapter 33, a look into the future follows.

God had promised the people that He would bring them into the land of Canaan. After 40 years – instead of 11 days – they would now enter the Promised Land and take possession of its blessings. As a Christian you are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Ephesians 1:3): You have eternal life, you possess the Holy Spirit, you are a child of God, and many more ... And yet you must do something: Get an understanding of what God has given you, so that you can enjoy it and live your life in accord with it. That will mean battles! It demands energy! It's a challenge!



143. What is the salt sea (v3) called today? 144. What is the great sea (v6)?



The **four directions** (north, south, east and west) were of great importance to the Israelites with regard to their enemies: From the north came the King of the North (Assyria, today especially Iraq/Syria). From the south came the King of the South (Egypt). From the west, there will one day come supposed help (Europe). And from the east comes the real help, the returning Messiah.



Be occupied with the blessings of the Word of God. And live in them!

Finding refuge



God instructs Moses to give 48 cities to the Levites, out of

all the cities of Israel. He even determines the size of these cities. Today, in the same way, God makes sure that His servants are provided with sufficient material things, as much as they need. The Lord Jesus wants to use you for that too. You may give materially for the work of the Lord Jesus and for brothers and sisters in the faith who are active in the work.

Six of the 48 cities of the Levites are designated as cities of refuge. People can flee to them if they have killed someone else unintentionally. There, they are safe from the avenger of blood.



145. Why isn't it sufficient to have cities of refuge in the

land of Canaan?

146. Who lives in the cities of refuge?



The **cities of refuge** have a spiritual meaning. Every

person faces death and judgment. But God has given us a city of refuge: the Lord Jesus. We can take refuge in Him. If you have accepted Him as your Saviour, you have an anchor in heaven which no one can remove (Hebrews 6:18-20).

On purpose or not?



God explains carefully who has a right to flee and who hasn't.

Today's passage can also be explained prophetically, i.e. with a view to the future. The Jews would later kill the Lord Jesus. But because Jesus prayed for forgiveness for the people, despite terrible sufferings on the cross (Luke 23:34), God does not consider the nation to have committed murder. They have the chance to flee God's judgment. Therefore a number of Jews will take refuge in the Lord Jesus in the future time of tribulation. In that way they will be preserved from the judgments which God will bring over the earth and they will, in the end, take possession of their inheritance.



147. Why should the land of Israel (Canaan) not be defiled?



In the Old Testament, as well as in the New, you read again and again of **witnesses**.

For a testimony to be accepted it was necessary that at least two witnesses should confirm a matter. It's the same today: In order to be able to come to a judgment, two witnesses are needed. Remember this important principle when someone comes to you with something negative concerning another person.



Have you found eternal refuge – salvation – in the Lord Jesus?



It takes two witnesses to confirm a matter. Don't rely on a single testimony!

Holding fast



Chapter 36 is something like an appendix. Again, the subject is

the daughters of Zelophehad. God has rewarded their faith (chapter 27). But now the tribe of Manasseh sees the danger that they may lose the land of the five women if these are to marry men from other tribes. God therefore commands the five women to marry men from their own tribe. In this way, the land belonging to the tribe of Manasseh is preserved. God shows that the personal responsibility of the five women and the responsibility of the people – here of the tribe of Manasseh – are never opposed to each other. Both have to be considered. It's the same today: Your personal actions can never be in opposition to the unity

of the people of God and their collective responsibility. Remember that in everything you do!



148. The daughters of Zelophehad should get married.

Are they allowed to decide who to marry?



Christians are no longer under the **commandments** of

the law (v13). They have been called to liberty (Galatians 5:13). This doesn't mean that you can do what you want! Rather it means that now you may do what pleases the Lord Jesus and you are able to ask in every situation what He wants of you. That's not law, but joy!



**Live your Christian life in liberty
with real joy – walking with the
Lord Jesus!**

[illegible]

Numbers Number puzzle

You've probably noticed that the book of Numbers is full of numbers. The numbers in parentheses show you the chapter where you will find the answer.

1. How many men able to go to war were there in the tribe of Judah during the first census (1)?
2. How many belonged to the forces of Dan (2)?
3. How many numbered Levites were there (3)?
4. How many people were still left after the redemption of the firstborn (3)?
5. How many numbered Levites were there between the age of 30 to 50 (4)?
6. How many animals did each leader bring for the dedication of the altar (7)?
7. According to Moses, how many Israelites had made their journey through the wilderness on foot (11)?
8. After how many days did the twelve spies return to the congregation (13)?
9. How many men died in the fire that came out from the Lord (16)?
10. How many Israelites died as a cause of Korah's sin (except the most inner circle of his company) (17)?
11. What price did the Israelites have to pay for each firstborn of men and of unclean animals (18)?
12. How many times did Moses hit the rock (20)?
13. How many times did Balaam's donkey turn aside out of the way (22)?
14. How many altars was Balak supposed to build for Balaam (23)?
15. How many Israelites died because they messed around with the daughters of Moab (25)?
16. By how many men able to go to war did the tribe of Judah increase during the wilderness journey (26)?
17. How many soldiers from each tribe went to war against Midian (31)?
18. How old was Aaron when he died (33)?
19. How many cities did the Levites inhabit (35)?



**Transfer your answers
into the addition table
on the next page.**

Numbers Number puzzle

1	■	□	□	□	□	□	□
2	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
3	■	□	□	□	□	□	□
4	■	■	■	□	□	□	□
5	■	■	□	□	□	□	□
6	■	■	■	■	□	□	□
7	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
8	■	■	■	■	□	□	□
9	■	■	■	□	□	□	□
10	■	□	□	□	□	□	□
11	■	■	■	■	■	□	□
12	■	■	■	■	■	□	□
13	■	■	■	■	■	□	□
14	■	■	■	■	■	□	□
15	■	□	□	□	□	□	□
16	■	■	□	□	□	□	□
17	■	■	□	□	□	□	□
18	■	■	■	□	□	□	□
19	■	■	■	■	□	□	□
	□	□	□	□	□	■	□

Add up the numbers. The marked digit of the result show you both the chapter and the verse of an important Bible passage from the First Epistle of John

Facts and Figures

Author:

John

Time of Writing:

Shortly before the end of the 1st century AD

Place of Writing:

Probably Asia Minor (Ephesus)

Addressees:

All people

Topic:

Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God

Peculiarities:

The Gospel according to John was probably the last book of the Bible written

«For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.»

John 3:16

Structure

Chapter 1:1-18

Introduction: The Word

Chapter 1:19-12:50

Jesus' public service

- The Life (chapters 3-7)

- The Light (chapters 8-12)

Chapter 13:1-17:26

His service towards the disciples

- The Love (chapters 13-17)

Chapter 18:1-20:31

Death and Resurrection

Chapter 21:1-25

Conclusion

How it started:

The Apostle John wrote this Gospel just before the end of the first century, when some false doctrines concerning the Lord Jesus had already started appearing. The Gospel of John emphasises that the Lord Jesus is God – God the Son.

The other three Gospels were already in existence when John wrote his, so that he could assume that they were known.

John never mentions his own name. He calls himself “the disciple whom Jesus loved” or “the other disciple”.

What it's all about:

John speaks much in his Gospel – as well as in his letters – about the three big “L”s: Life, Light and Love. This is all in connection with the person of the Son of God.

The Man Jesus Christ is at the same time the eternal God, Who could say of Himself in the Old

Testament: “I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:14). He could also say: I am “the bread of life”, “the light of the world”, “the door of the sheep”, “the good shepherd”, “the resurrection and the life”, and “the way, the truth, and the life” (6:35, 8:12, 10:7+11, 11:25, 14:6).

While the other Gospels tell us much about the deeds of the Lord Jesus, the Gospel of John records mainly His sayings. Of the 30 miracles reported elsewhere, John describes only the feeding of the 5,000, but he mentions six others, which are not mentioned anywhere else. However, he doesn't call them miracles, but “signs”. The reason is recorded in chapter 20:30-31: “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

How about today?

God wants everyone to believe in His Son so that they don't perish but have eternal life. You should be more and more impressed by the greatness of His person: He is God!



First and foremost, John's Gospel describes Jesus Christ as the Son of God.



God wants you to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

God becomes man



The Lord Jesus is “the Word” which was from the beginning. As far

back as we human beings are able to think, the Son of God was already there (vv1-2). He was not created; He is the One Who has created everything (v3).

And this mighty Creator enters His creation: Jesus Christ becomes man, lives among men and shows what grace and truth are (v14). But His creatures reject Him (v10); not even His people Israel want to have Him (v11). And yet there are some who accept the Lord Jesus into their lives and by doing so become children of God (v12).

Still today, everyone who is confronted with the Lord Jesus has the same two possibilities: Either to refuse Him or to make Him the centre of their life.



1. What task does John the Baptist have (v7)?
2. What does the statement of John the Baptist in verse 15 mean?



You are a creature of God. But are you also a child of God?

The testimony of John



You can learn much from John the Baptist. He speaks little of himself but much of the Lord Jesus. He considers himself to be “a voice” to call people to repentance, so that they are ready to accept the Christ of God. Those who repent are baptised by John (vv19-28). Then something amazing happens: John sees Jesus coming towards him. He can't keep quiet! He speaks of what the Lord Jesus does: He takes away sin and baptises with the Holy Spirit. People can't solve the problem of sin, but Jesus Christ will, on the basis of His sacrifice on the cross, eliminate sin from of the universe. People can baptise only with water, but the Son of God baptises with the Holy Spirit (vv29-34).

- When did you last talk about the Lord Jesus and about what He did on the cross?



3. Today's passage mentions three times that John bore witness or testified of something. In which verses do you find these?



John the Baptist announced the baptism of the **Holy Spirit**. The Lord Jesus did the same after His resurrection in Acts 1:5, and added that this would happen after a few days. The baptism itself took place on the day of Pentecost – the Holy Spirit came to earth (Acts 2:1-2). Through this unique event the assembly or church of God, the body of Christ, was formed.



Are you a testimony for the Lord Jesus?

To seek and to find



At In the Old Testament, the coming of the Messiah was announced to the Israelites. They expected Him; they were looking for Him. Andrew and Philip find Him in the Person, Jesus Christ (vv41+45). As a result they both get up and look for others who they can lead to acquaintance with this wonderful Person. Andrew finds his own brother Simon, and Philip finds Nathanael (vv41+45). That's just the way it is: Those who have found the Lord Jesus look for others who want to follow Him as well. And the best place to start is in your immediate surroundings! On the one hand it is true that people seek Jesus and may also find Him. On the other hand, it is also true that the Lord Jesus

Himself seeks and finds. That was the case with Philip (v43).



4. Where does Philip find Nathanael?
5. Why is Nathanael first of all sceptical when he hears about Jesus? And what arguments does Philip use to convince him?



“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
(Luke 19:10)

Running out of wine



The positive thing about this wedding celebration is that the Lord Jesus is invited (v2). It's negative that the wine runs out. An embarrassing situation! Mary addresses the right person with that problem: She tells Jesus (v3). However, He says to her that the time for the public display of His glory had not yet come (v4). Mary accepts this and tells the servants: “Whatever He says to you, do it” (v5)! These are the last words which the Bible reports of Mary, the mother of Jesus. A remarkable “legacy”! Then the Lord Jesus turns water into wine – and a good one, too (v10). Yes, everything the Creator does is very good (Genesis 1:31).



6. Approximately how many litres of water does the Lord Jesus turn into wine?
7. What does this miracle show us?



Wine in the Bible is often a symbol of joy. Psalm 104:15 tells us that wine makes the heart of man glad. John 2 reports that the Lord Jesus ensures that there is wine at the wedding. This points us to the fact that He can and will give joy. The condition on your part, however, is that you do what He says!



The Lord Jesus will bring real joy into your life!

Eaten up by zeal



The Passover Feast is on! Many Jews travel to Jerusalem. Not all

of them are able to bring animals for sacrifice; therefore oxen, sheep and doves are sold in the forecourt of the temple, and a lot of money is exchanged. The whole affair has deteriorated into a huge business venture. The Son of God acts decisively against this (vv13-17).

The Jews demand a sign of Jesus. They want Him to prove His right to cleanse the temple. The Lord Jesus doesn't fulfil this request, but He speaks of a miraculous sign: When they would destroy the temple of His body, i.e. when they would kill Him, He would rebuild this temple on the third day. Therefore He speaks of the miracle of His bodily resurrection. His listeners don't understand that and twist His words (vv18-22).



8. Read again verse 20 and compare it with Matthew 26:61.

What is it that the Jews don't understand and how do they twist the words of Jesus?

9. Many believe in the name of Jesus when they see His signs (v23). That sounds quite good, but it's obvious that there is a problem, because the Lord Jesus doesn't commit Himself to them (vv24-25 – i.e. He doesn't trust them). What is missing with regard to their faith?



After the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, they rebuilt the destroyed **temple** in Jerusalem (Ezra 3:8ff). Herod the Great undertook quite a bit of restorative work. After having been built for 46 years, the resulting temple was an impressive building.



Are you zealous in the things of God?

New life!



Nicodemus, a leader of the strict religious party of the

Pharisees, gets up and goes to Jesus by night (vv1-2).

Jesus shows him that all his religiousness is not enough.

Nicodemus must be born again, otherwise he can't enter the kingdom of God (vv3+5). This new birth happens "of water and the Spirit".

Water is here a symbol of the Word of God in its cleansing power (Ephesians 5:26).

"Spirit" means the Holy Spirit, Who uses the Word of God in order to work in the soul of a person and to give new life.

So that a work can take place *in* you, a work *for* you was necessary: The Lord Jesus had to be lifted up on the cross, and He had to die there – now it's up to you to repent and to

believe in the Lord Jesus. Then you have eternal life (vv14-15).



10. How often does the Lord Jesus start His statements in

today's passage with "Most assuredly"?

11. He who does not believe in the name of the Son of God is judged already. That's what it says in verse 18. What do you understand this to mean? In what way is an unbeliever already judged today?



New birth is a "must" in order to enter the kingdom of God. Religious habits, believing parents, etc., are of no use for this.

He must increase



It hurts the disciples of John to see that everyone

now comes to Jesus and no longer to John (v26). John the Baptist, however, doesn't have a problem with that – just the opposite: He is happy to take second place to the Lord Jesus. The concise statement of verse 30 can also be your motto. There is a big difference between John and the Lord Jesus. As for any other man, John was from the earth. Christ however came from heaven. The words He spoke were the words of God. Those who received His testimony acknowledged that God is true (vv33-34). You find the contrast to this in 1 John 5:10: He who does not receive this testimony makes God a liar!



12. At which place does John baptise?
13. Who is meant by

“the friend of the bridegroom” (v20)?



The **baptism of John** was a baptism to repentance. John baptised those who were ready to repent and pointed to Him Who would come after him – Jesus (Acts 19:4). Christian baptism has a different character, as it is performed unto the death of Christ (Romans 6:3).

Thirsty?



The Gospel of John contains many dialogues of the Son of

God. Here, Jesus speaks with a woman who has had five failed marriages and is not married to her current partner (vv17-18).

Before the Lord Jesus touches this sore point, He tries to win her heart. He asks her for a drink of water (v7). He presents God as the great giver and offers her living water, by which the thirst of the soul can be quenched (vv10+14). Just like Nicodemus, this woman also doesn't understand Jesus. The spiritual significance of His words are, for the moment, hidden from her. When He mentions living water she first thinks of fresh spring water (vv11-12) (Genesis 26:19) and is only thinking of

natural thirst. But the Lord Jesus carries on talking with her...



14. Where does the Lord Jesus meet the Samaritan woman?

15. At what time of day does Jesus meet the woman?



Do you like to be in the limelight, or would you rather be a light for Jesus Christ?



“Let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.” (Revelation 22:17)

Where should you worship?



Because the Lord Jesus has won the heart of the woman, she

doesn't run away now that He shows her that He knows her whole messed-up, sinful life. She sees in Christ a prophet and considers Him competent to answer a burning question: Should God be worshipped on Mount Gerizim, as the Samaritans say, or in Jerusalem, as the Jews say (vv19-20)? Jesus hints that the Samaritans are wrong (v22), but He also shows that with Christianity, something new is about to start: the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth. Mere outward, ritualistic worship is set aside. Having a certain place to worship is no longer important. Meanwhile, the disciples come back from shopping (chapter 4:8). Their thoughts are with

the food they had bought, while Jesus speaks about a completely different kind of food (vv31-34). – Is the will of God your “daily bread”?



16. What are the disciples surprised about when they meet their Lord after they come back from shopping?

17. How much time is there still until harvest? And which two kinds of harvest does the Lord Jesus distinguish here?



Worship is directed to God. It is a special kind of prayer. He

who worships bows down before someone greater than himself and, with praise, acknowledges His glory. Worship is admiration and homage of a person. Worship means more than just giving thanks for gifts received.



The Father seeks worshippers! Has He found you?

Hearing and believing



The testimony of the Samaritan woman finds an amazing echo in

her home town. People flock in crowds to the Lord Jesus. They listen to His words and are convinced that He is the Saviour of the world (vv39-42). Jesus is also received in Galilee – though not because of His words, but because of the signs they had seen (vv43-45). That's what motivated the nobleman's request: that Jesus needed to come with him to heal his son – he wants to see how Jesus heals (vv46-47). However, the Lord Jesus points out that the Jews trust too much in visible things: in signs and miracles (v48). He is able to heal by His word alone! The nobleman now trusts this word, and his son is healed immediately (vv50-54).



18. At what time does the fever leave the son of the nobleman?



Faith is based on the Word of God. At the beginning of the

Christian era, visible signs and miracles confirmed this word (Mark 16:20); but they can't be the basis for faith. Romans 10:17 says: “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”



Do you trust the word of the Lord Jesus without reservation?

Do you want to be saved?



It is a picture of misery: Many suffering people crowd along the edge of the pool of Bethesda (vv2-3). One of them has been seriously ill for 38 years (v5). He has already been waiting for a long time to experience the healing movement of the water. Then he hears a strange question: “Do you want to be made well?” (v6). The sick person doesn’t respond to Jesus with a direct answer, yet his words make it clear: He wouldn’t want anything better than that (v7). As a result, the Son of God acts in His authority and heals the sick man (vv8-9). That man is an illustration of sinful people who can’t free themselves from their misery of sin. The important thing to know is: Salvation is of the Son

of God! He helps – if people want to be helped.



19. Where does Jesus heal the sick man?

20. On what day of the week is the sick man healed?

21. How is the sick man healed?



In this passage you read of a **“feast of the Jews”** (v1). You don’t find this phrase in the Old Testament. It’s a hint that at the time of Jesus the religious feasts no longer centred around God, but around the Jews.



Admitting your own personal helplessness leads you to salvation.

Jesus is the Son of God



Jesus had healed the sick man on the Sabbath and had told him

to carry his bed. Therefore Jesus, in the eyes of the Jews, is someone who had broken the Sabbath and therefore deserved to die (v16). The Lord Jesus shows them that He and His Father – independent of the Sabbath – work in this world of sin (v17). With these words He puts the works of His Father and those of Himself on the same level. The Jews understand that this means that He claims to be God. For them, this is blasphemy and they seek all the more to kill Him (v18).

In the words that follow, the Lord Jesus confirms again the thought that the Father and the Son act in complete agreement (vv19-30).



◆ Think about which points in verses 19-30

document the unity of Father and Son.

22. Verse 25 speaks of the dead and verse 28 of those who are in the graves. They both hear the voice of the Son of God. Is the Lord Jesus referring to the same group of people?



People who broke the Sabbath and those who

blasphemed God, according to the law, deserved the death penalty (Exodus 31:14 and Leviticus 24:16). The Jews believed that such verses gave them the right to kill the Lord Jesus. They were so blinded!



It is still true today: The Father and the Son work – in you too!

Four testimonies



The Jews reject the testimony of the Lord Jesus.

If Jesus was only testifying of Himself they really wouldn't have had to accept it (v31). But the opposite is the case! Jesus speaks of a fourfold testimony, which is proof of Him being sent by the Father. The testimonies are:

- the testimony of John the Baptist (vv33-35)
- the testimony of His works (v36)
- the testimony of His Father (vv37-38)
- the testimony of the Scriptures (v39).

"The Scriptures" in verse 39 mean the Old Testament. This verse should motivate you to look for Christ in the Old Testament. If you do this, you will be richly rewarded.



23. In which name did Jesus come?
24. Verse 44

mentions an important reason that hinders people from coming to faith in the Lord Jesus. Can you summarise it in one word?



In verse 43 the Lord Jesus speaks of a man who will come

in his own name and will be received by the Jews. He refers to the **Antichrist**, who will appear after the rapture of the believers. He will be the leader of the apostate Jews. This "man of sin" only thinks of his own honour and will even allow himself to be worshipped in the future temple in Jerusalem (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).



Read the Bible regularly and deeply so that you get to know the Lord Jesus better.

Divine times tables



How should this large crowd be satisfied with food? Philip

calculates: There's not enough money to buy bread for everyone (vv5-7). Andrew has met a boy who is happy to contribute five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many (vv8-9)?

Philip and Andrew see the limited possibilities and the nearly unlimited needs and conclude: Not everyone can have something. Both disciples are good at maths – but they don't know the divine times tables. Otherwise they would have taken account of the factor we might call the "unlimited possibilities of their Lord". There are no desperate situations for Him. And He miraculously multiplies bread and fish (vv10-13). The people

like that. They get carried away and want to make Him their king. The Lord Jesus withdraws: He wants to receive kingship only from the hand of His Father (vv14-15). The disciples also leave the scene and in the storm they again experience how mighty their Lord is (vv16-21).



25. At what time of year did the miracle of the feeding of the

crowds take place? Clue: Look at verse 4 and refer back to last year's *Lightkeeper*, 16 May.

26. How many people does the Lord Jesus feed?

27. The disciples gather up the leftovers: How much do they gather?



The Lord Jesus gave thanks in public for the food. Do you do the same?

The Bread of life



Many of the people look for Jesus. This isn't because they

believe that He is the One sent by the Father, but because they appreciate being fed by Him free of charge (vv24-16). But the Lord Jesus gives more than nourishment; He has a food that reaches into eternal life. In order to receive it, you only have to do one thing: believe in Him (vv27-29). Believe? The people want to see a sign from Jesus first. The miracle of the feeding is not enough for them. Moses had given food to millions of people in the wilderness, and that for many years (vv30-31). But the Lord Jesus points out to them: It wasn't Moses who had given the manna, but His Father – and it is also He Who gives the true bread (v32), i.e. Jesus. He is the Bread of life (v35).



28. In this passage the Lord Jesus mentions two different kinds of food – natural food and spiritual food, and in one verse He also shows the big difference between them. What is it?

29. The Lord Jesus says in verse 33 that He gives life to the world. What does this mean?



The **manna**, which the Israelites ate during the forty-year journey through the desert, is called “bread from heaven” (Exodus 16:4). It is an illustration of the Son of God, Who came from heaven to earth and calls Himself “the true bread from heaven” (v32).



Only Jesus Christ can satisfy the thirst and hunger of your soul.

Not cast out



He who comes to the Lord Jesus will not be cast out (v37). And everyone who has come to Him, believing, is eternally secure (v39). Wonderful words! But the Jews complain. They are annoyed at the claim of Jesus to have come from heaven (vv41-42). The Lord Jesus remains calm and continues His teaching. In verse 51 He mentions His death for the first time. His dying is unavoidable! Only through His death will people be able to receive eternal life.



30. What, according to the words of the Lord Jesus in today's passage, is the will of the Father?

31. How often does today's passage mention the resurrection “at the last day”?



The **last day** mentioned in John 6 does not refer to the end of the world and is of course also not a 24 hour day. It refers to a time span, beginning with the rapture and resurrection of believers, and ending with the judgment of those who have not received Christ (chapter 12:48). The Millennium (1,000-year reign of Christ), which is in between these two events, is contained in this “day”.



**“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”
(1 John 5:12)**

Superficial discipleship



You probably know this idea: People admire the wonderful life

of Jesus, take it as an example, and believe that this turns them into a Christian. But without faith in His person and His sacrificial death, you don't have eternal life (v53).

Then as well as now, there are people who follow the Lord Jesus without really believing in Him. Their life as disciples is only outward. That shows up when they turn away completely from the Lord Jesus. If they don't do that, their hypocrisy, as that of Judas Iscariot, may remain hidden from the true disciples for a long time. But you can't fool the Lord Jesus! He knows everything (v64).



32. What do many of the disciples of the Lord Jesus

say when they hear what He teaches in the synagogue?

33. What does Peter say when the Lord Jesus asks the twelve disciples whether they want to go away as well?



To eat His flesh and drink His blood means to identify with the dead Christ. This is first of all an act of faith: He who believes in the Saviour Who has died has eternal life. Verses 51 to 53 speak of this. Verses 54 to 58 show that as a Christian you should be occupied continuously with the death of Christ, in order to "feed" on it.



**Do you want to go away as well?
But: To whom will you go?**

His brothers don't believe



Yesterday you read about the unbelieving disciples of Jesus.

Today's topic is something that is probably even sadder: His own brothers don't (yet) believe in Him (v5) – and this although they have God-fearing parents and they have been able to watch the perfect life of their oldest brother for years! Sadly there are also people today who are at a great advantage in many respects, and still they don't take the decisive step of believing in Him.

These brothers would like Jesus to show Himself at the great religious event in Jerusalem, so that He would become popular by His works (vv3-4). But the Lord Jesus doesn't allow Himself to be compelled by His brothers. He acts according to the will of the Father. And when He goes, He doesn't do it

to attract attention but as "in secret" (v10).



34. Which feast was soon going to take place?

35. Why does the world hate the Lord Jesus?



The expression "**world**" occurs frequently in the

Gospel of John. It has various meanings. Chapter 1:10 tells us that the world came into being by the Lord Jesus – that is the world as creation. Chapter 3:16 refers to the world of mankind. And the expression here in verse 7 refers to a system with Satan at the top, who rules over the unbelieving people and where there is no room for God and His Christ.



Do you believe in the Son of God?

Judging by appearances?



You may remember this: One Sabbath day the Lord

Jesus had healed a man who had been ill for 38 years, and because of this the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, as in their eyes He had broken the law of the Sabbath (chapter 5:5ff). Now the Lord Jesus comes back (vv19-23) and tells them in no uncertain terms that their zeal for the Sabbath is only an outward, empty form of holiness. The judgment they have come to regarding Jesus is completely unjust although they refer to the law in this matter (v24).

Yes, that's how bad people were then ... that's what we like to think sometimes. But don't we also often come to a judgment over someone that

may sound right and pious, but in reality is totally unjust?



36. Who is able to recognise whether the doctrine of Jesus is from God?

37. Try to explain what the Lord Jesus puts before the Jews in verse 23. Clue: Read Leviticus 12:3.



“Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” (John 7:24)

Come and drink!



The words of the Lord Jesus are a problem for some, especially for the leaders of

the people. They are looking for an opportunity to catch Jesus (vv30+32). But that doesn't happen. Why? Is there a lack of anger, craftiness and wickedness? No, the reason is that the Lord's hour of suffering has not come yet (v30). This statement shows us in an unmistakable way that God controls everything!

In spite of the opposition, on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles the Lord Jesus speaks to the crowd again. All those who are discontented are invited to come to Him and quench the thirst of their soul (v37). But the believer doesn't just receive blessing for himself, he also becomes a blessing for others: Out of his heart, streams of living waters flow (v38). This is

possible through the Holy Spirit Who lives in the believer (v39).



38. The Lord Jesus tells the Jews that they are going to seek Him and won't find Him, and that where He is, they can't come. What does He mean? And what do the Jews think He means?

39. Which day is the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles? (See Leviticus 23:33-36.)



Historians report that it was usual at the **Feast of Tabernacles**

that on the last day of the feast the High Priest would pour out water from the pool of Siloam over the altar, accompanied by great ceremony. Against this background, the words of the Lord Jesus would have been especially impressive: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink”!



Mere religion doesn't satisfy a person deep inside. Only Jesus Christ can do this.

Division among the crowd



Only shortly after the birth of Jesus, old Simeon had said that people's opinions would

be divided regarding Him (Luke 2:34-35). Today's verses show this clearly.

Nicodemus puts in a word for Jesus (vv50-51). He does it very carefully, but nevertheless he does it. Immediately the Pharisees try to shut him up. They command him to read the Scriptures carefully; then he will realise that Jesus of Galilee can't be a prophet because there has never been a prophet from Galilee (v52).

Those Pharisees aren't even right. The prophet Jonah came from Gath Hepher (2 Kings 14:25) – a city in Galilee. The Pharisees, who cursed the people because they didn't know the law (v49), don't even know it themselves!



40. What do the servants answer in response to the question of the High Priests and Pharisees, as to why they haven't taken Jesus captive?



Galilee at the time of the Old Testament described just a small area; at the time of the New Testament it covered the area of a number of Israelite tribes. Many mixed-race people from Jews and Gentiles lived in this area north of Samaria. That's why Galilee was despised by "real" Jews. The Lord Jesus grew up in a city of Galilee – in Nazareth (chapter 1:46), and was therefore considered to be a Galilean, although He was born in Bethlehem which belongs to Judah.



Take a clear stand for the Lord Jesus!

Jesus is the Light of the world



The Pharisees and Scribes bring a woman before the Saviour. The

fact of the case: adultery. The law demands death. What does Jesus say? Will He show grace? Then the Pharisees would claim that Jesus is disregarding the Law of Moses and they would then have something to accuse Him of (vv1-6).

Again, the Pharisees are the great defenders of the law. But have they considered that the law is also against them? Or is it possible that they have never sinned? "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." The Pharisees, having been exposed by the light of God, steal away (vv7-9). Jesus, in accordance with His commission, doesn't judge the woman (v15). This doesn't mean that He tolerates sin though. Verse 11 shows this clearly.



41. If the Lord Jesus had said to the Pharisees that

they should stone the woman, according to the law, they could have accused Him. Can you imagine how? Read chapter 18:31.

42. Verse 7 has led some people to claim that the Lord Jesus says here that judgment should only be executed if the executor of the judgment is himself without sin. What would you say to such a statement?



The Pharisees accepted the **witness** of two people when

they had to come to a judgment. This was prescribed in the law (Deuteronomy 19:15). But they refused to accept the twofold divine witness. The witness of the Father and the Son was of less value to them than the witness of two sinful people (vv17-18).



Can you see your own failure – your own sin?

Where to? Who? Where from?



The Jews don't understand the Lord Jesus:

Where does He want to go (vv21-22)? Who is He, anyway (v25)? And who is He Who sent Him (vv26-27)? Neither do they understand that they must be freed. In their own eyes, they are not slaves (vv31-33). But the Lord Jesus tells them unmistakably that they are slaves of sin and can only be made free through Him (vv34+36).

Even to this day, many people are not aware of the rule of sin in their lives. They only notice the power of sin if they try seriously to live according to God's standards – and don't manage. How wonderful it is then to be able to come to the Lord Jesus! He can, He wants to, and He will set people free.



43. Why is the Lord Jesus not left alone by His Father?

◆ Are there sinful things in your life from which you would like to be set free? Are you plagued by a bad habit? Do you feel in bondage to something evil? Read again verse 36 – and apply it to yourself, personally!



A person is always a **servant**: either a servant of sin

or a servant of God. There is nothing in-between. The Apostle Paul deals with this subject further in Romans 6:15ff.



Jesus Christ can break the strongest chains of sin!

Children of the devil



The Jews are extremely proud to be descendants of Abraham and

to belong to the people of God (vv39+41). But Abraham's good behaviour is strange to them, and they don't have a living relationship with God. Their real father is the devil! Just as children imitate the behaviour of their parents, their lifestyle is marked by the devil who is a murderer and liar (v44). And so are they, as the Lord Jesus makes clear by His words and as they prove by their words and actions.



44. Explain the difference between a descendant

of Abraham and a child of Abraham.

45. What does the Lord Jesus mean when He says that some people will never see death (v51)?



This eighth chapter of the Gospel of John is an

illustration of what Hebrews 12:3 says: The Lord endured such hostility from sinners against Himself. If this is the same for you, be encouraged by studying His life and behaviour!



The Lord Jesus witnessed to the truth, even when people mocked and blasphemed. How about you?

Blind from birth



This man was really badly off: He was blind from birth.

The disciples assumed that God would allow something like that only if there was a sin somewhere. But the Lord Jesus tells them that the man's blindness is not punishment for a particular sin, but something that offers the opportunity to reveal the works of God (vv1-3). The way the Lord Jesus heals him is strange. He prepares a mixture of soil and saliva, which was to be rinsed off with water. The blind man doesn't ask any questions; he trusts Jesus and obeys His instruction. No one does this in vain: The blind man is healed (vv6-7). This healing raises a lot of dust (vv8-17).



46. What's the name of the pool where the blind man is told to wash?

47. The healing of the blind man causes a division. What are the two sides of the argument?



In the Gospels you can find seven reports of the **healing of a blind person**. The Old Testament doesn't mention a single occasion. But it announces that there would be someone coming who would give blind people their sight (Isaiah 42:7). This is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus.



You can "blindly" trust the Lord Jesus. You won't regret it.

Once blind – now seeing!



Once again there is a spiritual significance behind the natural: There is also such a thing as spiritual blindness. Every person who is not yet saved is, in God's eyes, blind, as he is unable to see himself in the way God sees him: as a lost sinner. Christ has come for all who are spiritually blind. Through God's Word He wants to open their eyes with regard to Himself and to God, so that they will turn from darkness to light (Acts 26:17-18). All who have experienced this will also experience opposition. It's the same with the man here. He is insulted and abused and, in the end, cast out of the synagogue (v34).



48. The people don't seem to be too interested in who has healed the blind man, but rather how the healing took place. How often does this question of "how" occur in John 9?

49. Why don't the parents give any information about the healing of their son?



Even the youngest in faith can say: I know one thing – that I was blind and now I see.

Cast out – into the arms of the Good Shepherd



The man born blind makes remarkable progress in his

knowledge of the Lord Jesus. First he speaks of Him as a man (chapter 9:11), then he recognises Him as a prophet (chapter 9:17), and in the end he understands that Jesus is the Son of God (vv35-38). That's exactly the point to which the Holy Spirit wants to bring each reader of the Gospel of John, as chapter 20:31 states. This includes you! The man born blind no longer has a place in the synagogue. He now finds himself outside the Jewish system. But that's where the Son of God, the Good Shepherd, is, whose aim it is to bring His sheep out of the "fold of Judaism" (v3).



50. Try to explain verse 41.
51. Why don't the sheep follow a stranger?



Overview of the parable of the good shepherd (vv1-6):

Sheepfold = the Jewish people living in separation from the Gentiles (nations).
Thieves and robbers = religious fraudsters and deceivers
Shepherd of the sheep = Jesus Christ
The sheep of the shepherd = the Jewish believers
Doorkeeper opens the door = Christ is identified by the prophets as the Good Shepherd.



**Do you know that Jesus is the Son of God?
Then fall down before Him!**

Jesus is the Door



Today's parable has a different perspective from yesterday's. This

time, the door symbolises the Lord Jesus Himself (v7). Only through this one door is it possible to enter into Christian blessings. Those who enter through it, i.e. who believe in Christ, will (v9):

- be saved. This is salvation from the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13), salvation from the wrath of God (1 Thessalonians 1:10) and much more.
- go in and out. This speaks of freedom. You may enter the sanctuary in prayer, i.e. approach God in prayer, and go out to people with the message of peace.
- find pasture. The soul is nourished, the inner man satisfied.



52. Which group of persons is meant by the other sheep, "which are not of this fold" (v16)?

53. The Lord Jesus says that the Father loves Him, because He gives His life (v17). How would you explain this statement?



The Greek word schisma (**schism**, **division**) occurs

three times in John's Gospel. It is interesting that it is always in connection with the Lord Jesus. Each time, a different point is emphasised: once it is especially His person (chapter 7:43), then His works (chapter 9:16) and now His words (vv10+19). People's opinions are divided where Jesus Christ is concerned – and this is still true today!



It isn't necessary to go a long way to enter through this door. It's only one step! Have you already taken it?

Assurance of salvation



Yesterday,
one verse was
picked out with
the purpose of

highlighting three blessings of a Christian. We'll do the same again today: Verses 28 and 29 say that the sheep of the flock of the Lord Jesus are marked by the following:

- They have eternal life.
- They are safe for eternity.
- No one can pluck them out of the hand of the Lord Jesus and out of the hand of the Father.

This makes it clear that as a Christian you are completely safe. You don't need to fear that you'll be lost in the end. No enemy is able to pluck you out of the hand of the Good Shepherd or out of the hand of the Father. Nothing can separate you from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39).



54. Where and when did the Jews surround the Lord Jesus and what did they want to know?



The **Feast of Dedication** (v22) is called "Hanukkah" by the Jews. This feast takes place over eight days and is a reminder of Judas Maccabaeus rededicating the temple in 164 BC, after it was defiled by the Syrian king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, three years earlier. Among other things, he had changed the altar of burnt offering into an altar for Zeus.



For you as a Christian, God in His love wants to take away your fear of judgment.

Lazarus – Why doesn't Jesus help?



Lazarus is very ill. His sisters tell Jesus and leave it to Him to decide what He wants to do. That's how Christians ought to pray (vv1-3)!

Jesus knows the purpose of the illness (v4). Out of love, He would like to help, but He only does what God wants – He walks "in the day". If you hear cries for help during the night, you don't only need love to go and help, but also light to find the way (vv9-10).

The Lord Jesus waits. That's fine for the disciples, because they are afraid of going to Jerusalem again. But then He goes. When He arrives, Lazarus is already buried! Martha goes to the Lord Jesus for comfort and knows that if He had been there, Lazarus wouldn't have died, but He will raise him up "at the last

day" (vv17-24). Jesus says: He who has eternal life and dies, will rise again (v25). – "Do you believe this?" (v26).



55. In chapter 7:6-10, the Lord Jesus acts in the same way as here. How exactly?

56. When the Lord Jesus comes to Lazarus, how long has he been dead?



The Jews believed in a "**resurrection** at the last day" (v24) because they didn't know any more details about it. As Christians we know that believers who have already died will rise from the dead at the time of the rapture. The believers who are alive then won't die at all (v26).



Who do you call on when you are facing a difficulty?

Lazarus – the Lord Jesus helps



Martha goes to get Mary, who had stayed at the house. But when Jesus calls her she

hurries. She says the same as Martha did in verse 25 (v32). The Lord Jesus feels with the sorrowing. He weeps. How much suffering has been caused in this world by the fall of man into sin: including sickness and death (vv33-38)!

Martha doesn't want to have the grave opened as it has been four days since the burial – because she doesn't believe that Jesus will raise Lazarus (vv38-40). But as a testimony to the onlookers, the Lord Jesus thanks His God and Father for hearing Him and ... He calls out to the dead man (vv 41-44)! The raising of Lazarus is an illustration of the Lord Jesus:

- giving eternal life to those who believe in Him. No one

else can do this (chapter 11:25).

- raising all believers at the rapture.



57. Where in the Gospel of John do you find the miracle of the blind man, quoted in verse 37?

58. Who should take the grave clothes off Lazarus? What meaning could be inferred?



When someone dies, **decomposition** begins almost immediately. In the hot conditions in that part of the world, after four days decay would have well and truly set in (v39). This was the case with Lazarus.

When the Lord Jesus died, He did not “see corruption” (Psalm 16:10). In this, He is unique!



Often God answers your prayer in a different way than you imagine.

Murderous intentions



The Lord Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. Many are fascinated.

The leaders of the people are outraged. They fear losing their power but pretend they are concerned for the future of the country. They exercise great influence on a religious level, which they are sure to lose “if everyone will believe in Him” (vv45-48).

The High Priest Caiaphas suggests saving the nation by sacrificing one person for them: Jesus. This is a prophecy, because it is indeed expedient that He dies: Through His death, Israel can be saved in the future, and through it the church can be formed from people out of all nations (vv49-52).

In that way, the murderous intentions of the Jewish leaders become firmer. Their plan appears to be perfect: Every

religious Jew will come to Jerusalem for the Passover feast – then they will be able to arrest Him (vv53-57). Will He, Who knows everything, come as well?



59. What is the Passover called? And why?

60. When is the prophecy of Caiaphas fulfilled that the children of God who were scattered abroad would be gathered together in one (v52)?



The “**council**” consisted of 71 members, forming

two parties: the Sadducees and the Pharisees (Acts 23:6). The council was chaired by the High Priest in office. In that year, this was Caiaphas (v51).



Don't make friends with people who reject the Lord Jesus.

Entry into Jerusalem



Six days before the Passover, Jesus is already staying in a suburb of Jerusalem.

Lazarus, Martha and Mary are happy to receive Him into their home (vv1-2). – Can the Lord Jesus feel welcome in your room, too?

Only Mary understands the Lord Jesus. This woman senses what is going to happen: He is going to die. At that time it was customary to embalm the dead (chapter 19:40). She does this in advance by pouring very precious ointment out over Him. – What do you give to your Saviour? Your worship is what is most precious to Him!

Unbelievers can't understand this. Judas Iscariot believes charity is more important. In reality he is just greedy (vv3-8). Crowds of people come to see Lazarus who had been raised from the dead. But

sensationalism is more important to them than the Lord Jesus. – What do you think of that? Despite increased hatred, the Messiah enters Jerusalem. God guides events in such a way that the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 is fulfilled. Sadly, the excitement of the people is only superficial (vv11-19). Soon they will cry: "Crucify Him!"



61. How many days did one have to work to earn 300 denarii (Matthew 20:2) (v5)?

62. Does Christianity abolish poverty?



At His first **coming**, the Messiah entered humbly into Jerusalem. At His second coming, He will come in power. The first time we read of a donkey (vv14-15); the next time of a white horse (Revelation 19:11).



What value does the Son of God have for you?

"We wish to see Jesus"!



Some Greeks wish to see Jesus (vv20-22).

The Lord Jesus looks ahead to His hours of suffering on the cross. That has to happen so that the Greeks will also one day be able to belong to the "grain" He brings forth (v24). If you put a grain of wheat into the ground, it disintegrates (it "dies"). But then an ear grows, bearing many grains of wheat. In the same way, the Lord Jesus had to die so that many people could receive eternal life. Otherwise He would have had to remain alone in heaven (v24)!

Those who have eternal life don't feel at home in the world but serve the Lord Jesus here. This will be rewarded in heaven (vv25-26). The thought of His death troubles the Lord Jesus. But He always wants to obey His Father (vv27-28).

The world, which doesn't know the voice of God any more, will now be

judged, as their king, Satan, will be conquered by the Lord Jesus on the cross (vv29-33). Jesus warns His listeners: Believe, while you still can (vv34-36).



63. When did the Father glorify the Lord Jesus (chapter 11:4) (v28)?

64. What does it mean to be "lifted up from the earth" (vv32-33)?



Jesus Christ is:

- Verses 1-11: the Son of God, Who is already worshipped today.
- Verses 12-19: The Messiah, the King of Israel, Who will in the future enter Jerusalem again.
- Verses 20-36: the Son of Man, Who had to suffer and die and after His coming again will reign over everything.



The Lord Jesus promises: "If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour."

The Light of the world



The Lord Jesus told people to believe in Him while He – “the light” – is there (chapter 12:35-36). But they don’t do that (v37). It’s just what the prophet Isaiah had predicted: They don’t recognise the “arm of the LORD”; they don’t want it to be true that God works through this Man and that He Himself is God (v38)! The consequence is terrible judgment: They can’t believe in Him any more (vv39-41).

But this doesn’t apply to all people. Many believe in Him. Sadly, some act too much like cowards to show their belief openly (vv42-43). – How about you?

The Lord Jesus can explain that He always does and says what His Father wants. He is the Light of the world (vv44-50). – Since He is in heaven, we Christians

ought to be lights in this world (Philippians 2:15).



65. How are people saved: by seeing miracles or by hearing and keeping the Word of God?

66. John quotes Isaiah 6:10. The prophet spoke this word after he saw someone sitting on a great throne, as he reported at the beginning of Isaiah 6. Who does Isaiah describe there? Clue: It tells us in today’s passage.



The prophet Isaiah spoke much about the Lord Jesus, for example in Isaiah 6 and 53. He calls Him the “arm of the LORD” when he wants to emphasise that He is God. He calls Him “Servant” of the LORD when he wants to emphasise that He is man.



Are you a light in this world?

Feet washing



Jesus knows that He will die and then return to the Father. Despite this, He can still think of His beloved disciples (v1). He knows that Judas will betray Him and that He Himself will rule as Man over everything. Despite this, He washes their feet (vv2-5). Feet washing is a job for servants. It seems that the disciples consider themselves to be too good for it. When the Lord Jesus starts washing their feet, Peter is so shocked that he can’t even wait for an explanation (vv6-7). Jesus begins to explain this symbolic act: When He is in heaven, He will cleanse His disciples through the Word of God. – If you read the Bible, you will become aware of your sins, so that you can confess them and restore fellowship with your Lord (v8).

That’s just what Peter wants (v9)! But Jesus has to explain things to him in more detail: A believer may sin (“get his feet dirty”), but he can’t be lost, because he is clean – “bathed” (chapter 15:3) (vv10-11). What the Lord Jesus does here is also an example for us as Christians: We should contribute to the restoration of the Christian who has sinned, so that he can be joyful again (vv12-17).



67. Why does the Lord Jesus announce His betrayal by Judas?



The priests in the Old Testament were bathed at their dedication (Leviticus 8:6). Later they only had to wash their hands and their feet before entering the sanctuary (Exodus 30:19-20). The Lord Jesus refers to this here (v10).



If someone else “washes your feet”, imagine that the Lord Jesus Himself is doing it!

Judas and Peter – disappointments



One of the twelve disciples would betray Jesus. This troubles Him (v21). The disciples

want to know who it is. One of them, the one who has the best relationship with Jesus, is prompted to ask Him (vv22-25)! – It is only through regular prayer and reading of your Bible that you can have such a good relationship with the Lord Jesus. Jesus, in His answer, gives a clue (chapter 13:18). But when He addresses Judas directly, the disciples don't understand it (vv26-29).

First of all Judas had opened his heart to Satan, and now Satan enters into him (v27). After Judas has left, the Lord Jesus explains that He will die soon and leave the earth. They would remain here and should love one another (vv31-35).

Peter overestimates his love for the Lord Jesus by assuring Him

that he would also die for Him. But instead he will deny Him (vv36-38).



68. Who is the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (v23)?

69. How should we as Christians love each other?



In the Gospel of John you read of three different

glorifications of the Son of Man:

- Chapter 13:31: This refers to His work on the cross; His glories were visible there more than anywhere else – His obedience, His devotion and His love.
- Chapter 12:28: This refers to His being raised from the dead.
- Chapter 13:32: This refers to God receiving Him into heaven.



You can also feel as comfortable with the Lord Jesus as “the disciple whom Jesus loved”.



The Lord Jesus will soon leave His disciples. They won't see Him any

more then, but they will have to believe in Him as they also believe in the invisible God (v1). But He will return to take all believers to be with Himself in heaven, where He has prepared dwellings for them (vv2-3). The disciples need to know that He will go to the Father and what the way is for them to get there: He who believes in Him comes to the Father, to heaven. There is no other way (vv4-6). The disciples believe in Him, but they understand only little. Philip, for example, doesn't understand that everything Jesus says and does reveals the Father (vv7-11).

Like the Lord Jesus, we as Christians should also do what God wants. We should pray as He did. The works we can do

can be even more spread out than those the Lord Jesus did, because now the gospel should be preached in the whole earth (vv12-14).



70. What is the condition required for our prayers to be answered (v13)?

71. When will these requests then be answered (v13)?



The **Father's house** is the uncreated heaven. That's

where God lived even before He created the universe. By the Lord Jesus going there as Man, He has prepared dwelling places there for those who believe in Him. All Christians will live there for eternity, where the Father and the Lord Jesus live too!



Christians will be where the Lord Jesus is now!

The other Helper



Even though the Lord Jesus now leaves His disciples, they are not alone.

He will send them “another Helper”: the Holy Spirit. He has been living in believers since Pentecost (vv15-17). Through the Spirit, Christ “comes” to Christians again. If we are obedient out of love to Him, He will reveal Himself to us through the Spirit. Then we can enjoy His presence (vv18-21). It’s like an upward spiral: The more you get to know the Lord Jesus, the more you get to know His will, and the more you will do His will out of love to Him, then the more He will reveal Himself to you ... (vv20-21). This doesn’t only concern things He has explicitly commanded in His Word (“commandments”) (v21), but everything you learn from the whole Bible (“the Word”) (v23).

The Holy Spirit would remind the disciples of everything that Jesus had told them and would give His peace into their hearts (vv26-29).



72. How long will the Holy Spirit remain with believers (vv16-

17)?

73. Satan couldn’t find a way to tempt the Lord Jesus because He couldn’t sin (v30). Being without sin, He wouldn’t have had to die. What was it that caused Jesus to go to Calvary?



In other translations, the **Helper** is called the “**advocate**” –

someone who intercedes with the judge for the cause of someone else. The **Holy Spirit** is an “advocate” because He is the Helper, Intercessor and Comforter of believers.



Do you have the peace of God? Make sure those around you notice it!

The true vine – all about bearing fruit



The Lord Jesus tells the parable of the vine: He compares Himself

to the vine, the Father is the vinedresser and Christians are the branches. There are “pretend” Christians who have never been born again.

They don’t bear fruit. The real Christians should bear more fruit (vv1-3).

Every Christian is responsible to “abide” in the Lord Jesus, i.e. to remain in contact with Him. Only the believer can do this (vv4-8).

To “abide” in Him also means to remain in the consciousness of His love and to obey Him. This will cause joy (vv9-11). One commandment of the Lord Jesus is that we as Christians love one another as He has loved us (vv12-13).

The Lord Jesus calls us His friends, because He wants

to tell us everything He has heard from the Father, just as you would confide to your friend everything that is important to you (vv14-15).



74. How can we as Christians be completely joyful

(v11)?

75. What does the Father do so that we bear more fruit?

76. What happens to the false professors, the “pretend” Christians (v6)? What does the Lord Jesus refer to?



The **wood** of a **vine** can’t be used for anything. If a

branch doesn’t bear fruit, it can only be burnt. See Ezekiel 15:1-5. In the same way, unbelieving people are useless for God. But the believer can bear fruit for God by abiding in Him.



Stay close to the Lord Jesus and bear fruit for Him.

"If the world hates you"



The Lord Jesus draws all those who believe in Him out of this

world (vv16-17). That's why Christians are hated by the world. Because the world persecutes Jesus, it also persecutes His followers (vv18-20).

Really, the hatred of the world is aimed at the Lord Jesus. People in the world rejected Him when He was here – and they are still doing it (vv21-25). The Holy Spirit bears witness of Him! He wants to enable you to confess the Lord Jesus, even if you are hated and persecuted for doing so (vv26-27). You don't have to be surprised about being disadvantaged, ridiculed or bullied because you are a Christian. The Lord Jesus already predicted this here.



77. Why does the Lord Jesus leave us Christians in the

world (v16)?

78. We can apply verse 27 to ourselves. But who is really meant here?



During the long years of the history of the church, many

Christians were not only disadvantaged and ridiculed, but also severely **persecuted**. Often it was forbidden to be a Christian or to own a Bible. Offenders were imprisoned, tortured, even murdered. In Rome, believers were thrown to the wild animals or burnt as live torches; in medieval times they were burnt at the stake; today they are often killed secretly. Even today it is forbidden to be a Christian in many countries. Pray for believers in such countries!



Don't be discouraged if you are ridiculed for being faithful to your Lord.

"It is to your advantage that I go away"



The Lord Jesus warns His disciples of persecutions. These, He adds, will first of all come

from the religious world (vv1-4). And this is how it has been throughout the history of the church.

The Lord Jesus going away is to the advantage of the disciples, because otherwise He can't send the Holy Spirit (vv5-7).

By being here, the Holy Spirit convicts the world:

- of sin (The world has crucified Christ!)
- of righteousness (He has gone to the Father – The world has rejected the only righteous One. But the Father has glorified Him, has acted righteously, taking Him out of the world and giving Him an honoured place at His right hand.)
- of judgment (On the cross, He won the victory over the prince of this world (vv8-11).)

The Spirit guides believers into all truth, i.e. He helps them understand the Bible (vv12-15). Jesus will leave the disciples for a short time, and then they will see Him again as the Risen One (vv16-18).



79. What is the condition for the coming of the Holy

Spirit (v7)?

80. What does the preaching of the Word of God lead to with regard to the Lord Jesus, if the hearer is worked on by the Spirit (v14)?



The Spirit would (first of all for the apostles and writers of the New

Testament):

- remind them of what the Lord Jesus said when on earth (chapter 14:26)
- lead them into all truth (letters of the New Testament) (v13a)
- tell them "things to come" (Revelation) (v13b).



Do you pray before you read the Bible, asking God to give you understanding by His Spirit?

"Be of good cheer"!



The Lord Jesus knows everything! He knows what the disciples are thinking of (vv19-

20).

He also knows that they will be sad when He leaves them. But He will see them again. The disciples will see Him bodily, as the Risen One, and later by faith – just like you, as a Christian, can see Him today. Lastly you will see Him when He comes again to take you to Himself. Are you looking forward to that (vv21-22)?

"That day" which the Lord Jesus then mentions refers to the time of grace in which we live today – a time of joy. The Holy Spirit is here; He has "openly" told you everything in the New Testament; you are able to appreciate how much the Father loves you ... (vv23-28).

The disciples are always a little behind in their thoughts and

think only of themselves. They will leave Him alone when it comes to the crunch (vv29-33).



81. Is the Lord Jesus completely alone after the disciples

have left Him?

82. Why does the Father love you if you are a Christian?



In the New Testament you read of "**full joy**" three

times:

- in chapter 15:11 in connection with the Word of God
- here in connection with prayer (v24)
- in 1 John 1:4 in connection with fellowship with the Father and the Son.

So what do you need to be full of joy? The Bible, prayer and, through these, fellowship with God!



**As a Christian you can rejoice:
You are always loved!**

The Son speaks with the Father



Jesus prays. He, the Son, speaks with the Father.

The disciples hear

it: He speaks about us!

He gives believers eternal life.

He is still doing that (vv2-3)!

The basis for this is His work

on the cross, which He here

considers as finished already

(v4). Therefore He also now

prays for His glorification as

Man with the Father (v5).

He has revealed the Father to

the disciples – and they have

believed it (vv6-8).

Believers have been given to

the Son. They belong to Him

and to the Father. He prays for

their protection. He will leave

the world, but they will remain

in it (vv9-13).



83. Does the Father possess anything that the Son doesn't

have?

84. Who is the "son of perdition", of whom the Lord Jesus speaks in verse 12?



A **dog** has a lower form of life than a human. He may be

able to answer to the simple commands of his owner, and he can bark and wag his tail. But if a human was to pour out his heart to him, he wouldn't understand anything and wouldn't be able to give an answer to it.

In the same way, a human is by nature unable to understand God. Only those who have been given eternal life – the same life as the Lord Jesus, as God – can know God and have fellowship with Him (v3)!



Do you already belong to the Lord Jesus?

The Son speaks to the Father about Christians



Christians are “in the world”, but no longer “of the world”, i.e. they

don’t belong to it, just as Christ doesn’t (vv14-16).

The Lord Jesus asks for the sanctification of His disciples. He desires that they live their lives in separation from evil in this world and devoted to God. Two things “sanctify” them: the Word of God – the truth, and the Lord Jesus in heaven (vv17-19).

Until now Jesus has prayed especially for the apostles. But now He prays for all those who believe through the word of the apostles (= the New Testament) (v20).

When Christians don’t fight, but are “one”, they are a testimony to the world. Hopefully many more will believe (v21), because when Jesus returns in glory and the

world is able to see how much He has loved believers, it will be too late for those without God (vv22-23).

As a Christian, you will one day be with the Lord Jesus in heaven and will see His glory (vv24-26)!



85. How much has the Father loved us?

86. Since what time has the Father loved the Son?



When the Lord Jesus returns to take all true Christians to Himself, they will:

- share that glory with Him that He has received as Man in heaven (v22); they will have a body like His, with which they are able to live in heaven (Philippians 3:21).
- see the glory which He has as God (v24).



How are things with regard to practical sanctification in your life?

Jesus is captured



Jesus goes to a garden where He had often met with His

disciples before. It is the garden Gethsemane. Judas Iscariot goes there with many soldiers and servants to arrest Him (vv1-3).

The Lord Jesus knows everything, even what is now about to happen. Despite this, He presents Himself to them voluntarily. He could, however, have had the power to annihilate His enemies with one blow. He only says: “I am He” and they fall to the ground (vv4-9)!

But the Lord Jesus doesn’t use His power to defend Himself. He rather heals one of His enemies, who had his ear cut off with a sword by Peter. Peter must have really wanted to fight for his Lord and cut the head of the High Priest’s servant in half. But Jesus prevents that – because

He wants to do what His Father has given Him to do: to die on the cross (vv10-11)!



87. How is Jesus addressed by the people who want to arrest Him?

88. When did Jesus say what is quoted in verse 9 (i.e. in which chapter)? Clue: It refers to a prayer of the Lord Jesus.



When the Lord Jesus says: “I am He” (v6), He actually

mentions the name of God. When Moses asked after God’s name at the burning bush, God said: “I AM WHO I AM”. God calls Himself “I AM”, because He is and remains eternally the same. You can’t say of God: “He was” or “He will be”. The Lord Jesus is God, the “I AM”!



When someone annoys you, do you react like Peter or like the Lord Jesus?

Denying the Lord



The Lord Jesus allows Himself to be captured and bound. They want

Him to be tried straightaway. For that, they take Him to Annas (vv12-14).

Peter and John follow them into the court of the High Priest. Peter has self-confidence. But as soon as a maid speaks to him, he shows cowardice, denying that he is a disciple of Jesus (vv15-17).

– If you go where the enemies of the Lord Jesus amuse themselves (v18), you won't have any strength to confess your Lord!

During his interrogation, Annas doesn't find anything to charge the Lord Jesus with. One servant is outraged and hits Jesus in the face. The Lord Jesus takes him to task over it,

but He doesn't defend Himself (vv19-24).

Peter gets more and more into a tangle and in the end denies the Lord Jesus three times (vv25-27)!



89. How does Peter get into the court of the High Priest?

90. At what time of day did the trial before Annas take place?



Annas was the father-in-law of the official High Priest Caiaphas (vv13-24). He was deposed by the Roman occupying power, but kept his standing and influence. The Jews still unofficially considered him to be the High Priest (vv19+24). So in practice there were at least two High Priests: Annas and Caiaphas (Luke 3:2).



“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.”
(Matthew 10:32)

Jesus before Pilate



After the nocturnal interrogations before Annas and Caiaphas (chapter

18:24), Jesus is now brought into the Praetorium, the residence of the Roman governor. The Jews, however, don't enter the heathen building because they think this will defile them. They take heed to that kind of purity law – but they don't mind killing the Lord Jesus (v28)!

Pilate has to go out to them to learn what their accusation is. For them, one thing is certain: He must be executed (vv29-32)! Pilate interrogates Jesus in the Praetorium: “Are You the King of the Jews?” The Lord Jesus has a kingdom, but it is a heavenly kingdom. Therefore, He really is a King. He tells the truth – as always (vv33-37).

“What is truth?” Pilate asks resignedly, without waiting for an answer. He hopes that the people

will prefer the “King of the Jews” to a robber. But he is wrong (vv38-40)!



91. Which feast were the Jews about to celebrate? How can

you connect the death of the Lord Jesus with this?

92. Why do the servants of the Lord Jesus not fight against other people (v36)?



The **death penalty** was only to be administered by

the Roman occupying power. At the time of Jesus, the Jews were not allowed to execute anyone. That's why they had to level a charge against Jesus before Pilate, so that he would condemn Him to death. Pilate was the governor, i.e. the highest official and representative of the Roman Caesar in the province of Judea.



Jesus always told the truth. Make sure you do the same!

The sentence



Now Pilate tries to arouse the sympathy of the people. He has

Jesus scourged, i.e. brutally whipped. After the soldiers have also mocked and hit Him, Pilate shows the bleeding Man to the people (vv1-5).

In order to stop the people becoming weak, the leaders react immediately and demand His crucifixion. Pilate says: "You crucify Him," although they are not allowed to do that, as much as they would like to (vv6-7). When superstitious Pilate hears that Jesus has made Himself the Son of God, he becomes even more frightened. Where did this "son of the gods", or whatever He was, come from? The Lord Jesus had told him already (chapter 18:37) (vv8-9). Pilate threatens with his power – which he has only received from God. He wants to get rid

of this Jesus by releasing Him, but the Jews threaten that this would mean the end of his career (vv10-12). Pilate gives in. He mockingly taunts the Jews until they again call on Caesar. Then the sentence is confirmed: crucifixion (vv13-16).



93. How often did Pilate testify to Jesus' innocence (from chapter 18:28) and how often did the Jews demand His death?

94. At what time of day was Jesus condemned to death?



The Romans were very **superstitious**. They believed in all kinds of gods. They were further known for their brutality. Criminals were crucified.



Jesus was not guilty. Who was?

The cross



The rough soldiers crucify the Lord Jesus, Who allows

all this to be done to Him, in the centre of the place of execution, Golgotha (vv17-18). Pilate continues to mock the Jews by calling the Crucified One "King of the Jews" (vv19-22).

The pitiless soldiers share out the clothes of Jesus, which they have taken off Him, as if they were a kind of booty. Without knowing it, they fulfil a prophecy from Psalm 22:19 (vv23-24).

Some women and the disciple John are standing near the cross. Even on the cross Jesus thinks of His aged mother Mary (who was probably already a widow by then) and asks John to care for her (vv25-27).

After the three hours of darkness, the prophecy from Psalm 69:21 still had to be fulfilled. Then the Saviour says, "It is finished", and gives up His life (vv28-30).



95. Where is Golgotha?
96. What do they give Jesus to drink?



The **title on the cross** was written in three languages, so that everyone could read it (v20):

- Hebrew was the religious language.
- Latin was the political language.
- Greek was the academic language.

It's a fact: the whole world is guilty of the crucifixion.



What did you feel when you read today's Bible passage?

Death and the grave



The Jews in their hypocritical piety demand a quick end to the

crucifixion, which otherwise can be quite a prolonged event as those crucified die slowly and painfully. In order to speed up their death, the soldiers break the legs of the two criminals. Jesus however, Who was crucified between them, is already dead! A soldier pierces His body with a senseless stab of his spear and out of His side blood and water flow. In this way, another prophecy is fulfilled (vv31-37).

Until now, no one has been aware that Joseph of Arimathea has believed in the Lord Jesus, because he was a coward. But now he bravely goes to Pilate. Nicodemus also takes a clear stand for the Lord Jesus. According to the custom

of the time, they bury the body of the Lord Jesus in a new tomb (vv38-42).



97. Why does John testify that what he sees is true (v35)?

98. Nicodemus at first came to Jesus by night (v39). Where do you read about that?



The **Preparation Day** was the day before the Sabbath,

on which people made the necessary preparations for the day of rest.

“That Sabbath was a high day” because it coincided with the Passover Feast, which was celebrated on the fourteenth day of the month of Abib (v31).



Do the people around you know that you are a disciple of the Lord Jesus?

The resurrection



Early Sunday morning, on the first day of the week, Mary

Magdalene comes to the tomb. She gets a fright: The stone, which had sealed the tomb, has been taken away! She tells the disciples. Peter and John run there. This time Peter is not in the lead. He runs slower than John. Surely, his conscience is still heavy (vv1-5)!

After the two disciples have seen that the tomb is empty, they go home again, sad and disappointed (vv6-10).

They leave Mary standing there on her own. She weeps. – As Christians, don't we also sometimes overlook the needs of others and leave them alone (v11)?

Mary Magdalene longs for the Lord Jesus so much that she doesn't get frightened when she suddenly sees two angels. She

even forgets that she is not strong enough to carry Him away (vv11-15). Only when the Man Who had spoken to her calls her by her name does she realise that it is Jesus (v16)! Now she can give an important message to the disciples: His Father is also our Father, and His God is also our God (vv17-18).



99. What does the risen Lord call His disciples, and also all those who believe in Him?



Mary Magdalene knew the Lord Jesus only as an

earthly Messiah. He told her not to cling to Him in that relationship. Now she would have a new relationship with Him in heaven. That's why she was not allowed to touch Him (v17).



The tomb is empty. Jesus lives!

Faith and doubts



It is Sunday evening. The disciples are together. They

have locked the door because they are afraid. Suddenly Jesus stands in their midst and says twice: "Peace be with you". He also shows them the marks of His crucifixion – but He is alive! And He sends them out into the world, so that they can proclaim forgiveness of sins (vv19-23). – If you are a Christian, you are also commanded to tell those around you that their sins can be forgiven. If they aren't told, they won't be able to believe! Thomas wasn't there, but the others tell him: "We have seen the Lord" (vv24-25). – What do you say to your believing friends if they stay at home on a Sunday?

Next Sunday, Thomas is there again. He doubts and believes only after having seen everything with his own eyes. Although Thomas is a believer, he is unbelieving in this point (vv26-29). How sad!



100. On which days were the disciples together?

101. For what purpose does the Gospel of John report some signs which Jesus did?



The Lord Jesus now has a **resurrection body**. It will be the same with Christians (Philippians 3:21). With this body the Lord Jesus can move in the invisible world, without being limited by space and time. But when He entered the visible world, He was recognised by the disciples.



Are you in the place where the Lord Jesus is in the midst?

"I am going fishing"!



Some of the disciples are again together at the sea of Tiberias.

They are impatient because Jesus has not appeared. Peter says: "I am going fishing". The others follow him (vv1-3). – Everything you do has an influence on others. Are you a good or a bad influence? The night is past. They haven't caught a single fish. There's someone on the shore, telling them to cast the net on the right side. This must have seemed senseless to the disciples, but they are so much at their wits' end that they just obey ... And, what a surprise, the net is full of fish (vv4-6)! Now they recognise that it is their Lord on the shore. Nothing holds Peter back, and he throws himself into the water. But before he does that, he puts on his outer garment,

because this is appropriate before the Lord Jesus (vv7-8). Jesus invites His disciples for breakfast. They are ashamed and don't say anything (vv9-14).



102. Which disciple recognises the Lord Jesus first and why?

103. Can the disciples contribute anything to breakfast (v9)?



John reports three **appearings of the Lord Jesus**, which have a prophetic meaning:

- Chapter 20:19-23: The Lord Jesus is already in the midst of the assembly (church) today.
- Chapter 20:24-29: The Jews in the future will only believe after they have seen Him again.
- Chapter 21:1-8: The Jews bring many people from the sea of nations into the Millennium.



The Lord Jesus doesn't need you, but He wants to use you!

"Do you love me?"



Peter was standing by a fire of coals when he denied his Lord

three times (chapter 18:18). Now Jesus asks him – again by a fire of coals – whether he loves Him. Peter had thought he loved Him more than others. But now Peter answers on each occasion: "You know that I love You". In other words: I recognise no love in myself, but because You know everything, You can see it deep in my heart. In this way, Simon Peter (Simon was his old name) is publicly restored. The Lord Jesus gives him an important responsibility: He was to be a shepherd who would care for other believers (vv15-17). Jesus also says that Peter was going to die as a martyr (vv18-19). Peter wants to know what is going to happen to John. But

the Lord Jesus has to tell him: "You follow Me!" – This is also your responsibility (vv20-23)!



104. What should a shepherd do with the lambs (= young believers)?

105. What would have been the outcome if John had written down every single thing that the Lord Jesus had done (vv24-25)?



Soon after His resurrection, the Lord Jesus had appeared to Simon (Luke 24:34). On that occasion he was able to confess his sin and experience forgiveness. That was his personal **restoration**. What had to follow here was his public restoration before the others.



The Lord Jesus says to you: You follow Me!

The Saviour in the River

Many years ago, an unknown man sacrificed his life in a manner of unparalleled selflessness. After a crash of a commercial aircraft into a river, he saved five other passengers.

The crew of the rescue helicopter, who had come to save those survived still floating in the water, were eye-witnesses of this deed. The pilots saw how a middle-aged man kept passing the rescue equipment to somebody else each time it came down. They made it clear that it was his turn now, yet he passed on the rope.

After five people had been brought to safety by the helicopter in this manner, the man drowned without a cry for help.

"I have never seen anybody with such a willingness for sacrifice", said one of the two helicopter pilots. "I admit that

I had tears in my eyes, and I believe he has earned those tears. He was a truly noble person and a proper hero." – Thus far the report of the daily press.

You probably find it amazing that one person sacrificed himself for five others, don't you? But how much does it touch your heart that there was one Person ready to die for all at the cross of Calvary? Christ, the righteous, died for the unrighteous. The perfect and pure One took upon Himself our guilt and died for you and me. What answer will you give to Him, the Son of God?

Facts and Figures

Author:

David

Time of Writing:

1012-970 BC

Place of Writing:

Various places

Addressees:

The people of Israel

Topic:

The separation of the righteous (the god-fearing) from the unrighteous (the godless) among God's people.

Peculiarities:

The Psalms are very often quoted in the New Testament.

«Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.»

Psalms 1:1

Authors of the Psalms

David – 73 psalms

Asaph – 12 psalms

Sons of Korah – 10 psalms

Solomon – 2 psalms

Moses – 1 psalm

Heman – 1 psalm

Ethan – 1 psalm

Author not listed – 50 psalms

Total – 150 psalms

How it started:

Most psalms were written at the time of David. One of them had already been penned by Moses. The last psalms originated at the time of Ezra in the 5th century BC. Many expositors of the Bible believe that the priest and scribe Ezra, led by the Holy Spirit, finalised the compilation of the Psalms. This is because the division into five books and the headings are the work of an editor.

What it's all about:

Mostly, the psalms are songs which were sung at the religious services of the Israelites. This can be implied by the various instructions regarding how they were to be sung and which accompanying instruments and tunes should be used.

The psalms are written in poetic language. The style of old Hebrew poetry was rarely rhyme (similar sounding endings), although this occurs as well.

What occurs more often is rhyme of thought and verses of thought. In that case the second part of the verse reinforces the thought of the first (Psalm 22:4), shows an opposite idea (34:10) and adds a further thought (1:2).

The writers of the psalms express their feelings more than the authors of the other books of the Bible. Some of the psalms in the first book were written because of certain events (for example 3, 7, 18 and 34).

The Holy Spirit was working in the writers of the psalms so that they also made many prophetic statements about the Messiah. That's why you find the Lord Jesus everywhere in the Psalms. He is seen especially clearly in the so-called "messianic psalms" (for example 16, 22, 24 and 40). But many other psalms also contain prophecies about the Lord Jesus.

An important subject of the First Book of Psalms is the separation of the righteous from the unrighteous among the people of God.

How about today?

The Psalms have always been enjoyed by readers of the Bible in a special way. Why? Because they show what believers have personally experienced with God. You will easily be able to find yourself in many accounts. Further, by reading the Psalms you will get to know and understand the Lord Jesus better.



The English word "psalms" means "songs", which are accompanied by instruments.



In the psalms you will learn a lot about the Lord Jesus' deepest feelings.

Fruit or chaff?



Do you know people who don't care about God?

They ignore His commandments; they waste their time mocking Him. Are they happy doing that? Certainly not. Something is certain, though: God will condemn them.

In contrast to them is a man whose life is filled with different things. He gets to know the Word of God, thinks about it and enjoys it. It's possible he is mocked by others, but he is like a tree planted by the water – healthy and strong. At the right time he brings fruit for God. "The LORD knows the way of the righteous." It is a life worth living!



1. How are people who don't care about God described

in today's psalm?

2. The third verse of this psalm expresses the same thought as Jeremiah 17:8. Which additional promise can you take from there, if you dig deep into God's Word?



Chaff is that part of wheat, barley etc. which is worthless

and has to be discarded. This used to be done by a process called winnowing in the wind.



Sinners and mockers are mentioned in the plural. On the contrary, if you walk in God's way you are an individual.

You can't avoid Christ



This psalm speaks mainly of a future time. Mighty

nations rise up

against God (vv1-2). They decide to finally break away from Him (v3).

These are mighty powers before which people tremble, but God is not impressed by them. He can't even take their plans seriously; He has to laugh at them.

But then He gets serious and the would-be rulers of the world are silenced. The Son of God returns and shatters His enemies. Those who want to escape judgment have to flee – into the arms of the judge (v12)!



3. Acts 4:25-26 quotes the first two verses of today's

psalm. Which opponents of the Lord Jesus are mentioned there by name?

4. Who is the "Anointed" at the end of verse 2?

5. To which object are the nations whom the LORD will punish compared?



The prophetic interpretations of the **Psalms** can be

varied. There are prophecies relating to the history of Israel. Many statements refer to Christ, His life and His death. Often they deal with future events. For example verse 9 speaks of the time when the Lord Jesus will finally conquer His opponents shortly before the beginning of the Millennium.



Christians are able to gladly accept the Lord Jesus as Ruler now. Non-Christians will be forced to in a coming day.

Praying people can sleep better



David is isolated: Psalm 3 talks about the time when he fled

from his son Absalom. Many are against him; his situation is desperate. No wonder he is yearning for better times. He tells God about his situation in prayer. As a result he finds inner peace, although his outward situation hasn't changed.

Tip: Take time to read the background story to this psalm in 2 Samuel 15:10-14+23-30. Psalm 4, a teaching psalm, may have been written at the same time as Psalm 3. The author experienced that God answers prayer. The teaching: Tell God your problems – He will help you.



6. Why is it that David can sleep quietly, although

he is in a life threatening situation?

7. Which points that are addressed in Psalm 4:2-4 are also mentioned by Paul in Ephesians 4:25-27?



73 out of the total of 150 **psalms** were, according

to their headings, written by David. Furthermore, the New Testament attributes Psalm 2 and 95 to David as well (Acts 4:25; Hebrews 4:7). In the First Book of Psalms, 37 out of the 41 psalms are written by David.



If you believe that God hears you when you cry out in your need, you are in good company.

Prayer in the morning



In his life, David had learnt to tell God all his worries: in

words, in groaning, and also in crying. The reason is his firm conviction that God hears prayer. He will protect those who come to Him. But you have to be honest before God. Deceivers and liars can't fool Him. He takes sides with those who fear Him, and who admit that they are lost without Him. Unlike David, Christians don't pray that their enemies will be punished (v10). On the contrary: As a follower of the Lord Jesus you ought to love your enemies (Matthew 5:44).



8. At which time of day does it say here that David prays to

God?

9. What does verse 9 prove, if you compare it with the quote in Romans 3:13?



Some **headings of the psalms** give instructions for

their musical performance. The Israelites were familiar with a variety of **musical instruments** that were used to accompany the praise: cymbals and the tambourine, as well as different kinds of wind and string instruments. This psalm, for example, is headed "Nehiloth" – "with flutes".



Be honest: Can you pray "Make Your way straight before my face" instead of "Make my way straight before my face"?

We need God's grace



David prays to God. Again, he is at his wits' end.

Mighty enemies

are against him. He is worn out by daily struggles. His conscience is also against him: The LORD to Whom he prays has reason to punish him and to be angry. The enemies may be as unjust and evil as they wish – David understands that he is subject to God's discipline.

God has to heal our inside wounds. Only then will we be free. Then we will thank Him that He has put an end to the struggles of our conscience. And the people around us will be surprised how happy we have become.



10. What do learn from 1 Chronicles 15:20-21 about the

expression "on the Sheminith"?
11. With which two "arguments" does David try to convince the LORD that He should save him?



Don't play with God's grace. Have you sinned? Be honest and admit it.

God's judgment is righteous



It remains unknown who Cush the Benjamite is, but

it is certain that David had to suffer much from this man. Just put yourself in David's shoes: Someone accuses you of something terrible. You are slandered. People get together against you, their accusations becoming worse and worse. Are they right? You ask yourself: "What have I done?" You become insecure and begin to doubt. What does David do? He confides in God. God is righteous; He is the one to examine him. With the best judge on his side, David can be calm. He has an advantage over his slanderer, who knows neither himself nor the danger he is in.



12. A proverb has been derived from one of the verses of

this psalm. Which one? Clue: Read also Psalm 9:15 and Proverbs 26:27.

13. Which organs does David mention that God examines (KJV or JND translation)? Do you know the inferred meaning of these organs?



Saul, David's arch enemy, was a Benjamite.

Therefore it's no surprise that many an enemy of David came from this tribe. See also 2 Samuel 16:5-13.



How good it is to speak with your Lord in prayer! He tests "hearts and minds". He listens to you if you are honest.

Who is the Lord of the world?



When we are out in the great outdoors, in nature, we

soon see what our limits are. We see some things that are tiny, while others are incredibly large; some contain incredible variety; others are unimaginably strong or fast. It seems as if humans are insignificant.

No. God had appointed Adam as ruler. The people on earth were supposed to represent God. They are not unimportant at all. But mankind has failed miserably. That's why the second Man, the last Adam, Christ, had to put everything back in order. Prophetically, this psalm gives us an impressive insight into how the Lord Jesus humbled Himself (v5) and how He will be exalted as Son of Man, the

One to Whom God has given dominion over the whole world (vv6-8).

How glorious it will be when the Lord Jesus will one day reign in peace and righteousness (v9)!



14. On what occasion does the Lord Jesus quote verse 2? Clue: Have a look in Matthew 21.

15. Verses 6-8 are quoted in relation to the Lord Jesus in Hebrews 2. From Hebrews 2:8, what do you learn about the time of His rule?



**Christ is the Lord of the world.
Be subject to Him!**

Living with God – experiencing miracles



This psalm is a psalm of praise. David tells of how he feels

under the guidance of God. Thinking about God, he finds good reasons to praise Him: with God, he finds protection from his enemies. He is certain that God is a righteous judge (v4). He knows that God reigns in eternity (v7). Those who are oppressed, the poor and needy, can rely on Him, even if it seems as though He has forgotten them (v18). God's judgment over evil may consist in people getting themselves into trouble (v16). The end of this psalm conveys a very important thought: We, as human beings, should recognise that we are just that – only humans, small, weak and helpless. God is great, therefore He should be feared.



16. Verse 12 says that God remembers and avenges shed

blood. Do you know when that was? Clue: Think of the beginning of the history of man.

17. What does David “promise” God, because he wants Him to be gracious to him?

18. What does God do to the name of the ungodly?



The heading “Death of the Son” may be a musical instruction (Hebrew: Muth Labben) and refers to the death of the Son of God.



Those who trust God will not be forgotten by Him.

God sees everything



Greed and covetousness suit the ungodly, but not someone

who believes in God. The ungodly thinks himself to be very clever. He knows tricks, he is crafty, and he is convinced that he finds his way always and everywhere. He believes that God is not interested in his antics. He even believes that God doesn't exist (v4). Have a good look at how the behaviour of the ungodly is described (see question 19). Lying, deceit and murder are everyday events in our society. The victims are the poor, orphans, those who are unhappy and those who are meek. In God's future kingdom, righteousness will reign again. Christ will rule on the earth. He doesn't overlook anything, nor does He forget

anything. The psalmist is thinking of this future era.



19. Look at all the negative activities of the ungodly in verses 8-10 and try to find a fitting positive type of behaviour which you as a Christian can show!



Psalms 9 and 10 are closely connected. That's why Psalm 10 doesn't have a heading. If you take both psalms together, the first letters of the verses follow the order of the Hebrew alphabet (an acrostic or "alphabet" psalm). The expression: "Arise, O LORD!" connects both psalms further (Psalm 9:19 and 10:12).



To practise unrighteousness is shameful; to suffer unrighteousness is not. Christ, the Judge, will judge everything righteously.

To stand fast



Have you decided to trust in God? Then you have taken the same

position as David in this psalm. Now you must show this attitude in a practical way: Should Christians flee in difficulties; should they hide? Unbelievers are watching us! They check up on our integrity. The foundations of society are destroyed. Have you noticed how up to date this psalm is? As a Christian, you often stand alone when you want to be upright and faithful to your Lord.

"What can the righteous do?" David doesn't even answer this directly. Instead, he remembers his God in heaven. It is He Who tests the people. He loves the upright. He hates those who love violence. God has

everything in His sight and holds all things in His hand. There is no reason to panic.



20. What will the ungodly have in their cup? What does this speak of?
21. What does God do from heaven?



God's eyes test the children of men (v4). For the ungodly, this is an uncomfortable, even unbearable thought – but the righteous is happy about it (Psalm 139:23-24)!



If you find it doesn't pay to be honest, remember the Lord Jesus. He values it!

Man's treachery and God's constancy



Many lies are told every day. Sometimes you could be inclined

to think that everything is a lie. Untruths are told, feelings are feigned, and facts are turned upside down. With their mouths, many save themselves out of uncomfortable situations. But before God, no one can get away with lying. Pure words: That's how God's language is described. God doesn't lie, neither does He say anything unconsidered. God will keep believers, even if unrighteousness prevails more and more (vv7-8). The Lord Jesus also prays in John 17:15 that God the Father will keep believers from evil.



22. How is the language of the ungodly described in verses 2 and 3? List four characteristics!

23. Compare verse 3 with James 3:5. What do you notice?

◆ What can you learn from verse 3 with regard to what you say?



Silver is a precious metal which, in ancient times, was gained from ore. In order to remove all impurities, it was heated (its melting point is nearly 1,000°C). Then the silver could be "drawn off". In the Bible, silver is often mentioned as a means of payment.



The Word of God is pure, the whole truth.

Sometimes it takes a long time



Prayers may be loud and clear. "How long, O LORD?" David

becomes impatient. "Consider and hear me, O LORD my God." Maybe you also have "How long" questions in your life: "For how long do I have to put up with being bullied all the time?" – "How long until I have discovered what is God's will for me regarding a job?" – "How long do I have to wait for a confirmation for an apprenticeship?" – "How long do I have to wait until God shows me if and who I should marry?"

Do you think God was getting annoyed with David, persisting in his prayer? Was He getting fed-up with being asked four times "How long?" Certainly not!

It was just the opposite: God helped. That's why a prayer of thanks follows (v6). Again, the words are simple and clear. God loves it when we trust in His goodness.



24. Can you find the verse in the New Testament which says that God is a rewarder of those who seek Him? Clue: Hebrews chapter 11.
25. David wants to sing. Why?



Don't use fancy words when you pray – pray honestly and always try to thank God for something.

The ungodly and the righteous



The Bible isn't soft on atheists (those who deny the existence of God) (v1). They are called "fools". What God sees from heaven is really terrible (vv2-3). God pronounces a devastating judgment for our bad, ungodly behaviour, which can only be taken away if we believe that another has paid the penalty for our sin: Jesus Christ. Psalm 15 shows good behaviour: To live correctly and righteously, to say the truth with conviction (v2), not to put anyone in a bad light, to be fair, not to reproach anyone (v3), to hate what God hates and love what God loves (v4), and all this without selfishness (v5). – There's much for God's servants to do!



26. Psalm 14:3 is quoted in the New Testament. Do you know the context? Clue: Letter to the Romans (first quarter).
27. Summarise the subject of Psalm 15 in one sentence!



Live correctly, be fair and tell the truth!

Confidence in God



The heading "Michtam" possibly means "poem". This goes well with the contents of the psalm, as David, in impressive poetic language, describes his confidence in God in any situation. God, Who is higher than David, looks after people who follow Him. David is glad, because God is always with him, even at night. He finds stability and security for his life in confidence in his God (vv8-9). You can also experience the same. This psalm refers especially to the Lord Jesus and contains an important prophetic statement concerning Him. In the New Testament, Peter and Paul explain that Jesus Christ was this Man Who died, but His body didn't see corruption because He rose again on the

third day (v10) (Acts 2:27-31 and 13:35). God's "way of life" is wonderful. David knows that real joy can only be found "in the presence of God" (v11).



28. What instructs David?

29. Why is David sure that he will not be moved?



Verses 5 and 6 provide hints about the history of Israel.

After their journey through the wilderness, the Promised Land was distributed. It was shared out by **lot**, and everyone had to be content with the lot fallen to him.



Jesus says: "Have faith in God." (Mark 11:22)

Prayer of the righteous



In prayer, David speaks with confidence to God, because

he knows that God hears the believer. He is completely open before God! God sees the heart and thoughts, even if the words are not said out loud. David feels free before God, because his conscience is clear. God's Word has kept him from mistakes. And yet, he has a huge problem: He has deadly enemies.

Now think of the Lord Jesus. His relationship with God was perfect. God didn't find any sin in Him; the words He spoke exactly represented Who He was (v3) (John 8:25). And yet, or just because of this, He had many enemies. They nailed Him to the cross where He died. But now He is risen and lives in heaven (v15).



30. What illustration from the animal kingdom does David

use to express his desire for safety?

31. To which animal is the ungodly compared here?

32. With what four characteristics are the "men of the world" described in verse 14?



Verses 14 and 15 show a marked contrast between

those who live only for this earth and those who possess a heavenly inheritance. You will find a similar contrast in Philippians 3:19-20.



Like David, be determined to stay on the right path: the path that follows the Lord Jesus.

Be thankful



The heading of this psalm explains the situation in which

David prays: He thanks God at the end of his life. You find this prayer for the first time in 2 Samuel 22.

God led David through a life full of changes. Success and failure, triumph and defeat, peace and danger of life were always close together. What does David say about this God? He starts his prayer with a declaration of his love (v1). Then he expresses with poetic beauty what God means to him personally (v3). God listens to David, who calls to Him in his distress (v6)! He does amazing things for the benefit of His servant. David compares the mighty acts of God with an earthquake, smoke, wind, rain, hail, thunder and lightning. He

is convinced: God works only miracles for those who trust Him.

At the same time verses 4-6 refer to the death of Jesus on the cross and describe His agony.



33. What is the LORD for David (v2)?



The first few verses of a psalm often summarise the

subject. It's the same with Psalm 18 (see verses 1-3). Sometimes the first few verses also present the result of the teaching of the psalm.



Have you ever told God that you love Him?

Everything is possible with God



When the Israelites fled from Egypt, the Red Sea was an insurmountable obstacle. Then God divided the waters and in that way saved His people. Verse 16 seems to hint at this occasion. David was saved in just as dramatic a way. He was drawn “out of many waters”, kept from his strong enemy. Verses 19-24 refer especially to Christ again, the One Who was without sin and did everything that God wanted. That’s why God also “delighted” in Him (v19).

This psalm also speaks into your day-to-day life. Are you also standing right in front of an insurmountable obstacle? If so, take verse 29 for yourself personally!



34. What does God do for people who please Him?

35. Can you summarise God’s actions in verses 25 and 26 in one sentence?

36. Clean hands: How often does this text refer to them and what does this expression mean?



The **wall** in verse 29 either refers to a close array

of enemies who have put themselves in the way of the attacker just like a wall, or a fortification erected by the enemies.



You can leap over the wall with God!

Why we need God



God gives strength, endurance and skill. He helps us

to stand firm and be successful against our enemies. If David is now an accepted leader, it’s only because God has given him this special position (v43). In contrast to David, God does not grant you revenge on your enemies (v47), but He gives you the strength to love your enemies. Despite this, you can experience the same in your day-to-day life: God helps those who – like David – trust in Him.

David is doing well. Couldn’t there be the danger that he believes that all this is his own doing, if he listens to the flattery of his subjects? No, David doesn’t forget that God has made him great. This keeps him from pride.



37. What exactly has made David great?
38. What difference

is there between verse 35 and Ephesians 6:16-17?

39. What will David do after God has freed him from his enemies?



What I am, I am through Christ.

Two revelations of God



Many are fascinated by what goes on in the universe.

Celestial bodies move according to a complicated plan. Day and night alternate (v2). The most noticeable star is the sun. Its visible path and the heat it emits are amazing (vv4-6). The celestial bodies speak a language, a language without words (v4): God the Creator is indescribably great. Verse 7 changes the subject. The psalm now deals with God's law. This law is a wonderful proof of His greatness, but also the revelation of His will. God's commandments direct, teach and make glad.

In verse 11 David starts speaking about himself. His desire is to please God more.



40. Verses 7 and 8 speak of four characteristics and four effects of the laws of God. List them!



In the symbolic language of the Bible, the **sun** is often a symbol of the glorified Son of Man, the Lord Jesus, Who will reign over the whole earth in the future. The prophet Malachi (3:2) announces Him as the Sun of Righteousness. In the New Testament, the sun is often mentioned in connection with the Lord Jesus as Son of Man (i.e. Matthew 17:2).



God's commandments have a preserving effect in your life!

Prayer for others



Prayers are not always the same. There are prayers to give thanks,

prayers for your own needs and prayers for others. The latter are prayers in which you bring the problems or worries of others before God. The pattern for such prayer can be found in today's psalm: that God will help the person we pray for. But it's more important that this fact becomes known: God has the power to protect everyone. He must be praised. You could conclude from verses 5-9 that this psalm may have been prayed by the king before a battle. This is because the author expresses this thought clearly: Confidence in a strong army instead of in God is foolish confidence (v7). David made this mistake once himself. We read about it in 2 Samuel 24.



41. What do those who go into battle without God put their confidence in?



"Horses and chariots" used to be a term symbolic of the size of an army. Those who trusted in them despised God, who alone could give the victory. Isaiah 31:1 is a remarkable reference for this.



How much do you pray for others?

All power is from God



David is a successful king. He has emerged victorious from

many battles, has enlarged the borders of his country considerably and has brought Israel into an era of glory. Our psalm tells us about this king, about David: Everything he is and has, all his success, is only from God. It almost sounds as though David hasn't done anything. God has fought for him (v8). David has learnt this in his turbulent life. This psalm clearly refers to the Messiah. He will be victorious over His enemies, when He comes onto the earth to establish His reign of peace. He, Who men crowned with a crown of thorns and killed in the most brutal manner, was raised by God and crowned with glory and honour (vv3-5)

(Hebrews 2:9). One day He will come again and reign as King.



42. In what is the glory of the King great?

43. What will the LORD do with the descendants of His enemies?



Your life comes from God. Live it for Him.

"Why have You forsaken Me?"



This psalm is a prophetic psalm throughout.

David's words

point us to the cross, where the Lord Jesus suffered and died. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, David speaks about things which he couldn't really know: that Jesus would suffer terrible thirst in His death (v15), and that the soldiers would share out His clothes but gamble over His coat (v18). The psalm opens with the words which Jesus said when it became completely dark on Calvary. Has not everyone who trusted in God received help? But God was silent in response to the call of Jesus. People mocked Him. "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him" (v8) (Matthew 27:43).



44. To which animals does David compare his enemies?

45. In the first 21 verses, there are a number of prophecies which were literally fulfilled in the sufferings of the Lord Jesus on the cross. List them!



Jesus said the words "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" in Aramaic. That was His mother tongue.



**Why this suffering?
Because of you and me!**

It is finished!



The first part of this psalm ended with “You have answered

Me”! Christ has been answered: God raised Him from the dead. The Risen One now hastens to make His “brethren” acquainted with the relationship into which His work has brought them: His Father has become their Father, and His God has become their God (v22) (John 20:17).

In contrast to other psalms which deal with the sufferings of Christ, this psalm does not speak about judgment on the enemies. Why not? Because the main subject of the psalm is that the Lord was forsaken by God. Surely, the sufferings inflicted by men are also mentioned, but the emphasis is more on the terrible

circumstances under which He meets the judgment of God. The result of God striking His Son can only be blessing – blessing which extends to the ends of the earth (v27) and into the future (vv30-31).



46. Who could be meant by “the great assembly” in verse 25? Remember that this deals with the future of the Israelites.

47. Who will return to the LORD? Which point in time does this prophecy refer to?

48. Who will praise the LORD?



The Lord Jesus can and desires to start a song of praise to God in your heart.

A shepherd speaks about the Shepherd



The shepherd David has written this most well known of all

psalms and to some extent takes on the role of a sheep which is being cared for in a perfect way by the perfect Shepherd – God Himself. The believer lacks nothing (v1); he can look in all directions with confidence:

- under me – green pastures (v2)
- beside me – still waters (v2)
- with me – God Himself (v4)
- before me – a table prepared (v5)
- behind me – goodness and mercy (v6)
- above me – the house of God (v6).



49. How many good things does the LORD do for David as

Shepherd?

50. What awaits David in the future?

◆ How about some memory training? Do you think you can manage to learn the 23rd Psalm by heart in a week? For the next 6 days, a memory verse will be added to each page.



The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.



A great thing: to look death in the eye and to still confide in God.

A king speaks about a King



This psalm answers three questions:

- Who does the world belong to? God, because He created it and keeps it going (vv1-2).
- Who will stand at God's side and be blessed by Him? He who does good and out of conviction rejects evil. All those who desire to live like this belong to the people of God (vv3-6).
- Who is the King of glory? God Himself, the LORD of hosts, Who is mighty and strong in battle (vv7-10).

We know that “the King of glory” refers to the Son of God, Who will one day appear in power and glory to establish His kingdom.



51. Four characteristics describe one who

receives blessing from the LORD. Which characteristics are these (vv4-5)?
52. By which name is God called four times in this psalm?



He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

The order of the Psalms is significant, which is shown in Psalms 22-24:

- Psalm 22 – past: the Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep (John 10:11).
- Psalm 23 – present: the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20) cares for His sheep.
- Psalm 24 – future: the Chief Shepherd appears in glory (1 Peter 5:4).



Those who await the Lord Jesus from heaven live differently from others.

A good teacher



David doesn't like sitting quietly at home. He acts where necessary.

He fights and reigns. But he is no risk taker! There are times when he doesn't do anything. Those who want to learn must listen. David knows God as Teacher. He wants to know the right path for his life. Is God only a judge who rewards what is good and punishes what is bad? That would be terrible, because David has also done many wrong things. No, God forgives! And He instructs the sinner. He takes him out of the net. He forgives our sins and helps us to become honest and open. The last verse is wonderful: David doesn't speak of his sorrows any more, but remembers only the people of God.



53. What does God promise to those who fear Him?

54. Through which two good characteristics does David hope to be preserved on his path with God?

55. How often does David express in this psalm that he puts all his confidence in God and expects everything from Him?



He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of

righteousness for His name's sake.



Study in the school of life with God, the best Teacher, and allow yourself to be taught by Him.

Cleansed for the house of God



David knows that he can only serve God if he is clean. Sin spoils

fellowship with God. He asks God to examine him. He wants God to test even the hidden thoughts. Contact with bad people must be broken. Why do we as Christians go to church meetings? Because we want to have fellowship with God and His people. We thank God and speak with Him of what He has done. We avoid contact with ungodly people. Those who live, or desire to live, in such a way will experience God's help. David stands firm – in an even place.



56. What does David have before his eyes?

57. Which man in the New Testament thought he could wash his hands of guilt?



Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Christians are cleansed by the blood of Christ. But their fellowship with God is spoiled if they do something wrong. God must examine us as well, and we also must confess our sins, before we can enjoy **fellowship** with God again.



Thank God that He has saved you, and have the courage to say so openly.

To live with God



This is a psalm full of confidence. If we seek God, our faith will

grow. The Lord lights our way, keeps us safe and defends us. David wants to live with God. The words “house”, “temple” and “pavilion” all refer to the temple.

David knows: If I give God first place, He will sort out my day-to-day problems. He is more reliable than father or mother. God is a teacher and leader (v11).

“Unless I had believed ...” (v13) has become David's motto for his life. Many Christians can but agree to this. – You too?



58. Find out where in the life of the Lord Jesus verse 2 was

fulfilled!

59. What does David instruct the reader of the psalm to do?



You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

David often spoke of the temple, but he was not allowed to build it since he had shed too much blood. But God showed him the exact plans, and David made all the precious building materials available (1 Chronicles 28+29).



Seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). This will be rewarded by God.

Does God really listen?



We're not always optimistic. Sometimes, we are suddenly full

of doubt. Compare Psalm 27 with the first few verses of Psalm 28. Why is God silent? Does He actually hear my prayers? Hopefully, God will make a difference between believers and unbelievers! In verse 6, the person praying in this psalm starts to become calmer.

David has had the experience of being heard by God. He has helped him in many dangerous situations. Remembering this gives him fresh courage. In verse 8, the psalm changes from David to the people of God. God protects those who believe in Him. All those who belong to Him are saved forever.



60. In what direction does David lift his hands when he

prays?

61. David mentions two characteristics of the ungodly. Which ones are they?

62. David desires that God should do four things for His people. List them!



Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.



God has helped believers to this day. You can also continue to trust in Him!

God's power displayed in nature



King David instructs us to worship God as the Almighty

God. We experience some amazing displays of power during a thunderstorm:

loud thunder, lightning that destroys massive trees and starts fires, sand storms, spring tides – this is the voice of God. The Bible doesn't only teach us that God has created the world. It also shows us that what happens in nature is also directed by Him. God controls the course of the year, the cycle of the day, the water cycle and more. How else would it have been possible for the great flood to have occurred in Genesis 7? Would it have been possible for natural powers to divide the waters of the Red Sea?

Yes, God is Lord over all. He will give strength and peace to His people.



63. How often does this psalm mention the voice of the

LORD?

64. Can you express with adjectives how the psalmist describes the voice of the LORD in the individual verses?



Do you know Psalm 23 off by heart now?

The first and the last verse are "mirror images" of each other. First we should give God glory and strength, then He will give His people strength and peace. This is one of the styles of **biblical poetry**.



God intervenes in your life. Put yourself on His side!

A song of dedication



David dedicates a temple that hasn't even been built yet. Strange,

isn't it? But after the preceding psalms, in which he describes a temple without having seen it, his thoughts are now already with his son Solomon who will later dedicate the temple (1 Kings 8).

What does he want to tell God on this occasion? That He has saved him, healed him and kept him alive; that his life may have consisted of ups and downs, but God has always been with him.

David has recognised that God has a purpose in our lives: We as believers should recognise that He leads us and should confess Him to others when opportunities present themselves.



favour?

65. How long does God's anger last, and what about His



It was the custom in Israel to be clothed in **sackcloth** (v11) as a sign of mourning. This dark mourning garment was made from rough cloth.

For Your name's sake



What do we do when we are afraid? How do we defend

ourselves against the attacks of our enemies? We pray to God: "Listen!" and "Help us!" (vv2-4). The conclusion in verse 6 is an important condition if our prayers are to be effective: The person who prays must trust in God.

When you pray you don't need to achieve some kind of powerful act. David speaks of how terrible he feels. He speaks of sorrow, lack of strength, mocking and loneliness. Verse 12 even tells us that he feels of no use. Faith reaches its limit. But David trusts completely in his God (v14).



66. Part of verse 5 occurs again in the New Testament. Do you know in which context? 67. Who did David hate?



In the Old Testament, God is often described or addressed as a **rock**. This makes you think of immovability, stability and firmness. Faith that rests on such a foundation can't be shaken (Matthew 7:25).



As a Christian, you are able to rejoice over things which others can't see.



If you, as a Christian, get into a crisis, you can turn to the best counsellor: God.

My times are in Your hand



“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under

heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; ... a time of war, and a time of peace” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, 8). But as Christians, we are assured: All our times are in the hand of our God. He has determined their sequence and length in advance – this applies in particular to difficult times. Those who trust in God and His Word will not fail. Those who don't believe in the living God will fail. God hears David, although David, in a crisis situation, thought he was alone (v22). God preserves (v23). He will make us strong and courageous again.



68. Compare verse 19 with Romans 2:3-4. What do

you notice concerning the goodness of God?

69. From what does God hide those who trust Him?



God is a righteous God. But He is also a gracious God. Those who belong to Him are secure forever.

Forgiveness of sins



David has sinned. What does he do now? First of all he hides his

guilt – with the consequence that he loses his joy and spiritual strength. After long inner torment he reveals his unrighteousness before God – and then God covers it. He rejoices over God's gracious forgiveness.

Think about it: Being silent doesn't make anything better. Your conscience torments you. You only feel free after an honest confession.

From verse 6 we read about the consequence: It's better not to wait but to pray to God immediately. It's better to live according to God's instruction, the Bible. It's better to obey immediately than to wait. – Only by doing these things you can live a joyful life (v11).



70. Psalm 32:1-2 is quoted in the New Testament. Do you

know where? Clue: The Letter to the Romans (first quarter). 71. Which animals are mentioned in the psalm as an example to be avoided?



“**Bit and bridle**” (v9) are a symbol of the unpleasant means

which God has to use if we don't stay near Him. It's much better if we allow ourselves to be instructed, taught and advised by the Word of God and in fellowship with the Lord Jesus (v8).



Are you silent, or do you speak to God about your sins?

Man proposes, God disposes



Today you have read a typical teaching psalm.

It starts with the praise of the righteous. They sing a new song (vv1-3). This reminds us of another new song, which the redeemed will sing in heaven in honour of the Lamb of God (Revelation 5:9-10). During the course of the psalm you read that everything that God plans will happen. People can try and make plans, but if their plans are opposed to God's plans they will fail. Therefore allow yourself to be led by God and His Word. Heaven and earth were made by the word of the LORD. He spoke, and it was done, says verse 9. But He is not only the Creator, He also guides everyday events. The universe is not a machine that just

runs by itself. God maintains it every day, every hour, every minute and every second. He sees everything and guides everything according to His will. Once you have understood this properly, you will never rely on yourself any more.



72. Which musical instruments accompany the new song?

73. What can you infer from verse 9 about what happened at creation?



God looks after you every day. Do you think about that?

God saves the weak



With regard to its content, this psalm is closely connected

with the previous one. David draws this lesson from his experiences: He who has God as guide will be saved; he who believes God will be heard. – Think carefully about the first verse of this psalm. When times are easy it is also easy to praise God, isn't it? But how are things with you concerning "at all times"?

David repeatedly emphasises his weakness. He is afraid. He is weak. He is just the opposite of a young lion. He can't help himself. When you are aware of this, God will also help you. We have to remember verse 21 well: Those who don't listen to God and hate believers will have to receive the punishment

for their own actions. Evil inevitably leads to death!



74. Where does the angel of the LORD encamp?

75. There are four pieces of good advice given in just one verse of the psalm. What is the advice?

76. To whom is the LORD near?



The heading of the psalm provides information about

the time in David's life when this psalm was written. Therefore, it is important that you should read the background story in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. **Abimelech** is the title of the kings of the Philistines; here the king is named Achish.



To allow God to help you keeps you from your own mistakes.

God with us



Often we want to solve our problems ourselves. This

psalm points out clearly: It is better to allow God to fight for us. Our enemies are keen to get us, aiming at our weaknesses. But God is greater; He can defend us effectively. Those who oppose us are slanderous and take pleasure in our hurt. But this shouldn't tempt us to pay them back in the same way. That's not the way to act for disciples of the Lord Jesus. When they see others suffer, they try to help, try to share in the suffering. For you as a Christian, the commandment of the Lord Jesus applies: "Love your enemies, ... pray for those who ... persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).



77. Which weapons are mentioned in the text?

78. Where do David's many enemies come from?



The **angel of the LORD** is mentioned twice in the Psalms:

Psalm 34:7 and here in verses 5-6. If you compare these two passages, you could say: The angel of the LORD is either Saviour or Judge. It's not hard to apply this to the Lord Jesus, and that's impressive.

Innocent – yet found guilty



We already read about it yesterday, and here it is again

today: David reaffirms that his enemies hate him without a cause (vv7+19). This points us to the Lord Jesus Who speaks in John 15:24-25 of being "hated ... without a cause", which He experienced more than any other.

The peak of this hatred was that He, the perfectly innocent One, was condemned to death and nailed to a cross. His enemies saw Him hanging there (v21).

But we read in Revelation 1:7: "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him." Christ won't be on the cross then, but will appear in His glory as Judge.



79. Which body parts of David's enemies are

mentioned in today's text?

80. For how long does David want to speak of God's praise?



Verse 21 reminds us of a scene at the **crucifixion** of the

Lord Jesus. He was mocked and ridiculed by His enemies in a most terrible way. Even the "Aha!" is mentioned in this psalm (Mark 15:29).



To live consistently with God can create enemies for you.



Are you hated without a cause? Remember what the Lord Jesus suffered!

Ungodly



Ungodly people don't fear God. They are proud of negative things.

Things that are beautiful and good have no attraction for them. They have given up on being wise and doing good (v3). It's probably too much effort.

Positive things, on the other hand, demand all your energy. Once you have invested this energy, you receive an incomparably high return. God protects you (v7), He satisfies you (v8), He lets you drink from the fountain of life and He gives you light (v9). The light helps you to better see and understand God, yourself and the world.



81. What does David think when he sees the transgression of the ungodly?

82. How great is God's goodness?

83. Where do life and light come from?



**"Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good."
(Romans 12:9)**

Don't be angry



"It's only by trickery and deceit that you can make progress. It's not worthwhile being honest. If you don't lie you get left behind." "Hang on!" says this psalm. Are you actually envious and angry because of this supposed liberty of ungodly people? This anger is dangerous; it can tempt you to do evil.

Pray to God. "Commit your way to the LORD". For you that means, ask God to lead you, every day anew. Do good. Don't get worked up. Sin has consequences (v20). So does doing good (v11). It's too early to judge everything by what you can see at the moment. Many rich are forgotten and their riches have vanished. But the righteous are not forgotten by God, even if they were poor here.



84. Verse 11 says that the meek will inherit the earth.

Do you know a verse in the New Testament that sounds similar? Clue: You can find it in the so-called Sermon on the Mount.

85. What will happen to the sword of the wicked?

86. One verse compares the actions of the ungodly with those of the righteous. What actions are they?



The Bible mentions **God laughing** on various occasions:

Psalm 2:4; 37:13; Proverbs 1:26.



**"Do not be envious of evil men ...
Do not fret because of evildoers."
(Proverbs 24:1+19)**

Of what value is it to do good?



This psalm often speaks of the righteous (singular or plural).

The ungodly hate them (vv12 and 32); but God upholds them (v17), He is always with them (v25), and He saves and strengthens them (v39). The righteous themselves are characterised by giving graciously to others from their goods (v21), although they may not have very much themselves (v16). They speak wisely, and in their heart is the Word of God (vv30-31).

– Are these characteristics of the righteous also found in you?



87. What has David never seen in his life?

88. Who has a future of peace?



“I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken.” – Never! Not even today!

Do you deserve God's anger?



David knows: We cause pain to ourselves if we act wrongly (sin)

against God. He feels God's discipline.

This psalm also contains verses with a strong prophetic meaning. Christ, the sinless One, took the punishment for sins. He was deserted by His disciples; at the cross His loved ones and friends stood away from His pain (v11) (Luke 23:49).

He could remain quiet when accused unjustly (vv13-14). His enemies hated Him without a cause, although He did good to His adversaries (v20). He was prepared to suffer for others. That's what characterised Him. That's how He went to the cross. He wanted to save you and me from God's wrath.



89. What was the cause for the divine anger that David

felt?

90. How did David deal with his sin?



David's enemies rewarded him evil for good. The

Christian principle is just the opposite: As Christians, we repay evil with good and thus overcome evil (Romans 12:21).



All of us have deserved God's anger. Only through Christ, the punishment can be turned away.

Life is short



Our life is short and accompanied by sickness. We work hard for our

living, but we don't know how long we can enjoy it for. How many people have despaired in this "treadmill" way of life! It doesn't help to complain about the toils of life. Ask God to lighten the load, and be thankful for every good day.

And: Remember that God has reserved an inheritance in heaven for you, if you are a Christian, and no one and nothing can cause any harm to it (1 Peter 1:4). This will give a new direction to your life.



91. With what did David want to restrain his mouth?

92. Which two illustrations does David use for human life and for a (restless) man?



Pray with Psalm 90:12:
"So teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

Confidence in God



The author of today's psalm expresses great confidence. He

trusts in God, and that's never a mistake. The problems are great, but the salvation is greater.

David, who is also a talented musician, now starts talking about a song of praise: God puts the song into his mouth. Verses 6-8 are quoted in Hebrews 10:5-9: Christ came into the world in order to do God's will. He became the perfect sacrifice for sins, which couldn't be taken away by animal sacrifices. Christians can be certain that they are sanctified by the once and for all sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:10).



93. Which verse in Psalm 40 points to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus?

94. In this psalm, David speaks of two things which can't be counted. What are they?



"Messianic psalms" are those psalms which especially

have Christ, the Messiah, as their subject. Psalm 40 is one of those psalms. This becomes very clear by the quote from Psalm 40 in Hebrews 10.



Thank the Lord Jesus that He came into the world to do God's will.

To become happy



God especially cares for those who care for others first of

all. "The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself" (Proverbs 11:25).

Are you ill at the moment?

Take verse 3 as an encouragement.

It is terrible when others rejoice over your illness and claim that it comes as a punishment from God. David experienced this. Yet he clung to God and He sustained him. The Lord Jesus personally experienced verse 9. Don't be discouraged if you have been disappointed by a friend.



95. In what way did the Lord Jesus have the same experience

as David in verse 9?

◆ Just think for a moment about what personal experiences you have had with God recently which could cause you to make a statement such as verse 13?



People may disappoint you – but God never will!

The Fifth Light Bulb

Out of love towards my parents I had agreed to go to a gospel preaching. My two sisters had accepted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, but I was still indifferent at the time.

On that evening I sat at the back of the room among many listeners and was determined not to listen. Because I was bored, I inspected the people, the room, the panelling of the ceiling and the great chandelier hanging in the centre. From a group of five lightbulbs, only four were working. Somebody really should have replaced this one lightbulb! – All of a sudden, everyone started singing. I had not noticed that the preacher had sat down and that the meeting was finished. When we all left the room, I exchanged a few words with other young people and went home.

I had not listened to a single word of the whole sermon, and yet God had touched my conscience. I was unable to sleep that night. I kept thinking of that great chandelier in the middle of the room. Only four out of five lightbulbs had worked. The fifth one was dark, not shining, without warmth. – Was this not a picture of our family? Four lightbulbs working: my father, my mother and my two sisters. And myself? Yes, I was without light, without warmth, dead in the eyes of God.

I knelt down and asked God for forgiveness of my sins. And God directed my view towards the cross. In full belief I accepted salvation and was saved. Now there are five lightbulbs working in our family.

Facts and Figures

Author:

Probably Ezra

Time of Writing:

Around 450-400 BC

Place of Writing:

Israel

Addressee:

No one particular

Topic:

God's review of Israel's history
(the kings of Judah)

Peculiarities:

Contains the most detailed
compilation of genealogies in
the Bible

«Be strong and of good courage, and do it; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God – my God – will be with you.»

1 Chronicles 28:20

Structure

Chapter 1-9

The genealogies of the patriarchs and the twelve tribes of Israel

Chapter 10

The end of King Saul

Chapter 11-29

The reign of David

- Mighty men and followers of David (chapters 11+12)
- The Ark of the Covenant (13+15-16)
- Victories over the Philistines (14)
- David's desire (17)
- Wars (18-20)
- Census and punishment (21)
- Preparations for the building of the temple and organisation of the kingdom (22-27)
- Solomon is introduced (28)
- David's death (29)

How it started:

The two Books of Chronicles were originally only one book. Only when the Old Testament was translated into Greek, was the book divided into two parts.

The English name "Chronicles" is derived from the Latin translation of the Bible, the Vulgate. There, the book is called "Liber Chronicarum". A chronicle is a list of historic events in the order in which they happened.

The Books of Chronicles were completed only after the Babylonian captivity.

The last few verses of 2 Chronicles and the first few verses of the Book of Ezra are nearly identical. This supports the Jewish tradition that Ezra was the author of both books. It would also explain the detailed genealogy at the beginning of the book, as this was especially important for the Jews at the time of Ezra (Ezra 2:62).

What it's all about:

The First Book of Chronicles starts off with nine chapters of names, finishing with one person: King David. He is the main character of this book. And because God was the main person in the life of this king, you can also learn much from the life of David!

Something interesting: In contrast to the reports in the Books of Kings, 1 Chronicles leaves out some of the dark events under David and Solomon. The northern kingdom (Israel) is only mentioned in Chronicles on the occasions when it has contact with the southern kingdom of Judah.

How about today?

Before your eyes, the history of Israel has continued, and especially the last 100 years has seen a development in Israel which fits with the Scripture testimony that God will achieve His goal with this nation.

In the days to come, you will read about the history of a country, a nation and its kings, which shows what is especially important for God in the life of an individual.

And you will see that only those who are prepared to make God the focus of their lives and allow themselves to be changed by Him win in the end.



The first book of Chronicles shows what service for God looked like.



Do you know the most famous descendant of David? No? It's about time you did!

More than just names



Our book starts with the family tree from Adam to Noah (vv1-4).

Then follow the families of Noah's sons, but not in the order of their birth.

The line from which Israel comes is continued in verse 24. When you started reading the First Book of Chronicles today, after the first few verses you must have thought: "Help, why all these names?!"

Good that you ask such a question, because that's just what God wants: We shouldn't just read His Word without giving some thought to what He wants to tell us through it. For the next few days you will need some perseverance, but it's worth it! Scattered throughout the chapters are little details which are full

of surprising and important information.

You need perseverance in other places as well: to be a joyful Christian at school, to continue to pray for your unbelieving classmates, and more.



1. What happened during the time in which Peleg was alive?
2. Who is Keturah?



Perseverance is rewarded!

Genealogies



The way in which the genealogies are put together also has a

spiritual significance. Here in 1 Chronicles, the main subject is that the natural (fleshly) line has failed, but God through His grace finds a way.

That's why the firstborn sons are often not mentioned first – for example in chapter 1:28: "Isaac and Ishmael". But the firstborn are always counted first (chapter 1:29).

Today's passage then shows the downhill trend of the line of Esau. Have you noticed that this whole generation is marked by violence? Not one of the kings has his own son as heir to the throne!



3. In which verse do you find the name of the first king of

Israel?

4. The name of one king's wife is mentioned. What is her name? The meaning of her name is "God does good things".



Genealogies were important for the people of Israel. This

was because promises were based on being a descendant of Abraham. When the Israelites arrived in Canaan, the land was distributed based on which family someone belonged to. Certain tasks and services were only allowed to be done by certain tribes and families. That's why these registers were very important.



God takes note of everything, without any gaps – in your life as well!

The descendants of Judah



After the list of Esau's descendants, God now turns to His real object – Israel. The sons of Jacob – Jacob was named Israel by God – are listed all together 22 times in the Bible, yet never in the same order. If the Bible was a human invention, all authors would have copied the list from the first occurrence, and the lists would all be the same. But God always has a special intention when He says something.

Today's passage lists the descendants of Judah, right up to the family of King David (vv3-17). During the course of the list, the sins of Er (v3) and Achar (v7) are mentioned. This shows that God doesn't just ignore and forget sin. From verse 18 onwards, the family of Caleb is mentioned

a number of times. Caleb was a forefather of Hur, who supported the hands of Moses in the battle against Amalek, and of Bezalel, who as a gifted artist built the tabernacle and its utensils.



5. How many brothers and sisters did David have?

6. Do you know where you can find the story of Boaz (vv11-12)?



The stories about the two men who God judged immediately for their sin are recorded in Genesis 38 (Er) and Joshua 7 (Achar is Achan). Today, God doesn't often intervene in **judgment**, but the riches of His goodness and patience should not be despised (Romans 2:4).



Grass doesn't grow over sin – sin must be confessed and forgiven.

The descendants of Hezron



After the descendants of Jerahmeel (the eldest son of Hezron) are listed (vv25-41), the writer comes back to Caleb (vv42-50).

The whole list appears to be rather disjointed. This reflects the condition of the people of Israel at the time: Many Israelites were no longer able to prove their origin (without gaps). That's the reason why descendants much further down the line are considered to be the sons of their forefather (v50).

Have you noticed that three men didn't have any sons (vv30+32+34)? This illustrates a lack of blessing. – As a Christian you – as opposed to Israel – haven't been promised earthly blessings, but how sad it would be if your life were to

finish without bearing fruit for God!



7. Why do you think Achsah is mentioned here (v49)? Clue:

Read Joshua 15:16-19.

8. Which names of people in verses 50-55 remind you of place names?



The Hebrew word for **son**, "ben", has various meanings. It can refer to:

- descendants in general, therefore also **grandsons** and **great-grandsons**
- those belonging to a group of people, for example "sons of the prophets".



God is looking for fruit in your life!

The royal line



Today's passage links up with chapter 2:15 and lists the

royal descendants of David.

It's the same here: It's not

the eldest (Amnon) who becomes king, but God acting in grace chooses another one

(Solomon). In contrast to the kings of Edom, who don't have a son as heir to the throne (chapter 1:43-51), David's descendants generally – up to Josiah – ascend the throne.

This makes it clear that the line that is based on grace is also lasting.

But sadly the disobedience of the people also brings this era to a sad end: Judah is taken captive to Babylon. Although David's descendant Zerubbabel (v19) returns some years later, he no longer bears the title "king", but is merely

called "governor" (Haggai 2:2). The list ends a few generations after Zerubbabel, probably at the time when the Books of Chronicles were finished.



9. How many sons does David have in Hebron?

10. How many children of David are listed altogether?



The name of the city of **Hebron** (fellowship) used

to be "Kirjath-Arba" (city of the giant). Hebron is situated high in the hill country of Judea (935m). Abraham and his family often stayed near it. Sarah, Abraham and Joseph were buried there. Later it became a city of refuge (Joshua 20:7+9). Before David conquered Jerusalem, he reigned from Hebron.



"Even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God".
(1 Thessalonians 2:4)

The prayer of Jabez



The Bible speaks about Jabez and his remarkable life only in this

chapter. He was respected and most of all was persistent in his prayer life – until his prayer was answered!

Jabez asked for what God had promised (Deuteronomy 8:7-10). For the Israelites, this was primarily material blessing. For us Christians there is much more – indestructible things, things that no one can rob us of, because they are eternal and heavenly. Ask God to show you these heavenly things, so that your "spiritual territory", your understanding, is enlarged. There's something else that is nice: God doesn't only remember kings and priests. He also mentions the manual workers.

Do you think that your abilities aren't worth anything? No,

God needs everyone who is faithful at doing their job. And remember, they lived with the king, i.e. they were always near him (v23)!



11. What does Jabez ask for?



The **potters** (v23) first trod the clay with their feet,

kind of kneading it (Isaiah 41:25). The material that had thus been prepared was roughly shaped by hand, and then made into a vessel on the potter's wheel (Jeremiah 18:3). After that the vessel was decoratively glazed and finally burnt in the furnace. The potter made a variety of vessels: jugs, pots, pans, cups, lamps, etc.



Are you interested in growing spiritually? – Ask God to help you!

The Simeonites



The tribe of Simeon is the weakest tribe

in Israel. The Simeonites don't increase as much as, for example, Judah (v27), within whose borders they live (Joshua 19:1). Why?

It is the punishment for the bad behaviour of Simeon and Levi, prophesied by Jacob in his last words (Genesis 34:25-30 and 49:5-7).

Yet despite the curse, there are individuals to whom God grants success and whom He blesses (vv38+40+43). Similar to Jabez, their territory is enlarged.

This shows us a divine principle: If many fail and don't receive a blessing, God still rewards you if you trust in Him and if you go forward in faith.



12. Who do the 500 men of the Simeonites defeat?



The Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) all

blessed each one of their sons individually. This doesn't only mean that they distributed the inheritance. Their words also contained prophecies which reach far into the future.

For example, Jacob said that the sceptre would not depart from Judah (Genesis 49:10). This means that the ruler over the people of Israel would come from the tribe of Judah. This prophecy is partially fulfilled here in Chronicles, but it reaches much further into the future!



Reuben committed a terrible sin. That's why his father

Jacob had prophesied that he would not have any preference before his brothers. His rights of the firstborn would be shared: the double portion of the inheritance would go to the tribe of Joseph; the special position would be Judah's (vv1-2).

The tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh had accumulated so much cattle during their journey through the wilderness that they preferred to take possession of a land which God had not intended for them. But God allowed them to make this choice.

You find the result of their choice in today's chapter: They give way to worshipping the

The two and a half tribes on the other side of Jordan

idols of the heathen and are led into captivity earlier than the other tribes (vv25-26).



13. Despite the generally sad situation, a victorious battle is recorded. How does this happen?



The **two and a half tribes** can be compared to

Christians who are more interested in material possessions than in the spiritual riches given by God. Read Luke 12:20-21.



God rewards faithfulness.



Sin is not without its consequences!

Priests and Levites



Today we read the genealogy of Levi. First the High Priests

were listed, up to the time when Nebuchadnezzar took the Israelites into captivity to Babylon (v15). The tribe of Levi is especially privileged amongst the other tribes, because only those belonging to this tribe are allowed to serve in the temple. It is clearly stated who is responsible for which tasks. Only the descendants of Aaron are allowed to be priests; others are assigned to the singing of praise. More on this tomorrow.

This shows us again why such a register of birth and of family is so important for the people: Then everyone knows exactly what their responsibility is.



14. What did a person have to do to become a priest?

15. Who was High Priest at the time of Solomon?



The **priests** were responsible for the direct service of the sanctuary. They had to offer the daily sacrifices, the voluntary sacrifices and the sacrifices required because of a sin.

One of the priests was **High Priest** for life; he was the only one allowed to go into the holy of holies, once a year, to make atonement for the people.

Distribution of tasks



Under David, the Ark of the Covenant and its tent get a

permanent place (v16). That means the end of the original service of the Levites (see info text). David now gives them new tasks. He divides them into various groups, each one overseen by one Levite. It doesn't matter whether it is in the wilderness or now in the land, everything happens with correct order.

Where holy things are concerned, only God's guidelines apply. There can only be worship which is for the glory of God, if we, as Christians, submit ourselves completely to God's guidance (the guidance of the Holy Spirit).



16. What were the names of the three singers?

17. Did the singers write any psalms?

18. What does worship mean? What is the difference between worship then and worship now?



Those who were from the tribe of Levi, but not descendants of Aaron, were **Levites** and were therefore responsible for everything to do with the service concerning the sanctuary. The Levites helped the priests, carried the various items and utensils, and were responsible for their setting up and operation (Numbers 1:50-51).



Do you know your God-given task?



Even if you are not a singer, you can always sing songs of praise!

The cities of the Levites



The last part of this long chapter tells us which cities are given to

the Levites.

You will remember the passage from a few days ago where, in connection with Simeon, we remembered the curse, which also applied to the tribe of Levi: they were to be scattered in all Israel. But God's grace changes this curse into blessing. Why? When the people danced around the golden calf, Levi was the only tribe who took a stand for God (Exodus 32:26). God doesn't ignore this: They may not receive a portion of the land, but they receive cities in the territories of the other 11 tribes in which they can live. And even more, God Himself is their inheritance (Joshua 13:33)!



19. Which two cities of refuge are mentioned here?



The **cities of refuge** were a kind of safety zone. If someone

had killed another person by accident, he could flee there. As long as he was within the boundary of the city, the avenger of blood was not allowed to kill him (Numbers 35:9-15).

The cities were scattered over the whole land so that the slayer could reach the city quickly. When the High Priest of that time died, the slayer was allowed to return to his own city.



Do you know the Lord Jesus as your "city of refuge"?

Strong and weak tribes



Brave heroes came from the tribes of Issachar and Benjamin.

This is emphasised more than once. Naphtali, on the other hand, is dealt with in only one verse (v13). It seems to be a very small, weak tribe, which also doesn't consider genealogical registers to be of any value – as opposed to other tribes whose men are carefully registered (vv5+7+9). You have seen over the last few days that these registers are very important with regard to the different responsibilities amongst the people of God. Applying this to today, if you are not interested in spiritual things, you will become as weak as Naphtali!



20. How often do you read of "mighty men of valour"?

◆ Are you a "mighty man of valour" in spiritual things? Or do you show little interest and lose each battle?



Benjamin (= "son of my right hand") points prophetically

to the Messiah, Who will commence His rule after victory over His enemies. As Christians we have enemies to conquer too. But these are always spiritual battles against the influence of evil powers.



Be brave – God will give you the victory!

Honourable women



You will surely have noticed today that many women

are mentioned. This is on the one hand a hint that the registers were written after the deportation to Babylon, because gaps had to be filled which were caused by the failure of the men. This documents the bad condition of Israel.

At the same time, though, you can see that women lead a spiritual life as much as men! The daughters of Zelophehad, mentioned numerous times in the Word of God, point especially to this fact (v15). In Numbers 27 they approach Moses because they want to inherit the land of their father, as a regular heir is lacking. This shows that they are interested in what God

has given as a blessing. It is essential for them. – How are things with you in that respect?



21. Why are so many women mentioned here?

22. Sheerah built cities (v24). Who is the first person mentioned to have built a city (Genesis 4)?

23. Challenge question: How many daughters did Zelophehad have and what were their names?



God has put “spiritual land” at your disposal – be interested in it and make it your own!

Asher and Benjamin



Following on from the list of the tribe of Asher is the tribe

of Benjamin from chapter 8 onwards.

Verse 8 shows us something terrible: Shaharaim does not only have more than one wife – even worse than that he sends his wives away. After that, everything seems to go downhill with him, because his sons are born in the country of Moab. That's not only outside the area assigned to the tribe, but even in the area of the enemies of the people of Israel! God shows you this development because it is not according to His thoughts that a married couple should be divorced. That is still the same today.

Always remember: It doesn't matter what the majority

thinks. It's only the will of God that counts.



24. How many men fit for war come from the tribe of

Asher?



There's only one standard for your life as a Christian: the Word of God.

The ancestry of King Saul



You may have already noticed yesterday that there is another

register of the tribe of Benjamin (chapter 7:6-12 and 8:1-40).

There is a special reason for this second mention. This register leads up to the family of Saul, the first king of Israel. Humanly speaking, he had the best preconditions: He came from a tribe that was renowned for their bravery, and he was one head higher than everyone else. But he is rejected because of his self-will and disobedience.

Do you remember the key thought in the Book of Chronicles? The line of human self-will is put away, and in its place is God's election by grace. This will become clear

again in our reading tomorrow, and on many other days.



25. Who was the man who gave a city his name, but he is not mentioned among the sons of his father?

26. What marked the sons of Ulam?



Saul was the first king of Israel. He began to reign in around 1050 BC. Saul came from Gibeah (1 Samuel 10:26 and 11:4), which is situated 5km north of Jerusalem. There, archaeologists have found the remnants of a village and a small rectangular fortress with four towers on the corners.

Saul was rejected by God as king because he was not prepared to obey Him.



Self-will has always been man's biggest "idol".

The homecomers



This chapter concludes the registers of the individual tribes – well done for having stuck with it so far!

Between the first two verses are 70 years, in which period of time the Israelites were in captivity. This wasn't something that God allowed to happen randomly, but it was their deserved punishment for their unfaithfulness (v1). That's what the last step of their failure looks like, after the eighth chapter concluded the line of the king after the flesh. But now comes the turning point: By grace, part of the nation is allowed to return to the Holy Land. Sadly there aren't many of them – mainly those belonging to the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi.

Amazing: God doesn't only measure out punishment, but He also recognises the good things – for example the zeal of the priests in their service in the house of God (v13).



27. Where is Judah taken captive to?
28. From which tribes are the inhabitants of Jerusalem?



"Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."
(Galatians 6:7)

The doorkeepers



The doorkeepers have a special responsibility:

They are to

ensure the security of the temple and stop anything unclean from entering.

Maybe this job of the Levites was less sought after than that of the singers. The Levites had to exercise their guarding service by day and by night (v27). But what applied then also applies today: Holiness ought to mark the house of God (Psalm 93:5)! You can learn two things from this:

- It should be ensured that no evil enters the church of God.
- You are responsible! Keep your heart! Otherwise all kinds of things, which are in opposition to God, will occupy your heart.



29. Do you remember (from Numbers) how

Eleazar and Phinehas were related to Aaron and what their occupation was?



Have you noticed that it is said of one doorkeeper that

the LORD was with him (v20)? Phinehas was a man who fought zealously against evil (Numbers 25). It's the same today: God will be with those who are faithful to Him.



Be careful what you are occupied with during the day!

Everyone has a job to do



Today's passage describes some of the jobs necessary to ensure that the worship in

the temple runs smoothly. There are servants who are responsible for the holy vessels (comparable to a caretaker), those who make the ointment, as well as bakers and singers. Everyone has their own special job. As small as a task may seem when seen on its own, it is still an important service within the framework of the great and meticulously ordered temple service!

You may ask sometimes: "What can I do for the Lord Jesus? My abilities aren't worth anything!" Wrong: everyone is needed! The New Testament compares the Church of God with a human organism in which no part of the body can function without the others (1 Corinthians 12:12-20).



30. Why don't the singers have to do other kinds of

service?

◆ You have read that many jobs are very much day-to-day tasks. What can you do for your Saviour today?



The production of **ointment**, incense and such things was

a special art in Israel, which was carefully passed on from generation to generation. Ecclesiastes 10:1 teaches us that **those who made ointments** had to be careful that no flies ended up in the ointment. They had to make ointments for the kings, for the care of their bodies.



Start with the small jobs – but do them with perseverance and diligence!

The tragic end of Saul



The people of Israel get the king they want.

This is a step with consequences, because in desiring a king, they have rejected God as their only King. It is obvious that something will go wrong, because it's not possible that God can give His blessing to such a thing. They fall into the hands of the Philistines; Saul and his sons are pursued too (vv2-3). Saul is afraid of the archers – the kind of soldiers for which his own tribe was famous. This shows clearly his failure. God mentions two explicit reasons for Saul's terrible end (vv13-14): unfaithfulness towards God and meddling with occultism.



31. On which mountain range does the battle take place?

32. How does Saul die?



What is **occultism**? It's the secret teachings and

practices concerning supernatural powers. Some examples:

- **Spiritism** – moving tables, trance speeches, conversations with spirits
- **Magic** – far-eastern meditation, auto-suggestion, self-healing
- **Fortune telling** – interpretations of dreams, tarot cards, horoscopes, clairvoyance, reading tea leaves
- **Superstition** – (un) lucky symbols, mascots, pendulums, lucky numbers, talismans.

In the Bible, God gives clear warnings regarding occupation with the occult (Leviticus 19:31 and Deuteronomy 18:10-12)!



**Keep your hands off the occult!
Trust God – He is stronger.**

David's mighty men



While the First Book of Chronicles covers the story of Saul

very briefly, it gives a very detailed picture of the life of David.

He is the king after God's heart (v2). With him, the foundation of the kingdom is laid, of which the highest ranking heir to the throne is Jesus Christ (Luke 1:32).

From verse 4 onwards the courageous actions of David's mighty men are recorded. They are all marked by great affection for David. Out of love to him they display unusual bravery and energy. Their courage has its foundation in God, Who gives the victory (v14).

These examples should encourage you to also trust in God and to show

determination to follow the Lord Jesus. If you fight for something out of love to Him you will never be alone!



33. Why does David rule first of all from Hebron?

34. Against how many enemies does Jashobeam fight at once?

35. What does Eleazar, the son of Dodo, do?



Don't lose courage – the Lord gives the victory!

Real courage in the face of death



David has a desire: He wants to drink water from the well in

Bethlehem. However, between him and the well is the army of the Philistines (vv16-17).

Although it is just a desire and not a command, the three mighty men get up, go, and achieve the impossible (v18): a unique example of real devotion!

But why doesn't David drink any of the water? Doesn't that mean that he despises what the three men have done?

No, in the water David sees the "blood of the men" – their life which they have risked for him. And the blood belongs to God. He makes the men understand: "Your act of love is too great for me. So much devotion belongs only to God."



36. Why is it mentioned that Benaiah's battle

takes place on a snowy day (v22)?

37. How does Benaiah conquer the Egyptian?



The land of Israel had the desert right on its doorstep, and

rain only fell in winter. Many rivers carried water only for a short time and were totally dried up for most of the year.

Water therefore played a vital role for the Israelites. They knew three ways of having **sufficient water**: underground **springs**, groundwater **wells** and rainwater **cisterns**.

David knew and appreciated the water from the well at Bethlehem because Bethlehem was his birthplace.



Do you love the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, more than your own life?

Men who came to David



This time it isn't only individual people who come to David, but

also whole groups – and this is certainly significant!

Some Gadites join themselves to David. The tribe of Gad is a tribe that didn't live in the land of Canaan, but settled on the other side of the Jordan River (Numbers 32).

Today, you could compare the Gadites with people who have confessed their sins, but have little interest in spiritual things. Here, however, they suddenly appear to come to their senses: Despite difficulties (the flooded Jordan River (v15)), they come and take a courageous stand on David's side (vv8+14). Amasai (v18) is a hero from whom you can learn to be completely at the disposal of the "true David": the Lord

Jesus. – How are things with you in that respect? Which areas of your life are you still keeping for yourself?



38. What kinds of weapons do the Gadites have?



The Gadites are compared to **lions** (v8). The Hebrew

language has many terms for this animal which is called "mighty among beasts" in Proverbs 30:30. It is mostly a symbol of power and strength. The lion is mentioned for the first time in connection with Judah, the son of Jacob. The Lord Jesus is called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" in Revelation 5:5.



Be courageous and take the Lord's side – even if He is despised by many today!

David's gathering point



The list of various events that happened during the time of

David's reign ends with verse 22.

Beginning at verse 23, we read how the different tribes come to Hebron to anoint David as king. Each tribe is mentioned with their individual "qualities". Only when they are all together, the nation is complete and able to function properly.

Just as with the Israelites at that time, we as Christians need a gathering point that unites us: Jesus Christ. If we give Him authority in our personal and collective lives and seek fellowship with Him, we will experience the same as Israel then:

- united hearts (v38)

- fellowship with each other (v39)
- joy (v40).



39. How many people altogether come to Hebron

(vv24-37)?

40. How is this great company catered for?

Wrong kind of transportation



The Ark of the Covenant has long been ignored. David

and the people now agree that it should be brought back and be given the place it deserves.

Therefore the return of the Ark is introduced with a great and joyful celebration (vv1-8).

But this joy is suddenly cut short when the Ark starts slipping off the cart and Uzza pays with his life for trying to catch it with his hands (vv9-10).

David is disappointed. Weren't his intentions good? Now he is afraid to take the Ark back and asks Obed-Edom to accommodate it in his house (vv11-14).



41. What is Uzza's mistake, and what is generally wrong with

the mode of transport? Clue: Remember the instructions in Numbers 4:11-20.

42. Why is Obed-Edom blessed? And what can we learn from this for ourselves today?



The **Ark of the Covenant** (Part 1)

The Ark of the

Covenant was a box made from acacia wood, which was covered inside and outside with gold. At the corners were rings through which the poles for carrying it were inserted. In the Ark were the tablets of the law. The Ark was closed with a lid made of pure gold, on which there were two cherubim. (To be continued on 29 July.)



Follow the Lord Jesus with an undivided heart!



The end does not justify the means!

God works in different ways at different times



Hiram seems to be the first king of the neighbouring

states to realise that the Israelites are the chosen people of God.

Two paragraphs follow (verses 9-12 and 13-16) which speak a clear language to you too.

The Philistines encamp in the valley on two occasions, and on both occasions David asks God whether he should go to battle against them. But two identical situations don't mean that God automatically gives two identical answers!

Although he is a respected king and experienced warrior, David doesn't want to do anything that is based on his own opinions.



43. What does Hiram send, and for what purpose?

44. What does David do with the idols the Philistines have left behind?

The more wives a king had at that time, the more he was respected and honoured. But when God instituted marriage, He determined that it should be between one man and one woman. And not only that, He also had explicitly forbidden **polygamy** for kings in Deuteronomy 17:17.



Always ask the Lord Jesus when you have to make a decision.

The Ark of the Covenant on its way



David's heart remains steadfast for the things of God, despite

the setback of chapter 13. He continues preparing a place for the Ark (v1).

But even more: He has learnt from his mistakes and gives exact instructions as to how to deal with the Ark (vv2-13). Now, everything is done according to God's thoughts. This time, the priests and Levites sanctify themselves (v14). You don't read about that on the first occasion!

Now that David has learned from his mistakes and is now acting according to God's will, this occasion becomes a great joyful celebration for all, free from fear!



45. List the two things that are different from the

first attempt to bring the Ark back!



"Be holy, for I am holy." (Leviticus 11:45 and 1 Peter 1:16)

The Ark of the Covenant arrives



The Ark of the Covenant is on its way towards Jerusalem. If

the way things are done is according to God's thoughts, He will make sure people will see that He agrees with it (v26). But something sad spoils the occasion somewhat: Michal, David's wife and – interestingly – Saul's daughter, doesn't understand the reason for the joy and despises the king, her husband, in her thoughts (v29).

Something similar could happen to you: If you really desire to follow the Lord Jesus, if you are interested in His things and live according to His holiness, there will always be someone who doesn't understand that. But do as David did: Don't allow yourself to be put off the right course!



46. Why does Michal despise the king in her heart?

47. Which instruments do the Levites use to praise God?

◆ How are things in your life: Is the Lord Jesus the centre?



The Ark of the Covenant (part 2)

This Ark is a type of the Lord Jesus. One key point: Just as the Ark of the Covenant was in the centre at that time (15:25-28+16:1), the Lord Jesus wants to be the centre in today's house of God, the assembly or church (Matthew 18:20).



Real joy can only be found in a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

A song of praise (part 1)



David doesn't only want to have the Ark near him; he also has the

desire to praise his God and to thank Him. Many of his songs (psalms) are in the Bible. However, he doesn't stop with himself, but instructs others to praise God (chapter 16:1).

You also find the following verses in the psalms. The text up to verse 22 can be found in Psalm 105. The Israelites were to praise God, because He had entered into a covenant with their forefathers (vv15-18) – a covenant based on grace. Do you know that you can think about a much greater one of God's wondrous works than the Israelites (vv9+12)? Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became man. He died on the cross for you and me. And He rose again! – Do you thank Him daily for it?



48. Does David sing his song of praise on his own?

49. Which covenant is mentioned here?

◆ David is not superficial but is intensely occupied with God. Is it the same with you – or are you easily distracted?



Thank God for His greatest “wondrous work”!

A song of praise (part 2)



Today's Bible passage, up to verse 36, is nearly completely

identical to Psalm 96.

Yesterday David was looking back. Today it becomes clear that he is a prophet. Here, the subject is the future, or rather the Millennium, the 1,000-year reign of peace. You can see that when you read verse 33: "For He (God) is coming to judge the earth".

But before that happens, the Lord Jesus will take all those who have confessed their sins to Him and who believe in Him to heaven to be with Himself. – Do you belong to them? Verse 38 mentions Obed-Edom again. Together with his brothers, he receives a special place among the Levites who serve before the Ark of the Covenant. He is the right candidate for that, for who

could tell of the blessing that the Ark brings with it like him?



50. What can be found in the place where God lives?

51. When should the burnt offering be offered?

52. For what was the LORD to be praised (v41)?



The priest **Zadok**, mentioned in verse 39, is a remarkable

person. Together with Abiathar, he later plays a key role in the life of David when he helps him in his flight from Absalom. Even when Abiathar committed treason against David together with Adonijah, Zadok remained faithful and anointed Solomon king. His faithfulness was rewarded: Solomon banished Abiathar and transferred the office of the High Priest again to Zadok and his descendants.



Tell those around you of the blessing that has come into your life through the Lord Jesus.

A house for God – a house for David



The kingdom having entered a quieter period, David now has

the desire to build a house for God (v1). Nathan the prophet supports this good thought immediately (v2). But God has other plans. David's desire is a good one, but the right time for it has not yet come. First of all, God Himself wants to build a house for David (v10).

Of course He doesn't mean a house made of stones or wood. Rather, He means that David will have many descendants and that he will be the beginning of a great dynasty of rulers (vv11+14).

Although his first desire is not fulfilled, David does receive an infinite blessing. This is because this promise has a fascinating prophetic dimension: verses 11-14 refer

to the Messiah! That's why in Hebrews 1:5, verse 13 is applied to Jesus Christ, the Son of God.



53. What does David want to do and why?

54. God rejects this plan. What does He give David instead?



If God doesn't fulfil a good wish, it's because He has something better in mind!

David is overwhelmed



When he hears God's message through Nathan, David is not at all

disappointed or angry. On the contrary, he is overwhelmed by the promise and God's grace which he can see in it.

Did you notice that David sits down before God (v16)? He is on a spiritual high point on which he can speak with God as with a friend. But he does it in the right attitude concerning himself, i.e. as a servant (v17).

He marvels that he, as a former shepherd, should be given such honour and that these promises go even further than the next few generations (vv17+23+27).



55. With what words does David start his prayer?

56. Do you know a man of God who started his prayer with the same words? Clue: Have a look in Exodus 3.



Be grateful for what God has made of you.

Victory follows victory



The next three chapters show how God also gives His people

Israel outward rest, the inner conflicts having been laid to rest and the Ark of the Covenant being put into its proper place.

But God can only grant David this because he trusts Him completely. – You too can only lead a victorious life as a Christian if you live with the same attitude.

The battles David fights have nothing to do with his own power. You can see this from the fact that he keeps the booty for building material for the house of God (vv7-8+11).



57. Which materials does David take as booty from his

battles?

58. How many men, mentioned by name, belong to David's closest "staff"?



Bronze (v8) was already known about 4,000 years

before Christ. Many items in the tabernacle and in Solomon's temple were made from bronze. Further, other items made from bronze were weapons, shackles, idol images, money and musical instruments.

In the Bible, bronze is a symbol for righteousness, as evidenced in judgment. As a Man, the Lord Jesus was the only One Who possessed a characteristic inner righteousness, which could endure the fire of the judgment of God.



All things are possible to those who believe.

An unexpected shame



David sends messengers to Hanun who has become king over

Ammon. These messengers were to comfort him and pass on David's condolences concerning the death of his father (vv1-2).

The Ammonites were enemies of the people of Israel – and here they show their real face!

They don't trust David and even falsely accuse him of wrong intentions (v3), and they treat his messengers shamefully (v4). Do you shake your head in despair when you think about how such kindness was rejected? But isn't it the same today?

Many people reject God's offer of grace and despise Him and His messengers, the Christians. When the Ammonites realise that David is angry with them, they prepare for war (vv6-7).



59. Why does David send messengers to Hanun?

60. How many chariots do the Ammonites hire?



The Sumerians had four-wheeled chariots, 3,000 years

before Christ. Later, lighter two-wheeled **chariots** were used, which were pulled by horses (v6).

They had an axle which was mostly situated a long way back and was firmly connected to the chariot box and the shaft. The wheels had four or six spokes. Looking at track marks that have been found, it seems that the distance between the wheels was 1.1m. The chariot box was round or square, richly decorated, and quivers for arrows were hanging down the sides.



Are you sometimes suspicious when someone shows you undeserved kindness?

Battle against the Ammonites!



The behaviour of the Ammonites is an example of how the devil

is able to get people involved step by step in conflicts which, in the end, seal their fate. At the beginning comes mistrust, followed by false accusations and, in the end, discrimination. Since human pride is not ready for reconciliation, the answer is a threat of an attack – ending in defeat and death (chapter 19:3-4+6-7).

For Christians, the spiritual battles can sometimes be as hard as the battle Joab was fighting: from in front and from behind. It's good that you're not alone! There are "brothers" to help you (vv11-12). Really, the battle is not about you and me, but about the people of God. That's the reason why the battle is

worthwhile. When we have given our best, God will supplement what is missing in order to make the victory perfect (v13).



61. What does Joab do when he notices that he is attacked

from in front and from behind? 62. What change takes place in the Syrians as a result of the war?



Do your best; God will do the rest!

Victory all along



Now the tables are turned: In the previous chapter, the Ammonites

prepared for war in order to get ahead of David, but now they find themselves in the defensive position. Joab and David wage a devastating war against these enemies (vv1-3). So the strategy of the Ammonites has failed completely. The parallel passage in 2 Samuel 11 adds the account of David's adultery with Bathsheba. God leaves it out here because He wants to present David as a type of the Lord Jesus Who establishes the kingdom and accomplishes peace. Verses 4-8, which describe the victories against the Philistines, conclude this thought.

This closes the circle of David's war activities. His first battle was against the giant Goliath. Now Goliath's terrible brothers are killed too.



63. To which enemy nation did the sons of the giant belong?

64. What peculiarities are mentioned about them?



In the land of Canaan, the Israelites came

across tribes which were taller than average (Numbers 13:32-33).

The **giants** among the Philistines (vv4-5) seem to have belonged to the Anakim who were driven from the mountains and had fled to the Philistines (Joshua 11:21-22).



The Lord Jesus wants to achieve victories through you too.

The census



Having achieved peace around him, David now faces a

danger from within himself: He becomes proud, and this provides an opportunity for the devil to attack him (vv1-2). David wants to know how strong he can consider himself. But first of all, the census is not conducted completely (v6), and secondly God makes sure that the figures become incorrect only a short time after (v7). Only when God strikes Israel does David realise his sin and he confesses it (v8). Yet his wrong behaviour does not remain without serious consequences. As with David, it is also possible that you have to receive the consequences of your sin, even if you have

confessed it and God has forgiven you.



65. Which tribes does Joab miss out in the census?

66. Which one of the three punishments does David choose?

◆ When you have sinned, do you also confess it?



Pride comes before a fall.

Judgment and grace



As a punishment, God sends an angel of

death, bringing pestilence (vv14-15). When David sees this angel, armed with a sword, he falls on his knees and again confesses his sin (vv16-17).

While in chapter 21 verse 8 he asks God for mercy, he now submits humbly under God's judgment and prays that innocent people should not be punished (v17). We can see the grace of God in the way the story develops: After a burnt offering, God commands the angel to put away his sword (v27).

David realises that this is the only place that should be considered for the building of the temple (chapter 22:1).



67. How many Israelites have to die?

68. Where does David see the angel stand?



You have seen **grace** in two different aspects today:

- God forgives and takes judgment away. But He can only do this because Jesus Christ became man and took the judgment upon Himself on the cross. This is pictured in the sacrifice in today's passage.
- God uses human failure to bring His plan to pass: Through David's census, it becomes clear where the temple should be built.



God can be gracious to you because He punished the Lord Jesus on your behalf. Thank Him for it!

Preparations for the building of the temple



Today's chapter introduces the last part of the book. This part

covers mainly the house of God, which is so important to David and something he puts in a lot of effort into.

It isn't by accident that this comes after a chapter which dealt with sin and judgment: David has experienced God's grace. And only if you know this can you understand why he invests so much energy into the preparations for the building of the temple, which he was not allowed to carry out himself (v8).

At the same time, God promises David that He will be like a Father to his son Solomon, and that the kingdom will always be connected to David's descendants. This of course

points us prophetically to the Lord Jesus.



69. Why was David not allowed to build the house himself?

70. What is the condition that David mentions to Solomon, under which God will prosper the building of the temple?

◆ David is not offended when God refuses to allow him to carry out his intentions. On the contrary – he shows great zeal to prepare everything as well as he possibly can. Can you learn something from this?



What do you contribute to the building of the house of God?

Divisions: Gershonites



David has come to the end of his life and declares the successor to

his throne (v1).

Those responsible among the people now receive instructions mainly concerning the temple service (vv2-6). The First Book of Kings also tells us about David's last days. Yet there is a big difference between the two reports. Here in Chronicles you find only positive things – David arranges everything with zeal and devotion, despite his age. You find his mistakes and omissions in the Book of Kings. Since you will remember previous readings, you know why this is: In the Book of Chronicles, David is presented as a type of Christ as King. The Levites are now divided, along the lines of the three

sons of Levi (v6). The first ones listed are the Gershonites (vv7-11). More tomorrow!



71. What is special about Jeush and Beriah?

72. What is the first occasion that the Bible tells us of a song?



David explicitly instructs the Levites to sing **praises**. He

even had his own musical instruments constructed to support this (v5). This shows that God's praise had great priority for David. Do you know that people are the only creatures that sing? Angels only speak (Luke 2:13, Revelation 5:12).



Singing is to God's glory and makes the heart glad and free!

Divisions: Kohathites and Merarites



The divisions continue with the Kohathites (vv12-20) and conclude with

the Merarites (vv21-23). The names of the heads listed after the names of the sons of Levi are of course not the direct grandchildren of Levi. Rather, they are descendants of these three lines, who lived at the time of David and became leaders of their relevant divisions.

You will have noticed in verse 24 that there is suddenly an age limit of 20 years – whereas verse 3 said that the limit is 30 years. The minimum age of 30 years had been determined by Moses in the wilderness (Numbers 4:3). That was necessary because the Levites had to carry the heavy carpets and other items of the tabernacle.

This is now no longer necessary (vv25-26). The service of the Levites may have changed compared to the original tasks, but one thing is the same: The Levites have been given to the priests (v28). It's the same for us today: Our service as Christians should advance the worship of God.



73. Moses was leader of the people. Did his sons also

have a special position?
74. When should the Levites praise God in their service?



God wants to use you – He has a task especially for you!

The divisions of the priests



David and one priest each of the two great houses of Eleazar and Ithamar now

determine the divisions of the priests (vv1-3). The size of the families is indeed taken account of (v4), but otherwise the priests are assigned to their divisions “neutrally” by casting lots (v5). The fact that the family of Eleazar has more descendants than the family of Ithamar is the result of two events:

- Phinehas, one of Eleazar’s sons, was blessed by God because he executed judgment according to God’s thoughts (Numbers 25:11-13).
- Eli, however, a descendant of Ithamar, attracted the judgment of God because he didn’t keep his immoral sons under control (1 Samuel 2:22-25+30-33). The 24 divisions are listed in the

remaining paragraphs (vv7-19).



75. The names of the priestly divisions are kept for a long time.

In what connection do you find a division in Luke 1?

76. The number 24 in connection with priestly service is found again in Revelation 5:8-11. Who and what is meant there?



“Casting **lots**”: This had been ordered by God (for example in Numbers 26:55-56). In certain cases this was the way in which God made His will known. The last time the lot is cast is in Acts 1:21-26. Once the Holy Spirit had come down to this earth at Pentecost, the Bible doesn’t say anything about this way of coming to a decision any more.



Your behaviour has consequences, either good or bad!

The Levites cast lots



Now the Levites who help the priests in their temple service are

listed again (vv20-30).

It is remarkable that in this list the Gershonites (chapter 23:7) are missing.

All Levites cast lots to determine when they have to take their turn. No difference is made – all have the same chance to serve God (v31).

– Do you sometimes think that you are too young or inexperienced to serve God? Be encouraged: God can and wants to use everyone. Chapter 25 deals with the singers. Their songs don’t provide pleasant background music during the religious services. No, their songs are led by God’s Spirit (v1). – What role do music and singing play in your life? Do you prefer

pleasant entertainment or do you contribute actively by singing and playing for God, Who has done so much for you (Colossians 3:16)?



77. Who is present when lots are cast to determine the rota?

78. Which musical instruments accompany the singing of the Levites?



God can and wants to use you.

Choosing the singers



Altogether 288 singers in 24 groups of 12 Levites are chosen

for service by casting lots (vv8-31). In this way, God makes sure that no group is either preferred or disadvantaged. – Actually, biased thinking and acting should not occur among Christians either!

The sons of Asaph are represented by 4 lots, the descendants of Heman by 14 and the sons of Jeduthun by 6. Verse 8 tells us that beginners and accomplished singers serve together. Yesterday you learnt that God wants to use everyone. But more than that, God wants you as a young Christian not only to learn a lot at school but also in your work for the Lord Jesus.

Pray that God will show you experienced Christians from

whom you as a younger person – “apprentice” or “pupil” – can learn much.



79. How long does it take for a group to have their turn again, if you assume that each group serves for approximately one week?



Look for faithful Christians from whom you can learn to serve the Lord Jesus.

Choosing the gatekeepers



The service of the gatekeepers is also regulated by lot. Their

task was to watch the doors of the temple and its store houses day and night (v16). Isn't that terribly boring? No, not at all, because these men have responsibilities similar to those of the police. Just as with modern CCTV surveillance systems, they have to watch the area around the temple and shut it off from enemy elements.

To do this effectively, the gatekeepers need the ability to watch like hawks, to be fit, to be able to react quickly and most of all they must be prepared to risk their lives if necessary.

– Can you see that you can apply these abilities to your life as a Christian?

- Watch carefully for things that can harm your relationship with the Lord Jesus.
- Keep spiritually fit through daily Bible reading and prayer.
- React quickly when it comes to eliminating “enemy elements” from your life.
- Give yourself over completely to your Saviour Who has given His life for you.



80. Why did Obed-Edom have so many sons?

81. How often do the expressions “able” or “ability” occur in the text?



Watch!

Overseers and stewards



At first glance you'd envy these people – wouldn't you like to have

such a treasure for yourself? The "problem": The treasure doesn't belong to these men. They are "just" the overseers and stewards of it. They take gifts, ensure their safe keeping and keep meticulous accounts of it.

In contrast to some gold reserves, the temple treasure has a definite purpose for its use. From the materials taken as booty or that have been offered, Solomon's glorious temple would be built one day. The stewards must have always had this aim before their eyes when they were doing their work.

Actually: Christians are also stewards. In his first letter, Peter instructs the believers to serve each other with their gifts

and in that way to be stewards of the grace of God, which is much more precious and varied than any temple treasure (1 Peter 4:10).

– What does that mean? As a Christian, you have received spiritual abilities (gifts) from God, which you should administer as faithfully and constructively as the temple stewards at the time of David. Use them for the good of others and therefore for God!



82. In Israel there were two treasures which were administered separately. Which ones were they?

83. Verse 28 mentions two well-known names. Do you know who they are?



God has given you gifts. Serve Him faithfully with them for the good of others!

The army



David's army consisted of 12 divisions of 24,000 soldiers

each. Each division actively served for one month per year. It appears that the divisions of the army were broadly the same as the tribes of Israel. Who did David choose as those in charge of his divisions? Were they young, ambitious officers, or maybe relatives of his ministers? No, most of them belonged to the mighty men of David. They stood with him during the most difficult time of his life – his flight from Saul – and protected him in danger of their own lives.

The Lord Jesus is still looking for people like that: men and women who want to be with Him because they love and respect Him and who know

that He will one day reign over the whole world.



84. Verse 6 mentions Benaiah. Do you remember what was said about him a few chapters back (Clue: see chapter 11)?



At the time of the Kings, the **army** consisted only of infantry. Besides those heavily armed with shield and spear there were those lightly armed with bow and arrow and slings. Under David, the army was reorganised. The division into smaller units within a larger division was based on divisions within the tribes into houses and families.



The Lord Jesus isn't interested in where you come from or how well educated you are. He wants your heart!

God first



Over the last few days you have read a lot about how David's

kingdom was organised and administered. Don't you find it strange that the political leaders of the twelve tribes (vv16-22) and David's "cabinet ministers" (vv25-31) are only mentioned now?

Nowadays, when a new government commences its term, first of all the ministers are appointed. Not so with David. He sets his priorities completely differently. They can be summarised in just two words: God first.

It's obvious that this attitude is a good example for you. As a disciple of the Lord Jesus you, like David, need clear priorities. – Put God first and leave Him to guide your life.

Verses 23 and 24 remind us of the sad episode in David's life. That was when he had to learn that for God it's not quantity that counts but quality.



85. How many "departments" are there in David's government (vv25:31)?
86. What characterises Jonathan, the uncle (or cousin) of David?



Sharon (v29) is a very fertile plain by the Mediterranean Sea, which goes from the city of Joppa to Mount Carmel. During the future judgments, Sharon will become a wilderness (Isaiah 33:9), but in the Millennium it will become fertile again (Isaiah 65:10).



As a Christian, you are – like Hushai – a companion or friend of the "King", Jesus Christ.

David addresses the people



The service of the temple is now organised – but the temple itself is still missing! David now explains the reason for this to the people (vv2-3), after he has called all the leaders to himself (v1). As in chapter 17, you don't find any complaints about this unfulfilled desire. On the contrary, you feel David's gratefulness with regard to the grace of God:

- that he is king at all
- that he has many sons
- that one of the sons will become a great king (vv4-7).



God, however, has linked one condition with the promise of an eternal kingdom: God's commandments must be kept. That this is observed is very important to David, and he therefore admonishes the people (v8) and his successor Solomon (vv9-10). Christians are a kingdom and also priests (Revelation 1:5+6) for ever – unconditionally! It's a fact which is not dependent on their behaviour, because they are saved only by grace.



87. Why does Solomon become David's successor to the throne? Was it because of his intelligence?



Thank God for His grace!

Plans for the temple



David doesn't only tell Solomon to build the temple, but he

also gives detailed instructions as to how the individual areas should look (vv11-18). The following two categories are mentioned:

- the building as such (vv11-12)
- the divisions of the priests and the utensils for service (v13).

For the following utensils he even determined their weight (v14):

- lampstands and lamps (v15)
- tables (v16)
- forks, basins, pitchers and bowls (v17).

Last of all the altar of incense and the chariot of the cherubim are described (v18). It must have been quite a lot of work to record all this in such a detailed fashion!

In this David is a very practical example for you: Despite what must have been great pressure as king and judge of the Israelites, he had time for divine interests.

But David says clearly that nothing is from himself, but everything is according to God's thoughts and originates from Him (vv12+19).

The chapter closes with the encouraging verses, 20 and 21. David says this with deep conviction – because he has experienced in his life that God never disappoints anyone.



88. Is Solomon solely responsible for the building of the

temple?

◆ Can you as David say with conviction “my God”?



You need to have a personal relationship with God – then you will also experience His help!

Joyful givers



After David has finished telling Solomon all the necessary details

for the building of the temple, he again addresses the people. He makes it clear again that Solomon is the successor to the throne, as determined by God. David also gives a reason why he has prepared so much: The great building project is too big for young Solomon to handle alone (vv1-2).

In addition to the treasures of the kingdom obtained in wars (chapter 22:14), David also gives gold and silver from his personal possessions (vv3-4). This exemplary behaviour surely contributes to the success of his call for gifts (v5): from the great leaders down to the simple people, everyone gives willingly what they can (vv6-8). The result is a reason

for great joy (v9). Two things are important in this:

- interest in the temple (an undivided heart for divine things) and therefore great willingness for sacrifice.
- the example of David.



89. Which materials are gathered?

90. What great weight is recorded, in talents, for some metals (chapter 22:14 and 29:4+7; one talent is approximately 35kg)?



**“God loves a cheerful giver.”
(2 Corinthians 9:7)**

Joyful thanksgiving



Under the impression of what has gone before, David now

starts to praise God (v10). He praises the greatness of God, as well as His glory, sovereignty and power (vv11-12). David acknowledges that God works all things, as well as the giving of all the materials which have been presented a short time before. He expresses humbly that the Israelites and he himself have only given what belonged to God anyway (vv14+16). And he knows that God doesn't look at the outwardly visible amount, but the inner attitude of heart (v17).

The prayer ends with David's renewed request that the Israelites and Solomon would remain faithful to God and carry out the planned building work (vv18-19).

It seems strange that David calls himself a stranger in verse 15, since he lives in the Promised Land. Although earthly blessing has been promised to the Israelites (Deuteronomy 11:8-9), he sees things here in the light of eternity and heaven and is therefore an example to you. This is because you, as a Christian, are a "citizen of heaven" and therefore a "foreigner" here on earth.



91. Where does David say this prayer of thanks? In his

house?

92. What counts with God when you give Him something? Clue: David really emphasises this.



Your goal is heaven. Do you live according to this? (John 17:16+24).

A day of celebration: Solomon becomes king



Once again, David addresses the assembled people: They

should praise God (v20). The Israelites show their respect for God and the king. On the following day a great sacrifice takes place (v21); it is a day of joy, on which Solomon is anointed king for the second time (v22).

You find the first anointing in 1 Kings 1:38-39. It took place because Adonijah wanted to be king himself. But now Solomon really ascends the throne. Now he is acknowledged by the ordinary people and by their leaders. And God confirms him as he wins the respect of the people and is granted much royal majesty.

Solomon is a beautiful type of Christ as ruler in the reign of

peace. – Are you glad that He will soon reign over the whole world?

The last few verses (vv26-30) provide a brief summary of the time of David's reign until his death and point to further accounts of his life.



93. How many burnt offerings are sacrificed?

94. For how long does David reign and where?



"Because He [the King] is your Lord, worship Him." (Psalm 45:11)

The Living Blanket

God works in supernatural ways whenever He wants. This was not only true during the time of the Bible; even today people experience it who trust Him with unconditional faith. If we hear anything that we cannot explain, we should not judge it according to the view of our everyday lives.

Here's a report of a servant of God from the time of the persecution of the Christians in Romania many years ago: "I was constantly under supervision because of my work for the Christians, which was illegal. I had to hide myself in the mountains from the police for several days. It was winter. Sometimes wolves showed up, but I feared them less than the people who were after me. When the wolves approached at night, I said: 'You

want to visit me at this time of night? – Well, I will go to sleep now. Goodnight, my friends!’ And then they disappeared.

One night, it was particularly cold. I was exhausted and prayed: ‘Lord, please send me a blanket, or else I’ll freeze!’ Having said this, I fell asleep. I did not feel any coldness anymore. When I woke up the next morning, it was still dark. I moved to get up. Suddenly, an animal got up from quite close to me. It disappeared behind the trees. Was it a dog? A young wolf? I don’t know. But it had spent the night cuddled up closely to me. God is wonderful. He could not have sent me a warmer blanket.”

[illegible]

Facts and Figures

Author:

Probably Ezra

Time of Writing:

Around 450-400 BC

Place of Writing:

Israel

Addressees:

No one in particular

Topic:

God's review on Israel's history
(the kings of Judah)

Peculiarities:

It contains many (short)
biographies

«Behave courageously,
and the LORD will be
with the good.»

2 Chronicles 19:11

Structure

Chapter 1-9

The reign of Solomon

Chapter 10-12

Rehoboam: Division into the northern
and southern kingdom

Chapter 13-36

The kings of Judah

- Abijah (chapter 13)
- Asa (14-16)
- Jehoshaphat (17-20)
- Jehoram (21)
- Ahaziah (22)
- Athaliah (23)
- Joash (24)
- Amaziah (25)
- Uzziah (26)
- Jotham (27)
- Ahaz (28)
- Hezekiah (29-32)
- Manasseh (33)
- Josiah (34-35)
- Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin,
Zedekiah and the fall of Jerusalem (36)

How it started:

Read again the introductory
text to 1 Chronicles, from
Lightkeeper on 3 July.

What it's all about:

The emphasis of 2 Chronicles
is on the southern kingdom
of Judah, ruled over from
Jerusalem.

David had extended his
kingdom and with God's help
had gained many victories over
hostile neighbouring nations. His
son Solomon led the kingdom
to further, greater success, and
under his rule Israel gained great
international recognition.

Sadly, after this things began
going downhill with the people
of God. Many kings followed
on from Solomon. Some of
them cared more and some
less for God's commandments.
In the end, the inhabitants
of the southern kingdom are
conquered like those of the
northern kingdom and are taken
into captivity.

How about today?

Many kings of the southern
kingdom are negative examples
– you shouldn't do what they
did! But some are very positive
examples – you should act as
they did!

Read 2 Chronicles,
considering the following
questions:

- How is each individual
person's relationship with God?
- How do they act and
how does God react to their
behaviour?

It isn't always easy to apply
the situations at that time
to your life. But take on this
challenge. Don't be afraid to
think critically about your own
life!

By the way... : Why is Israel so
important? Why does the Bible
give so much space to the dark
chapters in Israel's history?

The special thing about the
people of Israel is that they
are in a relationship with the
living God Who made heaven
and earth. Israel is, so to speak,

connected with God by two
bands. You find both of them in
Deuteronomy 7:7-8.

The first band is called "love":
God loves His people. The
second band is called "promise":
God is faithful to His people
because of the promises He
gave to Abraham. And He will
fulfil them. God is faithful to His
Word. Although at the end of
the Books of Chronicles it seems
as if Israel is finished, the nation
will continue on.



Through God-fearing kings such as
Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah, God
gave revivals in the kingdom of Judah.



Don't try to dodge the light
of God's Word.

One request



Israel becomes a famous and successful country. Its

wealth increases and becomes immeasurable (vv14-17). How does this happen? Through a young man who lives close to God. You can see this on the occasion of the sacrifice in verses 2-6. – Are you interested in the things of God? Then He will be able to use you.

God wants to give. That's why He instructs Solomon: "Ask! What shall I give you?" (v7). The Lord Jesus says in Luke 11:9: "Ask, and it will be given to you".

Solomon asks for wisdom and knowledge and thereby indicates that he can only rule with the help of God (vv9-10). He is only concerned for the people of God! – Ask God for help with the things you have to do, and He will give you much

more. That was Solomon's experience (vv11-12)!



1. What does it mean that Solomon made silver and gold as common as stones (v15)?

2. What are the characteristics of wisdom in James 3:13+17?



When "**knowledge**" is mentioned in the Bible, it often means that someone has understood or taken hold of something that can't be understood with the senses. Often it refers to the knowledge of God. We can't see God, but we can recognise Him in His actions and in His Word. Have you ever seen in a particular situation how God has had His hand in it? In order to see this you have to keep your eyes open and expect God to act in your life.



Ask God for the really important things in your life – and for the small things too.

Foreign trade



Solomon carries out the huge task which he has taken over from his father David, who had planned to build a house for the God of Israel (1 Kings 8:17). The number of workers will give you an idea of the size of the project.

Solomon is aware of the fact that even the greatest and most beautiful house is not good enough for his God. He describes God's unimaginable greatness. What is your idea of God? How great is He really? Human understanding is just not enough to describe His greatness. Solomon thinks of himself as very small (v5). In his letter to Hiram, king of Tyre, Solomon confesses clearly what God means to him. – Is the Lord Jesus great

in your eyes? If so, speak with other people about Him!



3. David had planned to build a house for God. Why doesn't he carry it out but instead leaves it to his son? Clue: Read the first few verses in 1 Chronicles 28.

4. What does Solomon order from Hiram, king of Tyre, in his letter?



Lebanon in the Bible is an area north of Israel. There is a very high mountain range (up to 3,000m). Today it belongs to Syria, although it is really part of the Promised Land (Joshua 13:5). Again and again Israel has been attacked from this area, even in the present day.



Look up into the starry sky during a clear night. You will get a "little" impression of the greatness of God.

Skilled men for the house of God



Hiram is happy to supply Israel with labour and materials because

he recognises God's hand in putting Solomon on the throne (vv14-15).

According to Solomon's request for an expert, Hiram sends the artist Hiram to Jerusalem. This man is a specialist for the work in the temple.

You will surely know that there is also a house of God today (1 Corinthians 3:9-10). This, however, is not a visible house, but rather an invisible, spiritual house, consisting of all Christians worldwide. Every believer is a living stone, added by God.

At the same time, God is pleased if you, as a Christian, are interested in His house today and if you want to

help in building it. – Who knows? Maybe God will later use you for special tasks, as He did Hiram. Therefore be faithful and conscientious in your day-to-day tasks and responsibilities.



5. What does Hiram write in his letter about Solomon?

◆ What would someone write about you?

6. How many foreigners were living in Israel at that time?



Those who work faithfully on the house of God will be richly rewarded!

Planning and execution



Solomon's plan is now carried out. The house of God has some peculiarities, for

example:

It is built in a special place – at the threshing floor of Ornan (1 Chronicles 21).

- It is decorated with great splendour both inside and outside.
- The Holy of holies or Most Holy Place contains two big cherubim.
- In front of the entrance are two mighty pillars.

More details are recorded in 1 Kings 6+7. Looking at this splendour, it is amazing that God wants to personally live in you as a Christian (1 Corinthians 6:19). Christians are the temple of the Holy Spirit. This was only made possible through the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross of Calvary. Isn't that amazing?



7. What is the special history of the threshing floor

of Ornan, the place where Solomon had the temple built?

8. What are the names of the two pillars at the entrance to the temple, and what is the meaning of the names? (There may be a footnote in your Bible.)



The **Holy of holies** was the room in the temple where the Ark

of the Covenant was placed. No one was allowed to enter. The exception was the High Priest once a year on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). Solomon built this room in the shape of a cube – 20 cubits wide, 20 long and 20 high. Here, between the cherubim, was the throne of God (Psalm 99:1).



The Lord Jesus shows you what you can do for God. Do it with His help – like Solomon.

A house with a history



The magnificent temple is now furnished with the utensils for worship and

sacrifices. The history of the temple really starts with the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exodus 25-31). This is because some of the items contained in this moveable “temple” are now reproduced in greater number or larger size. But even Solomon’s temple does not last forever. It will only be there for a few hundred years – until the Babylonians destroy it completely (chapter 36:19) and deport the Israelites.



9. How many golden lampstands were there in the tabernacle, and how many are in the temple?

10. How many kilograms of bronze were used for the utensils?



A second temple is built again later, after some Jews

returned from captivity under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. The temple at the time of the Lord Jesus was the third temple, built by King Herod. The Romans completely destroyed this third temple in 70AD.

Today, the place where the temple stood is occupied by the Dome of the Rock and the Omar Mosque. But the Jews have already prepared plans for the building of the fourth temple and have even produced some of the utensils of which you have read today!

In the Millennium there will be a fifth temple (Ezekiel 40-47). The fascinating history of this temple is therefore far from complete!



God’s history and plans for Israel continue and are being fulfilled before your eyes.

The glory enters



The house is finished and the Ark of the Covenant is

brought into the Most Holy Place. Now the Israelites have a place where they can praise and worship their God together. The Ark of the Covenant, and with it the glory of God, enters into the temple. Today the Lord Jesus has promised to be where believers are gathered unto His name: a great opportunity to bring Him praise and worship! – Are you present when the marvellous acts of the Lord Jesus are adored in worship amongst His people?

In today’s passage you can see the purpose of music.

– What is the subject of the music you listen to?



11. Who put together the “orchestra” which

plays the music at the dedication of the temple?

12. In Ezekiel 10 you can read more about the glory of the LORD. What happens there, in contrast to what happened at the dedication of the temple?



Musical instruments:
Cymbals: percussion

instrument with a clear, clashing sound.

Harp: string instrument with four to ten strings, with or without a sound board. The instrument makes a soft sound and was used on cheerful occasions.



“Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.”
(Psalm 95:2)

The fifth commandment practised



In his speech at the dedication of the temple, Solomon

emphasises that it was first of all his father David's wish to build a house for the LORD. He sees himself only as the one who carried out this plan and points out that the LORD has confirmed the desire of his father.

- Do you speak as positively about your parents? They will most certainly have made mistakes in their lives – just as David did. But think about how many positive things they have done for you and surely also for God. What would you be without your parents? Solomon is obedient to the fifth commandment: He honours his father! This commandment is quoted in the New Testament (Ephesians

6:2-3) and therefore also applies to you as a Christian. If your relationship with your parents is marked by respect and obedience, this will have a positive impact on your whole life. This may well be totally 'uncool' with many of your unbelieving friends, but God applies different standards!



13. The Ark contains the "covenant of the LORD" (v11). What does Solomon mean?

14. Where in the Bible do you find the Ten Commandments?



"A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother!" (Solomon in Proverbs 10:1)

Solomon's prayer (part 1)



A mighty one kneels before a Mightier One. Solomon

recognises that the God of Israel is the Almighty God and that it is really His will to enter into the temple and to listen to the prayers of the Israelites. This attitude of Solomon shows us his fear of God. What is the fear of God? It is the inner attitude with which you remember, in every situation, that God sees you and judges you. The person who fears God also knows: What I do now has eternal consequences. Solomon explains this: The fear of the LORD

- is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7)
- is to hate evil (Proverbs 8:13)
- is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10)

- prolongs days (Proverbs 10:27)
- is a strong confidence (Proverbs 14:26)
- is a fountain of life (Proverbs 14:27) and leads to life (Proverbs 19:23)
- is the instruction of wisdom (Proverbs 15:33).

Can you see why Solomon is such a wise man? Divine wisdom can only be obtained through the fear of God – if you live your life according to God's thoughts.



15. Solomon kneels down when he prays (v13). List another

three people in the Bible who do the same!



Those who know something of God's greatness make themselves small when praying.

Solomon's prayer (part 2)



You may ask yourself whether this prayer of Solomon was

answered. He asked that his prayer as well as the prayers of the Israelites would be heard and answered by God (vv19+24-25).

Have later prayers in or towards this house been answered?

Here is an example: King Hezekiah is in great distress. Jerusalem is being besieged by the Assyrians. They mock Hezekiah's confidence in his God. He is not moved by this but continues to repeatedly pray to God in the temple and to lay his situation before Him (2 Kings 19:14-20). And what happens? God listens. He helps Hezekiah in his desperate situation by sending an angel to defeat the enemies. This is one of the occasions on which God again answered Solomon's

prayer (vv28-30). Prayers in faith and confidence are answered by God. You can rely on that!



16. What is often the reason that the Israelites get into a desperate situation?

17. Where in the Bible do you find the record of a catastrophic drought, which can be traced back to the sin of the people and their ungodly king? Clue: 1 Kings.



Prayer is worthwhile! You pray to God for something. He listens and at a certain time, determined by Himself, He acts and answers your prayer – sometimes in a different way to what you imagined, but always for your best. In any case: thank God!



Prayers can bring God's mighty arm into motion.

Solomon's prayer (part 3)



Solomon continues to pray. He mentions in advance

deportation and war, as a result of the nation's failure. How can he do this? How can he speak about the future like this?

Solomon expects the Israelites to sin against God again and again, because he has observed the people very carefully. You will read about that in October in the Book of Ecclesiastes. In today's text, Solomon remarks: "there is no one who does not sin" (v36). Isn't that a terrible statement? – Do you accept this declaration of the Bible, which also includes you? Solomon doesn't only speak about deportation but also about liberation and return to the land. Later Daniel will remember these words of Solomon, when he prays to God from his exile in Babylon.



18. Subject to which conditions can God answer your prayer?

Read John 9:31, John 15:7 and Matthew 9:27-28.

19. Which verse in Romans 3 (from verse 21 onwards) contains a clear statement like the beginning of verse 36?



To be a saint (v41) sounds old and boring, doesn't it?

But it means to be as God wants you to be! **Being a saint** shows itself in many positive features such as faithfulness, righteousness, kindness and obedience. People who practise these will be blessed by God!



Work as if everything depended on you, and pray as if everything depended on God.

Many sacrifices – one sacrifice



As an answer to Solomon's prayer, fire falls from heaven onto the

sacrifices. And for a second time, the glory of the LORD fills the house (chapter 5:14). The people are deeply impressed and praise God's mercy (vv1-3).

After that a huge number of sacrifices are offered: 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep. This is in marked contrast to the "one offering" by which you as a Christian have been perfected: "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:14+10). – You have a great Saviour! Thank Him with all your heart!



20. Which feast of the LORD did the Israelites celebrate immediately after the dedication of the temple? Clue: Leviticus 23:33-36.
21. Look at Psalm 136. What connects it with verse 6?



Jesus Christ has offered one sacrifice for sins. (Hebrews 10:12)

A promise with conditions



Has the goal been reached: yes or no? That's the question

presented in verse 11. Solomon had planned to do something and has also completed it. Sure, there were difficulties to be overcome, but the objective has now been reached and the temple is finished. – God wants you to start the tasks He gives you conscientiously and to continue with them till the end.

Solomon now has further tasks. That's why God speaks to him again and lets him know that He has heard and answered his prayer. What God points out here you will find again and again in the Bible: He wants the best for people. He wants to bless them. But He also sets conditions for this (v17). He

wants the first place in your life.

"We are not interested in what you say, God; we'd rather do our own thing!" God warns the Israelites of such an attitude (v19). Disobedience towards God has serious consequences (vv20-22) – today as well!



22. What would be the consequences if the Israelites left the law and served strange gods?
23. Idol worship – is that still a subject that concerns us today? Clue: Read Colossians 3:5 and 1 John 5:21.



Living according to God's Word: What God has commanded brings blessing!

Wise government



King Solomon becomes rich and famous. He is able to expand and

strengthen his kingdom. The successes that can be traced back to his wise government are obvious. From the remaining Canaanites he raises forced labour (vv7-8).

In contrast, he doesn't make Israelites his slaves (v9) because this was forbidden by the law (Leviticus 25:42). In this way Solomon makes a clear distinction between those who belong to the people of God and those who don't, even where it concerns his own wife (v11).

– How about you? Of course, you shouldn't treat unbelievers with any less respect because they aren't Christians. But do you make a clear distinction between those who are Christians and those who

aren't? God doesn't want you to get into bad company which pulls you away from the Lord Jesus. If you want to be a happy Christian you can't be on good terms with anyone and everyone! You need the courage to give a clear and determined "No", even if it is difficult.



24. "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Do you know where to find this verse? Clue: 2 Corinthians 6.

25. According to whose commandment is the service of the priests, Levites and doorkeepers ordered?

26. In 1 Chronicles 26:25-28 you find part of the treasures mentioned in verse 15. How did David obtain them?



The Lord Jesus can give you the courage to say no. Ask Him for it!

Amazement



It's a state visit: from the Queen of Sheba. She has heard something

about Solomon, but she can't believe it. Now she wants to convince herself. And what happens? She is totally amazed!

– Two thoughts:

- Just like the Queen of Sheba, you will also be more than amazed when you get to know the Lord Jesus (better). How do you do that? By reading the Bible!
- Maybe your friends have heard that you are a Christian. If they are really interested, they will want to know what's behind it. Your life will be closely watched as to whether it's something real. Wouldn't it be marvellous if they could notice in amazement that you have something they don't have? But that can

only happen if your whole behaviour is in agreement with what you profess.



27. What impresses the Queen of Sheba during her state visit to Israel?

28. What does the Queen of Sheba say about the people who hear the wisdom of Solomon? Compare this with the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 13:16-17 and Revelation 1:3.



The **Queen of Sheba** (Saba) is likely to have come from Africa and had a very long journey to get there. The Lord Jesus speaks about this in Matthew 12:42. She came to be convinced that God was with Solomon and she gave glory to Him.



Is your Christian life convincing?

The climax



Solomon's life has reached a climax. He possesses more

riches, power and honour than anyone else.

What happens here is a hint regarding the future. King Solomon points us to the Lord Jesus Who will one day come back as the King of Israel. Shortly before His death, the Lord Jesus answered in the positive the enquiry concerning His reign as King (Luke 23:3).

One day the Lord Jesus will come back to the earth and will be King over the whole earth (Zechariah 14:9). He will then bear the title "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16). That's the point in time when the Millennium begins.

Then the Lord Jesus will restore true peace to the earth. – Are you looking forward, with your Lord, to Him receiving all the honour that is due to Him?



29. Solomon has built a house for his God, but what does he say in Psalm 127 concerning the building of the house?

30. Solomon's throne was made from which material?



Important characteristics of the **Millennium** are first of all the rule of the Lord Jesus in righteousness and peace. Furthermore, the devil will no longer be free because he will have been bound at the start of the 1,000 years.



One day the Lord Jesus will rule over the whole earth. Look forward to it with Him!

Wrong advice



Right at the beginning of his reign, Rehoboam experiences a

difficult situation. His people are trying to revolt. They appoint as leader Jeroboam, who had fled to Egypt from Solomon.

Rehoboam makes a grave mistake by listening to the advice of the younger men and he loses his power in Israel. Only the tribe of Judah still recognises him. Otherwise his authority is disregarded in many parts of the land of Israel. It even goes as far as Rehoboam having to flee from danger in his own country. Rehoboam is a negative example for you: Don't throw the advice of older Christians away just like that! They have more life experience and therefore can often evaluate a situation better. And they know more about how God thinks about things.



31. Why does God allow this to happen in Israel? Read 1

Kings 11:30-37. What happens exactly?

32. What does Rehoboam mean when he says that he will chastise the people with scourges (or, literally, scorpions)?



Israel is now divided into the northern and the southern kingdom (see "Additional information on 2 Chronicles"). The northern kingdom is comprised of the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh and Ephraim. The southern kingdom is composed only of Judah and Benjamin. The cities of the Levites (of the tribe of Levi) are distributed over both kingdoms.



Accept the good advice of older Christians.

The stop sign




 Jeroboam, having taken power in the northern kingdom, introduces idol worship. The Bible calls this a grave sin (2 Kings 17:21). Things are different in the southern kingdom. There, God's commandments are followed.

Fighting among the people of God is something that God cannot be happy with – neither at that time nor today. The stop sign works! Rehoboam follows God's instruction this time and prevents war against the tribes of the northern kingdom. Jeroboam casts out the Levites who, as a result, go to live in the southern kingdom so that they can continue to serve God. They are followed by other Israelites who find this equally important. They are all a good example for you. Serving and worshipping God is more


important to them than their possessions. They are prepared to give up something for God. – Are you?



 33. Which commandment does Rehoboam break, as did his father Solomon and his grandfather David? Read Deuteronomy 17:14-17.

34. What possessions did the Levites receive when they entered the land of Canaan? Read Joshua 21:1-3+41.



 The **high places**, where Jeroboam put up the **idols**, were nothing new in the land of Canaan. The original inhabitants of the land already sacrificed to their idols there. But the Israelites were supposed to have destroyed them when they conquered Canaan (Deuteronomy 12:2).

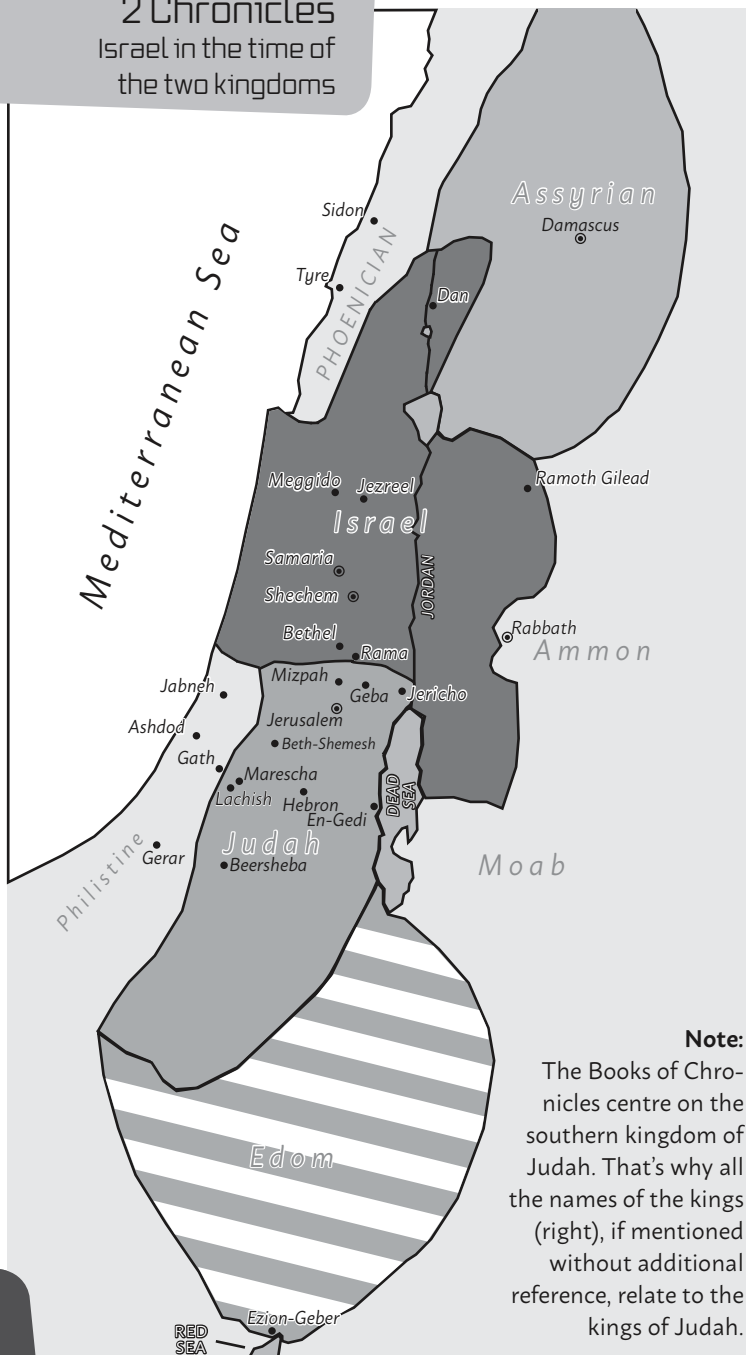


Ask God for guidance when you are facing important decisions!

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2 Chronicles

Israel in the time of
the two kingdoms



Note:

The Books of Chronicles centre on the southern kingdom of Judah. That's why all the names of the kings (right), if mentioned without additional reference, relate to the kings of Judah.

Since Solomon's son Rehoboam is not prepared to reduce the high taxes and services of his subjects, Israel is divided into two kingdoms: the northern kingdom of Israel (10 tribes) and the southern kingdom of Judah (the tribes of Judah and Benjamin). The capital of the northern kingdom is at first Shechem, until at a later time King Omri establishes Samaria as his residence.

Which places play a prominent role in 2 Chronicles?

- Rehoboam's son Abijah conquers Jeroboam of Israel after violent battles in the border area (chapter 13:18-20).
- Asa conquers Zerah the Ethiopian near Maresah and pursues him to Gerar (chapter 14:9+12).
- Baasha of Israel builds Ramah as a border fortress (chapter 16:1).
- Asa persuades Syria to attack Israel. As a result Baasha stops building Ramah. Asa takes the building material away and uses it to build Geba and Mizpah (chapter 16:6).
- Jehoshaphat fights with Ahab of Israel against the Syrians at Ramoth Gilead (chapter 18:28).
- Jehoshaphat conquers the Moabites and Ammonites at En-Gedi (chapter 20:2). Together with Ahaziah of Israel, he intends to build a Tarshish fleet at Ezion Geber (chapter 20:36).
- At the time of Jehoram, the Edomites revolted against Judah (chapter 21:8).
- Ahaziah, together with Jehoram of Israel, goes to war against Syria. Jehoram is wounded and stays at Jezreel to recover (chapter 22:5-6).
- Joash of Israel conquers Amaziah at Beth-Shemesh (chapter 25:21).
- Amaziah flees to Lachish because of a conspiracy and is killed there (chapter 25:27).
- Uzziah fights against the Philistines and breaks down the walls of Gath, Jabneh and Ashdod (chapter 26:6).
- Under the reign of Ahaz, the southern kingdom is under much pressure from Syria, Israel, Edom, the Philistines and the Assyrians (chapter 28:5-8+16-20).
- Under the reign of Hezekiah, Sennacherib of Assyria enters the southern kingdom, besieges cities and is soon standing before Jerusalem. As a result of Hezekiah's prayer, an angel kills all the important people in the Assyrian army, so that they go away again without causing harm (chapter 32:20-21).
- Josiah fights against Necho of Egypt in the valley of Meggido (chapter 35:22).
- Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, takes captive Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, and deports him to Babylon (chapter 36:5-6).

2 Chronicles

Places and Events

2 Chronicles

Kings of Judah

The table below show you which kings reigned over Judah and Israel after Solomon.

2 Chronicles

Kings of Israel

Kings over all Israel:

From 1050 – 931BC, Saul, David and Solomon reigned over the whole kingdom (all twelve tribes of Israel). The exact duration of Saul's reign is not known. David and Solomon each reigned for 40 years. After the death of Solomon the kingdom breaks up into the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judah).

Kings of Judah	Period of Reign	Length of Reign	Kings of Israel	Period of Reign	Length of Reign
Rehoboam	931-913BC	17 years	Jeroboam I	931-910BC	22 years
Abijam	913-911	3			
Asa	911-870	41	Nadab	910-909	2
			Baasha	909-886	24
			Ela	886-885	2
			Zimri	885	7 days
			Omri	885-874	12
Jehoshaphat¹	872-848	25	Ahab	874-853	22
Jehoram	848-841	8	Ahaziah	853-852	2
Ahaziah	841	1	Joram	852-841	12
Athaliah	841-835	6	Jehu	841-814	28
Joash	835-796	40	Jehoahaz	814-798	17
Amaziah	796-767	29	Jehoash	798-782	16
Uzziah (Azariah)¹	791-740	52	Jeroboam II¹	793-753	41
			Zechariah	753-752	6 months
			Shallum	752	1 month
Jotham^{1,2}	750-732 (751-735)	16	Menahem	752-742	10
			Pekahiah²	742-740 (752-732)	2
Ahaz²	735-716 (742-726)	16	Pekah¹	740-732	20
			Hoshea	732-721	9
Hezekiah²	716-687 (728-697)	29			
Manasseh¹	697-642	55			
Amon	642-640	2			
Josiah	640-609	31			
Jehoahaz	609	3 months			
Jehoiakim	609-597	11			
Jehoiachin	598-597	3 months			
Zedekiah	597-586	11			

The end of the northern kingdom:

The end of the northern kingdom: In 722/721BC the Assyrians under Sargon II conquer Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom. The ten tribes are taken into Assyrian captivity.

The end of the southern kingdom:

Jerusalem is besieged under Sennacherib of Assyria at the time of Hezekiah in 701BC. As a result of Hezekiah's prayer, God prevents the city from being conquered. From 606/605 till 586 Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon besieges Jerusalem twice, destroys the temple and deports the population to Babylon.

1 – These kings reigned at the same time as their predecessors or successors for part of their reign.

2 – For some periods of reign there are alternative calculations (dates in brackets).

Period of reign and length of reign can occasionally differ as only the information regarding the length is given in the Bible.

Recognising mistakes



Simone is facing a class test. She knows perfectly well that it's not going to be easy. The teacher urges the class to take the test seriously, as the result is vital for obtaining a place for an apprenticeship. Simone doesn't take too much notice – she'd rather take things easy. After the test, her gut feeling is pretty positive and she expects a reasonable result. But it's going to be different: She has made many silly little mistakes. The resulting mark is an "F". There's not much chance of getting a place for an apprenticeship with that! Is this fair? Yes, because most of her classmates have put a lot of work into the test and therefore have obtained better results. What Rehoboam has to experience here follows a similar principle: To turn away

from God and to ignore Him has serious consequences. There is a war, and the defeat is embarrassing. – If things go wrong in your life you also have to think very carefully what God may want to tell you. If necessary, do what Rehoboam did and acknowledge that God is righteous and that you deserve to suffer the consequences of your wrong behaviour.



35. What is the difference between "being humble" and "humbling oneself"? Read also 1 Peter 5:5-6.
36. You have just read about Shemaiah. What is he described as?



To acknowledge a mistake is often more difficult than to make one.

War between brothers



In chapter 11, war between the northern and the southern kingdom was avoided because God, through the prophet Shemaiah, sent an effective message to Rehoboam, the father of Abijah. Now, however, Abijah starts a war against Jeroboam and his army. He makes a speech which is quite remarkable, as it points out clearly the difference between the northern and the southern kingdom. In the southern kingdom, true worship takes place, according to the example of David and Solomon, while in the northern kingdom, Jeroboam has introduced idol worship. Jeroboam was keen to prevent his subjects from travelling to Jerusalem as God had

commanded. That's why he had idols made. The speech is also remarkable in that God doesn't exactly speak positively about Abijah in 1 Kings 15:1-8. He is an impressive speaker, but his actions displease God. Yet here he appeals to God and is certain that God is with him.



37. What can you notice regarding Abijah's behaviour? Does he ask God before he starts the battle?
38. Jeroboam makes golden calves. Do you know where a golden calf is mentioned for the first time in Israel's history?



Speak often with God in prayer so that you build a close relationship with Him!

Failed tactic



Despite Abijah's warning, the battle commences.

Jeroboam sets an ambush. Now the men of Judah do exactly the right thing: They call upon their God. They are confronted with an army on two sides. God intervenes directly. The men of Judah win a great victory.

The Bible compares the life of a Christian with a battle (Ephesians 6:10-20). However, your main opponents are not people, but your main enemy is the devil. If you are a committed Christian, he has his eye on you. He wants to attack your confidence in the Lord Jesus. He will also try to make you question the Bible as the rule for your life.

If you are in such a battle and ask God for help, He will give

you renewed courage and will confirm that He is a God in Whom you can trust!



39. Give an example where someone uses the tactic of an

ambush, just as Jeroboam did but successfully?

40. Which verse makes it clear again that Abijah is a good speaker?



The Israelites in their battles often gave a **shout of war** (v15).

This was done to encourage their own soldiers to fight and to make the enemy afraid. It also helped to make clear the difference between friend and foe.



“Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”
(Ephesians 6:10)

Tidied up – and ready for victory



Kings always act on behalf of the whole nation and carry great

responsibility. You can learn a lot from studying how they act.

Abijah should be rated rather negatively – but Asa is different. The first thing he does after coming to power is to tidy up. – Is there anything in your life that doesn't agree with God? We don't generally have to think for too long before coming up with something, but it's difficult to be consistent in doing something about it, isn't it? Do you remember how Abijah went to war against the northern kingdom? Now look at Asa: He positions himself absolutely right before his God and sees that salvation comes only from Him. The same God wants to help you too!



41. How big is Asa's army compared to Zerah's? What is his prospect?

42. Asa doesn't only consider the Ethiopians to be his enemies but also ...

◆ Make a list of all of the kings of Judah of whom it is said explicitly that they “did what was right” (even with limitations).



Weapons in Israel:

Long shield –

rectangular, made to protect the whole body

Spear – weapon for throwing or thrusting

Small shield – round, for the protection of the head and chest

Bow – favourite weapon for attack, great range

Chariot – enabled soldiers to advance quickly into the enemy lines.



God's help is always near; but sometimes it has to be activated by your prayer.

Courage and thankfulness



The battle against Zerah has been won. Now God, through the

prophet Oded, has a message for Asa and his subjects. Why? Those who have had the courage to do something with God and have accomplished it often feel weak and worn out afterwards.

God doesn't want that. He desires that we as Christians persevere, not resting on our successes, but continuing to ask what our tasks are. That's the reason why He encourages Asa.

And Asa starts on new tasks straightaway: Together with his people he offers a sacrifice to God. God has granted them the victory and the booty. As a thank you they give something of it back to Him. – Do you

give something back to God of what He has given you?



43. What does the prophet Oded encourage Asa and the people to do? Make a list of what they should do and of what God was going to do.
44. Today's passage speaks about swearing an oath (vv14-15). What does "swearing an oath" mean? And why should a Christian not swear an oath? Read Matthew 5:33-37 and James 5:12.



Asa receives the encouraging promise from God that there will be a **reward** for his work. It's no different in the New Testament. However, what is meant there is a reward that is given to us in heaven (Revelation 22:12).



Continue to live with God in your life – it's worth it!

An experience forgotten?



Again the southern kingdom is threatened: this time by Baasha, king of Israel, who expands the strategically important city of Ramah. What does Asa do now? Does he again rely on God – as at the time when Zerah attacked with an army of a million? No, for this minor problem he prefers a political solution, by asking Ben-Hadad to enter into a treaty with him. In order to achieve that, he takes the treasures of the temple, which had been dedicated to God. His plan seems to work; but the prophet Hanani tells him that he will now face exactly what he had tried to avoid: war.
Asa took note of the encouragement of the prophet Oded (chapter 15), but he

doesn't heed this serious message. It's not surprising that things continue to go downhill with him. Even his serious illness doesn't make him change course.

Asa: Good beginning (his first story); bad ending (his second story). – What will the story of your life be?



45. Find the key verse in this chapter! Who will God be with?
46. What illness does Asa suffer from and how does he react?



Do you accept correction, or do you reject advice?

The basis is right



Are you aware that the men you are reading of at the moment are

ancestors of the Lord Jesus? The family tree of the Lord Jesus is growing. You can read about King Jehoshaphat in Matthew 1:8. The Bible says really nice things about him (v3).

Jehoshaphat has a grip on his kingdom, because the first thing he does is to take the idols out of the land. Then he chooses able men to help him in government. He is able to extend his military power and no one tries to attack him. Where does this success come from?

Jehoshaphat had chosen a number of men for a special task: They were to travel around his kingdom, teaching the laws of the LORD.

– How about you? You have the Bible, the Word of God, in your hands. There are also many Christians who know the Bible very well and are able to explain it to others. Do you take advantage of this offer by diligently reading and listening?



47. How can you see in this chapter that Jehoshaphat's government was successful?



A **tribute** had to be paid by a nation when it was defeated. The victor and ruler had the right to demand money or other items of value. With the tribute, the losers bought back some of their independence.



Do you want to have success with God? Make the Word of God the basis for your life.

A bad alliance



It seems as if the war between the northern and southern

kingdom, a war between brothers, is finally put to one side. The mutual foreign enemy brings the kings together. But who is Ahab? Read 1 Kings 16:29-33. He is an idol worshipper and deliberately challenges God. You can see the consequences of this in this story.

Ahab hates Micaiah, the prophet of the LORD (v7). He isn't interested in what God has to say. Jehoshaphat is sceptical and doesn't want to rely solely on Ahab's prophets. Have you ever dealt with people you have referred to God, but they are not really interested in Him? Jehoshaphat should not only have mistrusted Ahab's prophets – he should not have allied himself with him either.

A believer must not work together with those who are determined in their opposition to God.



48. Jehoshaphat doesn't only join himself to Ahab in a military way. What relationship comes first? Read chapter 21:6. 49. How much does Jehoshaphat identify himself with Ahab's intentions for war?



Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, was situated on the important north-south road through Israel. King Omri had started to build this road in 875BC; his son Ahab continued the work and also had a new palace built. The Assyrians destroyed Samaria in 723BC after a three year siege.



Idol worship = darkness; Worshipping God = light
“What communion has light with darkness?”
(2 Corinthians 6:14)

One against all



Ahab confirms once more that the words of

God don't mean

anything to him. He has his own firm plan, and he won't move from it. First it looks as though Micaiah would also prophesy victory, just like the other prophets. But the king seems to notice the irony in Micaiah's words and asks again.

Micaiah has no other response than the truth: The King of Israel will not return from the battle alive. And God Himself has made sure that Ahab's prophets foretell victory. Micaiah's statement that Israel is like sheep without a shepherd must have hit Ahab hard.

This prophet shows amazing courage as Micaiah opposes 400 "colleagues", and that

before a king who could have killed him immediately. – Have you ever been in a situation where you were all on your own, witnessing as a Christian? Maybe no one attacked you, but everyone smiled pityingly. That's hard. But God wants to encourage you through the example of Micaiah to take His side courageously.



50. How does Jehoshaphat act in this situation?

He had himself asked for a prophet of the LORD. What reaction would you have expected?



Go forward with Jesus, no matter how hard the fight!
Go forward with Jesus; He's at your side!

Gridlock



Micaiah again announces

Ahab's death. But Ahab is not to be

deterred from his intentions. He has Micaiah thrown into prison so that he doesn't have to listen to his warnings any longer.

The genuineness of a prophet can be determined by whether or not his words come to pass. Micaiah's words become bitter reality for Ahab: He is not killed in a fair battle but by an arrow fired at random. Wasn't it God Who directed this arrow?

Jehoshaphat joins Ahab in battle, even though he must have heard Micaiah's words. He lacks inner strength to assert himself and to end this bad alliance. He even allows Ahab to dress him up in his own clothes, although it is

obvious that this will draw the enemy's attention to him. Why? Because a wrong path in life can make you run away with yourself. If you are on a path that is leading away from God you sometimes have to do things you don't want to do. It's only when Jehoshaphat cries for help that God throws him the "lifeline".



51. What was Micaiah's food in prison supposed to be?

52. Do you know another person in the Bible who was also beaten because of their words?



Bad friends bring you into dangerous situations.

The end of the wrong battle



Although Jehoshaphat returns from the battle in peace

and without a scratch, God tells him very clearly through the seer Jehu what He thinks about his alliance with Ahab. You should never make an alliance with people who hate God and reject Him. The New Testament of course commands us as Christians to love our neighbours and thereby show them something of God's love (Galatians 6:10). We must tell them about the Lord Jesus. But that doesn't mean you should be a "friend of the world" (James 4:4). The life of the Lord Jesus here on earth is the absolute example. He loved people, went out to them and did good, but at the same time He rejected any fellowship with sin.

Jehoshaphat organises his kingdom and ensures justice by appointing judges, Levites, priests and chiefs. His judicial system is based on God's law – which is really positive!



53. What values and benchmarks are important

to Jehoshaphat? What instructions does he give to the men whom he appoints for his government?

54. In chapter 14, God has a message to Asa through a prophet. In what way is this prophet related to the seer Jehu?



"Behave courageously, and the LORD will be with the good!"

A mighty enemy



A new war starts; the enemies are coming!

Jehoshaphat does

the same as his father Asa in chapter 14: Together with the whole nation, he calls to God for help. He reminds God in his prayer of the promises He gave to Solomon (chapter 7:12-22). And he recognises that he can't do anything by himself. Do the same, especially when you are in a seemingly hopeless situation. What could that be in your case? Maybe you witness fighting between two people you love. You can't do anything; maybe you will even make matters worse. You are afraid and feel totally helpless. Call to God and pray that there will be peace and reconciliation. Tell Him that He has promised to hear your

prayers – and wait to see what He will do.

How is God going to react to Jehoshaphat's prayer?



55. Was it right of the Israelites, on entering the land of

Canaan, to spare the Moabites and Ammonites (v10)? Clue: Deuteronomy 2:19.

56. "To seek the LORD" (vv3-4): What is it? How can you explain it?



Today, **En-Gedi** is an oasis at the Dead

Sea in the desert of Judea (or Tekoa). Maybe at that time it was also a city. Coming from Jerusalem, you had to walk over hills and mountains to get to that place.



God can do something with people who put their confidence in Him.

The enemy defeats himself



God answers! He has a wonderful message.

Jehoshaphat

and his army don't have to fight, but God Himself will lead the battle. Who would have expected that? Isn't this amazing?

It's as if someone has just blown the fear away! God's promise makes Jehoshaphat and the people praise and worship Him – even before they have actually experienced God's victory! Even before the battle, they are absolutely sure that God will be true to His word. This is real faith and true confidence.

If you take what the Bible says seriously, and show by your behaviour that you trust God, He will also be at your side just as He was at Jehoshaphat's side.



57. What does God command Jehoshaphat and

the people to do? What do they do while they fulfil God's command?

58. What does Gideon's battle in Judges 7:19-22 have in common with Jehoshaphat's battle?

God's victory



A proper battle doesn't even take place, because

God Himself has

already conquered the enemy. For Jehoshaphat and his army, only one thing remains to be done: collecting the booty.

The Lord Jesus won such a victory at the cross. There He fought against your worst enemy, the devil, and conquered him.

How did He accomplish that?

Through His death on the cross of Calvary, He conquered the enemy with his own weapon – death, which all people have to face. You can read about that in Hebrews 2:14-15.

You didn't contribute anything to this victory; you weren't able to and didn't need to fight. But you profit from this victory! Do you thank the Lord for it – as

Jehoshaphat and his people thanked God for theirs (v26)?



59. What is the result of this great triumph over the

enemies?

60. Towards the end of his reign Jehoshaphat makes a mistake that he has already made once before. Which one?

◆ Note how often you read of joy in 2 Chronicles.



**What do you expect of God?
Don't set your expectations too low!**



**Stay at the side of the Victor –
the Lord Jesus Christ!**

Cruel, but just



King Jehoram, the oldest son of God-fearing Jehoshaphat, is

not a very pleasant man. He kills his own brothers in cold blood to ensure that no one tries to take his place. But God sees to it that his influence over other nations diminishes after that. And one day he receives a letter from the prophet Elijah which points out his evil deeds and threatens terrible consequences. The cruel king comes to a cruel end. No one sorrows over his death.



61. Why does Jehoram walk in the evil ways of the

kings of Israel?

62. What does Jehoram lose (vv16-20)?



The Israelites often made “a burning” on the occasions of their kings’ **funerals** (v19). That has nothing to do with cremation. Rather, nice smelling spices were burnt in the burial places.



Do you leave trails of blessing in your life?

Bad advice



Done! At last Tim has passed his CBT, allowing him to ride the

scooter he “inherited” from his uncle. His class mates think the scooter is really cool. However, during the first trip they take together it emerges that the cool scooter has a small problem: It’s too slow! “Let’s have a look.” Tim’s mates have lots of ideas how to make the scooter go faster, faster even than is permitted. Having given it some thought, Tim decides to put these ideas into practice. Soon his scooter is one of the fastest. He also knows that his licence is in danger if he gets caught. King Ahazaiah’s mother behaves in a way that is similar to Tim’s friends. She advises him to do evil things. And –

just like Tim – Ahazaiah rises to the bait. Because of her advice, the king gets caught up in wars, and he is taken captive and killed. His mother Athaliah seems to have waited for that. Now she can take all the power to herself.



63. How is one of the king’s sons saved?

64. Many of King David’s descendants are killed at this time. Why is it so important that these descendants are not eliminated completely?



Test all advice by your Bible.

The conspiracy



Jehoiada, a man in the southern kingdom, becomes

courageous enough to go against the wicked queen Athaliah. He is sure that she is not the rightful ruler, because Joash is the one who should be the king. He is planning a coup. Every little detail in the plan is carefully thought through and prepared. He thinks of the weapons that may be necessary and also informs the gatekeepers in the temple. The plan is successful and Joash is really anointed king.

Many men and women in church history have proved to be similarly courageous for their God – from the first martyr, Stephen, to John Bunyan, up to the heroes of faith at the present time. – Be

encouraged to show the same courage for God!



65. Why is Jehoiada so sure that Joash should be king?



The **gate keepers** in the temple watched and kept guard at the entrances to the temple by day and by night. Their responsibilities also included watching over the store rooms, and they collected and administered the money the Israelites gave for God.

Short drift



With God's help, Jehoiada's plan works!

He convinces

the people that Joash is the rightful king. The wicked queen is executed. After that Jehoiada makes a covenant with the people and brings them back into a relationship with God. Immediately everything in connection with the idol Baal is destroyed. What can you learn from such actions? Maybe there are bad things in your life which determine what you do? And what is as important to you as the Lord Jesus, or maybe even more important? – If you notice something in your life that is evil or takes you away from the Lord Jesus, then get rid of it!



66. What kind of function, or job, does Jehoiada have?

67. The end of Athaliah is similar to that of Jezebel. In what way? Compare with 2 Kings 9:30-33.



The idol **Baal** has already been mentioned in

Numbers 25:3 as one of the gods of the nation of Moab. He was supposed to be responsible for the growth of cereal crops and fruit. That means that people believed that the harvest would be better the more he was revered.



Following Jesus demands courage!



Who sits on the throne in your life?

A great deal of motivation



King Joash has obviously learnt from Jehoiada, because one

important matter is of particular concern for him (v4). He loves his God and therefore wants to change something about the bad state of the temple. Jehoiada must have taught him how to set about doing something like that. Joash doesn't just have good intentions, but he really gets things going. This motivates the Israelites. The result? All rejoiced (v10).

To work together for God on something gives courage and joy. As Christians, God has put us into a partnership. We can help and encourage each other. If others motivate you, use it as an opportunity to serve God more. And try for yourself to encourage others so that

they gain more confidence and work more zealously for the Lord Jesus.



68. Into what kind of container are the collections placed

and where is it located?

69. What honour is given to Jehoiada and what is said about him after he dies?



"He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."
(2 Corinthians 9:6)

Like a flag in the wind



The end of the history of Joash is very sad. Why? How is it possible

that someone who starts so well with God is pulled down later in life? You can see in the life of Joash how your life can be influenced by others. As long as Joash was under the good influence of Jehoiada things went well with him. But sadly he then listened to the leaders of Judah (v17), and these were very bad advisers. How are things with you? Are you easily influenced by others? That can be very positive, if you are around good people. But God wants to achieve more with you. Paul writes to Timothy that he should continue in what Timothy himself was fully assured of (2 Timothy 3:14). Good advice is important, but your own

conviction of faith is far more important! Put some work into becoming a convinced, steadfast Christian who won't be turned aside by others.



70. Which king listened to the bad advice of the young

ones and ignored the good advice of the older ones? What were the consequences?

71. For what does Epaphras pray regarding his brothers and sisters in the faith in Colosse? Read Colossians 4:12!



Become a steadfast disciple of the Lord Jesus who won't be turned aside by others.

Bad investment?!



Amaziah has done some careful planning. Just to be on the safe side,

he hires soldiers from Israel so that his army is strong enough. But suddenly, a man of God puts a spanner in the works. Amaziah has invested so much in this matter already – and will that all be lost? Is God really serious when He tells Amaziah to forget about the 100 talents of silver? Yes, God means it. But He also explains why. First of all Amaziah has to learn to trust in his God and to build on His help. Further, God promises that He can give him more than 100 talents of silver.

Take God's Word seriously and act on it, even if it means missing out on something! You can be sure: God won't leave you and will more than make up for the apparent loss you have made.



72. Which negative statement concerning Amaziah

did you notice while you were reading?

73. Which other king, of whom you have read in this book of the Bible, also made an alliance with Israel?



In this chapter the Israelites are called "children of **Ephraim**". Ephraim was the most important tribe in the northern kingdom and is therefore often mentioned as representative of the 10 tribes. The Ephraimites were direct neighbours of Judah and Benjamin in the north. The border between the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom was at the same time the border between Judah-Benjamin and Ephraim.



It's better to trust in God than in 100,000 men!

Just cruel



Amaziah has 10,000 prisoners executed in one go – a terrible

crime!

Is such a thing still possible today? Sadly, yes. You will surely know about what happened in Nazi Germany. But you don't have to go so far back into history to see this terrible extent of sin on the earth. In 1994, around one million people were killed in Rwanda in a really short time. Defenceless women and children as well as men were cruelly murdered.

Sin has brought mankind into a terrible situation. This became evident shortly after the fall, not only with Cain, but also generally (Genesis 6:5). Look forward to the time when the Lord Jesus will reign,

when there will be peace and righteousness on earth at last!



74. What does Amaziah do with regard to God's second message, which comes to him through a prophet?



Amaziah's command in verse 17 constitutes a

clear declaration of war. He challenges Joash, king of Israel, to battle. The place where the armies were to gather and the battle would take place was often agreed beforehand.



Rejecting God's warning is like hitting your head against a brick wall.

Listen the second time, too



Why does Amaziah reject God's second message to him?

He doesn't even allow the prophet to finish and seems to completely block out God's voice. And then even the king of Israel warns him not to fight against him. Joash, the king of Israel, gives a clear message of defeat, illustrated in the story of the thistle (chapter 25:16-19). But Amaziah doesn't want to know. He goes to war and sadly experiences in a negative sense that God does what He says. – What can you learn from this? God expects you to take His Word seriously. The bad thing about Amaziah's situation is that he doesn't acknowledge his mistake and repent before God. At least, we don't read anything about it.

– If you have done anything against the will of God, you always have the opportunity to return. Use it!



75. Why does God make sure that Judah suffers this

defeat?

76. Where does the battle take place?



“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”
(Matthew 24:35)

An amazing career



Uzziah becomes king when he is 16 years old. Sadly, he doesn't

have a counsellor as Joash had. His starting point is quite bad, because his own father is responsible for the battle amongst the people of God. However, he takes the good acts of his father as an example and seeks God (v4-5). What does that mean? To seek God means to ask what He wants, rather than pushing your own ideas. That's when God makes Uzziah prosper. He becomes famous, and the time of his reign is the second longest of any king in Israel or Judah.



77. What does Uzziah do in the cities of the

Philistines during his wars?

78. What does Ecclesiastes 5:8 have to do with Uzziah?



There's only one place in the Bible where you find

machines (v15). These are **catapults** used to defend the city against the enemies.



Those who seek God are rewarded!

Pride comes before a fall



Uzziah has arrived at the climax of his power. Sadly he

now becomes proud and goes beyond God's commandments for temple worship. Despite his good beginning with God, he now imagines he can decide for himself what is right and what is wrong. Even the warnings of the priests in the temple can't stop him.

God gives a very serious answer. In one short moment, Uzziah falls from the highest position in society to the very bottom. Maybe that's the worst punishment he could have.

This story makes it clear how important it is to take God and His instructions seriously. To ignore God's commandment is pride because what's behind

it is: "God, you can't tell me anything!"
– Remember therefore: If you rebel against God and His Word, you have to expect serious consequences.



79. Which men in the Old Testament tried – like Uzziah –

to perform the service of the priests although they were not allowed to, and what happened to them?

80. Which commandment from the Law of Moses is applied to Uzziah after God struck him?



**"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
(James 4:6)**

Plans and recipes



Have you ever watched a bricklayer? He lays brick onto

brick. He does it according to the plans, without which it wouldn't work. It's just the same with food. For a good meal you need a good recipe. Can you lay bricks by two different lines or cook using two different recipes at the same time? What would happen if you tried?

And what does Jotham do? He arranges his ways according to God. That's like bricklaying according to plans and cooking according to the recipe.

The great God has a plan for your life as well, a recipe so that your life is a good life for Him. Therefore here's an urgent recommendation for you: Do as Jotham did and keep to God's plan for your life.

You will find God's whole plan for you in your Bible. Read it, and then act on it!



81. How many negative points are reported about Jotham in this chapter?



Live your life according to God's good plan!

Light in the darkness



Remarkable!
In the Old
Testament here
are men who

live by what the Lord Jesus teaches His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount: "Love your enemies". They clothe their enemies, feed, water and anoint them. Yes, they take the greatest care that their enemies are comfortable. In the end some of the attackers return on donkeys to their fellow soldiers. Just imagine how these must have stared! They act like that because they know that they are guilty before God. And they don't want to become even guiltier.

All the other things reported in these verses are extremely sad: idolatry, civil war and chaos.

At a time like that, those who

do good to their enemies are bright lights in the darkness.



82. Read
Deuteronomy 18:9-10! What does Ahaz

do about what is written in these verses?



An **abomination**
is something that
God or people

reject, even loathe, because it is spiritually or morally evil. Idolatry, for example, is an abomination to God (Jeremiah 44:2-5). Acting against the commandments of God is an abomination to those who take them seriously (Proverbs 29:27).

The door is shut!



It seems that God
can't reach Ahaz
with His message.
Ahaz experiences

defeat after defeat and doesn't seem to realise that God wants to speak to him.

But be careful not to judge Ahaz! Anyone can get into a similar situation and become blind to God's messages. This can go as far as it did with Ahaz, where God kind of shuts the door (v24). – Be careful that the door of your heart remains open for the Lord Jesus! And if it is shut, then open it again.

Ahaz continues to offer sacrifices to other gods and thus provokes God (v25). The last thing that is reported of Ahaz is not to his honour – just like his whole life. What a sad story!



83. What does Ahaz
do with the temple
treasures and why?

Read verse 21 and 2 Kings 16:8-9.

84. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Who says that and to whom? Clue: Read the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3.



The gods of
Damascus (v23)
which Ahaz

introduced and worshipped are the gods of the **Syrians**, because Damascus was the capital of that empire. The Syrians, or Arameans, are the descendants of Shem, the oldest son of Noah. This nation was for a long time a dangerous enemy of God's people.



"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him a drink."
(Romans 12:20)



A time is coming when God will
close the door (see Luke 13:25).

The door is open!



Something that appears to be dead can awake to new life. You

can see this in nature, during each spring, when new life appears.

Did you think yesterday that God's story with His people is finished? The door is shut, isn't it? That's right. But Hezekiah makes a new beginning. His first action: He opens the door of the temple again and has it repaired.

Then everything is tidied up. Everything that doesn't belong in God's sanctuary is thrown out into the valley of the Brook Kidron. There are many things that have nothing to do with the temple. Are you aware that your body is a temple in which God the Holy Spirit lives if you are a child of God (1 Corinthians 6:19)? If

your relationship with God is blocked, take the obstacle out of the way. How? Confess to God what rubbish has come in, in the shape of bad deeds and thoughts. Then you will experience real joy coming back into your life.



85. What is the relationship of Hezekiah to the man

who had understanding in the visions of God at the time of his great-grandfather Uzziah (chapter 26:5)?

86. What does Hezekiah want to do to turn away God's anger?



Do you need to make a clean sweep in your life as well?

Giving for God



Hezekiah has the ability to draw others with him in his enthusiasm

for his God. He reintroduces the sacrifices in the house of God. Why is this so important? Because all these sacrifices point to Calvary where the Lord Jesus offered Himself. There, the Lord Jesus atoned for your sin by being made sin Himself. For Him, this was an unimaginably terrible judgment.

You can clearly see here how important the work of redemption of the Lord Jesus is for God. If you are no longer aware of what happened on Calvary for you, and if you stop thanking Him every day for it, you will lose the joy of your salvation (vv30+36).



87. How many chapters have you read in 2 Chronicles without a mention of the word "joy"?

88. Joy here shows itself through music and singing! Find one passage in the New Testament which instructs us to sing. Clue: See, for example, James 5.



The result of giving thanks to God is joy!

On the way with the invitation!



The runners in verse 10 have the task of bringing the invitation to certain places. Every one of them has a letter in which the invitation can be read in black and white. And they invite people to the great feast of joy and fellowship with God. In the same way, as a Christian you have the task to pass on God's invitation to those around you. For this, you have your Bible and you may invite people to have fellowship with God. However, first of all the runners have to say that returning to God is necessary in order to escape judgment (vv6+8). Neither must you hide the fact that now, as much as before, repentance towards God is necessary in order to obtain forgiveness.

Not everyone greets the runners with their good tidings in a friendly manner – some laugh at them and mock them (v10). That's what can happen to you as well. But don't be discouraged by it!



89. When, according to God's plan, was the Passover supposed to be celebrated? Clue: Have a look in Exodus 12.
90. And when is it celebrated here? Is this according to God's thoughts? Clue: Read Numbers 9:9-12.



Are you looking forward to the "feast" in heaven? If you do, your invitation will be more convincing!

A nice feast



The first few verses of today's passage show that the condition among the people of God is not the best. Many Israelites celebrate the Passover without having first cleansed themselves in the way prescribed by God. Hezekiah prays that God may forgive them (v18). But does he really pray indiscriminately for everyone? No, he prays for all those who had prepared their heart to seek God. – Is that the case with you? God is especially interested in your heart. Make the firm decision in your heart to live close to Him and for Him! Now the Israelites experience the joy of having fellowship with God. One week isn't enough for them, and they

therefore prolong their stay in Jerusalem by another week. – Have you ever been really happy, enjoying fellowship with God and not wanting to stop praising and thanking Him?



91. Are the prayers of Hezekiah answered?
92. Who prevented the Israelites from the Northern kingdom from attending the feasts in Jerusalem? What was the tactic? Read 1 Kings 12:26-29.



Give your heart completely to God!

Pursuing God's interests



Just celebrating isn't enough.

That's obvious to Hezekiah and

many other Israelites. Many things in Israel have something to do with idols and have to be got rid of. In order for the temple worship to function properly, hard work has to be done. "You can't make something out of nothing!" Of course, God gives increase, good harvests and healthy cattle, but the Israelites have to be prepared to make a contribution to the provisions for the priests.

Through the worship service the Israelites remember what God has done for them in the past. It becomes clear to them that they are dependent on God and they bring Him gifts. In doing so, they express their gratitude.

– What about you? Do you work, bearing in mind the thought to give something

to God from what you have gained? When you do your daily chores you can work in such a way that you gain time, which you can then use for God!



93. What motivates the Israelites most to bring their gifts?

How does Hezekiah act?

94. What happens in Exodus 36:1-7 compared to Hezekiah's time? Clue: Continue reading to verse 10.



A sacred pillar, also called an **Asherah**, was a wooden post

driven into the ground which was dedicated to a goddess. Stones of remembrance were devoted to male gods. Sadly – and God had to punish them for it – the Israelites adopted these idolatrous practices from their neighbouring nations.



Working efficiently enables you to give something to God.

Good – right – true



What happens to all the gifts which the Israelites are bringing into the

temple? According to God's instructions, one part should belong to the priests and Levites.

Did you notice what is said about Hezekiah at the end of verse 20? His subjects can rely in confidence on this king! Of course Hezekiah can't do everything himself. That's why he chooses men who support him and act according to his wishes.

Verse 21 tells us the reason why everything works out so well for Hezekiah: He acts wholeheartedly – with and for God. What he does, he does well. His heart is behind all his activities. This gives the direction for every Christian!



95. Which kings mentioned in chapters 14-31

are said to have done good (although some with a divided heart)?



The word used for "offerings" in verse 12 is sometimes

translated as "**heave offerings**". A heave offering is often part of an offering that has been taken away from the whole and is used for a specific purpose. A heave offering could have been given to God, the sanctuary or the priests and Levites. Young men who entered the army at the age of 20 had to pay a tax of half a shekel of silver as a heave offering.



Serve the Lord in truth with your whole heart.

Trust required!



The inhabitants of Jerusalem are in a difficult situation. They learn that there is going to be a war. What can they do? On the one side there is the king that they know has a very good relationship with God. He tells them that they shouldn't be afraid of the enemy, but should trust in their God. On the other side there is Sennacherib, king of Assyria, who makes use of all kinds of methods of persuasion. He claims that no god is strong enough to conquer him. Have you experienced similar situations? Take for example the subject "Creation or Evolution". The Bible is very clear: God prepared the world for man in six ordinary days. Scientists who don't believe in God state, on the other

hand, that there has been an evolutionary process, which has taken billions of years; creation by God was something invented by men. Do you see the real need for trust in God? The question for tomorrow is: How is this situation going to end?



96. How often is this story reported in the Bible?

97. What does David say to Goliath, before a battle which seemed to be just as hopeless (1 Samuel 17:45-47)? Compare this with verses 7-8 of today's chapter.



Faith is to dare to trust only in God!

The right kind of trust



God Himself fights against the army of the king of Assyria and makes him return to his own country. – Don't be dissuaded by the fact that so many people today doubt the Bible. Those who trust in God will not come to harm. The rest of Hezekiah's history is reported only as a kind of summary in chapter 32. You find more details in 2 Kings 20 and Isaiah 38 and 39. What can you learn from the life of Hezekiah?

- If you are in trouble, pray to your God. Leave the decision to Him. – The extra years in Hezekiah's life were not good for him.
- Pride is a wrong attitude towards God and people. – Hezekiah humbled himself,

and the matter was put right.

- Diligence and faithfulness are rewarded by God. – Hezekiah received great riches from God and administered them faithfully.
- God tests your faith. For what purpose? You must learn that everything that you have and are comes only from God. – Sadly, Hezekiah also trusted in his riches at the end of his life.



98. What happens just before God destroys all the important leaders of Sennacherib's army?
99. What miracle (v24) happens in Hezekiah's life?



Trusting in God always: that's the best way!

Miles off the target!



Imagine you are walking across a bridge and you see a man who is obviously drowning in the river underneath. You are a good swimmer and decide immediately to try to save that person. With great effort you really manage to save his life. But then comes the great disappointment: The person you saved turns his back on you. You meet him once or twice, but you don't receive any thanks from him. This is a weak illustration compared to Manasseh's behaviour. God liberated the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt, brought them to the land of Canaan, gave them many good things and saved them at the time of Manasseh's father from the king of Assyria. Manasseh

forgets all this or deliberately pushes it aside. Yes, he provokes God by doing many evil things (v6). Don't ever forget the Lord Jesus Who has saved you! And thank Him for it with all your heart!



100. Which king passed his sons through the fire, just like Manasseh does (v6)?
101. What does God do after Manasseh doesn't react to His words?



How do you thank your Saviour?

Escape from disaster



Yesterday you saw the enormous scope of Manasseh's ungodliness: He acts with such blatant wickedness against God as hardly any other king. He provokes God by worshipping a broad range of heathen gods of the ancient Middle East. In doing so, he also seduces his subjects into worshipping idols. This makes matters even worse in God's eyes. God watches only for a limited time. His judgment for Manasseh is captivity in Babylon. Something remarkable happens there: Manasseh understands God's language. He starts to pray and he humbles himself. That means he recognises that God has acted righteously with him. But not only that: After God

takes him out of captivity he changes his life. His conversion is followed by actions which show clearly that his repentance is real. – That's what God also wants to see in you!



102. What does Amon (vv21-25) have in common with his father – and how is he different?



Supplication (v13) means to pray to God in desperate need in a very intensive manner, being aware that the situation, from a human point of view, is hopeless and only God can help.



The genuineness of someone turning back to God can be measured by their actions.

Young and active



How old do you have to be to have a relationship with God and to serve Him? The story of Josiah gives a surprising answer to this question. He becomes king at eight years old, and he starts to seek God when he is 16. Maybe you are around the same age as Josiah and face important questions such as: "Should I find a job, or should I continue in education?" Look to God for an answer to your question, as Josiah did. And be prepared to do what God wants you to do – in your job, at school or in your free time. At only 20 years old, Josiah starts to put into practice publicly what he has learnt. Idolatry among the people of Israel is abominable to God. That's why he is determined

to ensure: "That's not going to take place in my kingdom."



103. For how long does Josiah reign? What age, therefore, does he live to?
104. What task needs to be done after the idols have been got rid of? Who does this task?



Do you want to be a friend of the Lord Jesus? Then do what He says! Read John 15:14!

Something's found in the temple



The Book of the Law is found. Is this by chance? It's interesting to note that Josiah has already rid the country of idolatry – even without this book. But through reading this text it becomes even clearer to him how far his people have departed from keeping God's law! Josiah rends his clothes (see information text) and now wants to know whether he will have to face God's anger. Is there still a chance to escape judgment? How good that you can know today that there is always a way back to God. If you have become aware of a sin in your life, confess it. God is ready to forgive. The Lord Jesus has taken the judgment for it at the cross of Calvary.

– Read your Bible expecting that God wants to tell you something, and put it into practice – like Josiah.



105. How do the men who have been entrusted with repairing the temple act?



To tear clothes – that's what people did at that time when they wanted to express: "We acknowledge God's judgment" or "We have done something that is dishonouring to God". People in the Bible also did this at times of suffering or distress. You find more examples with David (2 Samuel 1:11) and Joshua (Joshua 7:6).



Reading the Bible can cause you to ask questions!

Question asked – answer received



What kind of answer will the men whom Josiah has sent to

Huldah the prophetess bring back? The answer is: God will punish the people for their evil deeds. But God also sees what's positive. He recognises that Josiah is sincere. So He promises that judgment will not come before his death. After that, Josiah gathers his subjects so that the Book of the Law can be read to all of them again. He wants to encourage more Israelites to be faithful to God by keeping His commandments and by not sinning.

And today? God has only terrible judgment reserved for this ungodly world. But if you believe personally that the Lord Jesus bore your sins on the cross of Calvary, then God

will spare you from judgment, as He did with Josiah. All true Christians can look forward to soon being taken from this earth into heaven – before the judgments arrive.



106. What does Josiah do in order to place the people

under an obligation to keep God's commandments?

107. Josiah urges the Israelites to serve God. Is he successful in this?



Are you also one of those who won't be on earth when God's judgments begin?

A feast to remember



Josiah celebrates the Passover feast – just like Hezekiah in his

time. Since he lives in close fellowship with God himself, he can also encourage the priests to exercise their duties in the temple (v2). Josiah reminds the Levites of everything David and Solomon had commanded them to do (vv3-6).

Has Josiah now fulfilled his duty? No, he goes even further and donates 33,000 animals to his subjects for sacrifice in the Passover feast (v7)! Other well-to-do people are infected by this generosity (vv8-9). And then the Passover is celebrated, exactly as commanded (v12). Nothing and no one is overlooked, not even the gatekeepers (v15). – If you are interested in God's will and have the desire to serve

Him, you will give Him the greatest pleasure!



108. Do you know the passage which makes it very clear that the Passover is a type of the Lord Jesus? Clue: Look at 1 Corinthians 5.



The name "Passover" reminds us of the event when

God passed over those houses in Egypt where He saw the blood of the Passover lamb on the door frames. In all other houses, the firstborn of men and cattle were killed (Exodus 12).



The one who thinks of God thinks also of others!

A warning not heeded



Necho, king of Egypt, goes to war with Charchemish, a city on the River

Euphrates, about 500-600km north of Israel. On his way there he has to go through the land of Israel.

Why does Josiah interfere in this war? He doesn't ask God for advice and doesn't take Necho's warning seriously (v21). The end of the story shows that Necho has really spoken God's message, because his warning to Josiah becomes bitter reality: The king who did so many good things has to die the same kind of death as ungodly king Ahab in chapter 18.

It's good to try to imitate Josiah's zeal for God. But also learn from his mistake: God wants us to be obedient to Him at all times, even if His warnings are communicated to us by people we might not expect.



109. How can you see that Josiah is a well-respected king in Israel?

110. How was Balaam (Numbers 22) made aware of the angel of the LORD Who blocked the wrong way for him?



Megiddo is a fortress not far from today's city of Nazareth. It is a very old city, which Solomon used as a centre for his army. Here Josiah fights against Necho, king of Egypt. In the great day of God, in this area which is also called Armageddon (mountain of Megiddo), many nations will gather for one of the last awful wars on this earth (Revelation 16:16).



Lead your life in such a way that others can love and respect you.

Foreign rule



Four kings in only 14 verses – that hasn't occurred in this book before!

It seems that there isn't much else to report about these kings, of whom two reign only for three months and two for 11 years. Necho of Egypt and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon take control over Israel. They determine who should be king, plunder the treasures in the temple and impose high taxes on the Israelites.

Isn't it terrible to see something like that happen amongst the people of God? Where is the energy with which they used to fight against their enemies? What is the reason for this decline? You will be able to answer these questions yourself if you think about the last few chapters.

But there are also bright moments: faithful individuals who have not forgotten their God.

One of them is called by name: It's the prophet Jeremiah. You can learn from him how to be faithful to God when others don't want to have anything more to do with you!



111. What would have been the first step towards solving the problems in Israel?



Swim against the tide!

Open-ended



This history book about the people of Israel ends with the explanation

as to why Israel is taken into Babylonian captivity: The Israelites have thrown all God's warnings through His prophets to the winds.

Once again it becomes clear: God is faithful to His Word and does what He says.

The people have to spend 70 years in Babylonian captivity, until God has this empire taken over by the Persians.

The Persian king, Cyrus, receives the command from God Himself to build Him a house. What impression would this make on the Israelites?

Aren't they the chosen people and therefore have the responsibility to build God a house?



112. Why does God tell King Cyrus to have the temple in Jerusalem rebuilt?

◆ Can you think of any good features or behaviour which you have read of in 2 Chronicles, which you as a young Christian can imitate?

Delayed Take-off

Cape Canaveral (Florida), May 1995. Kennedy Space Center is quite busy. The grey concrete runways are surrounded by a picturesque wildlife reserve. The "Discovery", a 56-metre-long space shuttle, is being prepared for take-off. It's going to be a landmark in the history of American space travel: it's the 100th manned space flight since Alan Shephard's 15-minute voyage in October 1961.

At the moment, engineers and technicians are fighting an unexpected problem. They are beavering feverishly on the Discovery's tank. There are 130 tiny little holes on the insulating compound on the whole surface of the tank, which was the untiring work of some Northern Flickers, a woodpecker species.

The devil, too, tries everything to stop Christians in their mission for God. He bombards them every day by flinging filthy pictures and language at them. It seems as if the followers of the Lord Jesus are at the mercy of the devil. But it's quite the opposite. The solution is to judge the first evil thought with the help of the Lord Jesus. Try it!

If NASA-workers had taken the very first woodpecker seriously, it wouldn't have come to a two-month long delay for take-off.



There's always a moral to the story when God tells us history!

Facts and Figures

Author:

Solomon

Time of Writing:

Around 931 BC

Place of Writing:

Unknown

Addressees:

People looking for purpose in life

Topic:

How does a person best spend their life?

Peculiarities:

The expression “under the sun” occurs 29 times

«Remember now your
Creator in the days of
your youth.»

Ecclesiastes 12:1

How it started:

Although the author doesn't name himself, many things point to Solomon. In chapter 1:1+12, the author calls himself son of David and king in Jerusalem. In chapter 1:16 he speaks of his great wisdom, which according to 1 Kings 3:12, only Solomon possessed. In chapter 12:9 he mentions that he has written many proverbs. This fact also points to Solomon.

Many expressions in Ecclesiastes hint at Solomon having written this book when he was old. He appears to look back onto a long life and all his thoughts and actions; he warns the young and points to life in old age.

King Solomon reigned from 970 to 931BC. Ecclesiastes was therefore written at the end of that period.

Solomon is alone, without God's revelation, on the journey to search for the true meaning of life and always moves in the realm of earthly standards.

The expression "under the sun" occurs 29 times, showing clearly from what point of view the author is writing.

What it's all about:

Solomon puts himself in the position of a person who doesn't possess a revelation from God, in order to understand how such a person feels and thinks. He tries to understand the questions and needs which have bothered mankind at all times.

What does a person have to do here on earth to find the meaning of life? Can a person be content and happy without God? If he doesn't look any further than what happens "under the sun", everything remains worthless, pointless and empty.

This book awakens the need of the heart for something more, for something higher, more precious, better, and more purposeful. This prepares the reader for the gospel.

How about today?

The meaning of life is still an up-to-date question today. Through reading this book you, as a Christian, learn to better understand the point of view of those around you. Without the revelation of God in Jesus Christ they remain desperate people who labour in vain to find the meaning of life.

Structure

Chapter 1:1-11

Introduction: Life without God is empty

Chapter 1:12-6:12

What's the purpose of everything that goes on in this world?

Chapter 7:1-12:10

Lots of good advice

Chapter 12:11-14

Conclusion: Life in the light of eternity



The expression "under the sun" occurs 29 times.



The search for the purpose of life ends with Jesus Christ.

Solomon's quest



On his quest for the meaning of life, Solomon comes straight

to the point. The result of his search “under the sun” is summarised in just one word: vanity (worthlessness). Life is hard work (v3), passes away quickly (v4), and is fleeting, empty and worthless. There is no purpose. Everything goes round in circles, following a kind of cycle like the sun (v5), the wind (v6) and the water (v7). This eternal cycle in nature reminds man of his never-ending work and efforts. Man is never satisfied, no matter how much he sees or how much he hears (v8). He has the continual desire for new experiences and adventures. – Is it the same with you? Nothing in this world is able to bring lasting happiness into your heart.

There is nothing new under the sun (vv9-10). Education and philosophy don't satisfy (vv13-18). That's not the way to solve the riddle of life (v15). Only if you rise “above the sun”, towards Him Who alone is able to bring satisfaction, you will find the real meaning and only valuable goal in life.



1. What was the job of the Preacher?
2. Imagine you

discover something new. What frustrating sentence would the Preacher say to you?



The word “**vanity**” (v2) can also be described as

“nothingness” or “without real meaning”. In Ecclesiastes, the word is always used in connection with experiences which don't have any lasting, eternal value.



Look for your happiness in the right place.

The search goes on



Solomon hasn't found the meaning of life by searching

for it intellectually. Now he looks at the pleasures of life (v1). He has participated in everything in life, with the desire to experience all that is pleasant to the senses: happiness (v2), alcohol (v3), great constructions (v4), many possessions (vv5-7), riches, music, enjoyment, sex (vv8-10); but everything is vanity. Today, films, television and advertisements present a completely false picture to people. Behind much fun and laughter, there is suffering. What remains is just emptiness. God wants you, as a Christian, to live a happy, fulfilled life, but He shows you that the world can't give you

real joy. This can only be found “above the sun”.

God is the source of all joy. Real, lasting joy can only be found in Him (Psalm 16:11). Man without God doesn't have anything to give him lasting satisfaction, even if he possesses everything that the world has to offer.



3. What conclusion does Solomon draw after he has tried out all kinds of pleasures?



Don't be deceived by the promises and temptations of the media.

Still searching



Worldly wisdom is better than foolishness, the wise is better off

than the fool (vv12-13), but the same end awaits them both – death (v14). That means that in the end, even the pursuit of wisdom is also vanity (v15). Solomon recognises that glory vanishes, and that even famous people are forgotten quickly. The result is that he hates life (vv16-17).

Your name being written in heaven is of much more value than a monument here on earth.

In the face of death Solomon considers his riches as well as his endeavours and hard labour to be of no value.

Everything seems to have no purpose (vv18-23).

It is much better to live and work for God and for eternity.

For everything you do for Him you will receive a reward. No work “in the Lord” is vanity. Christians ought to work for their Lord from their hearts. That means not for themselves, and not to make a good impression on others. – What is the aim of your work?



4. What is the result of even the hardest work of a person (v22) if he tries to find his satisfaction in it?

5. Can a Christian agree with Solomon’s statement in verse 24 that there is nothing better for man than what is mentioned there?



Fulfil your duties faithfully for the Lord Jesus.

To everything there is a season



Everything is moving and changing.

Nothing lasts

forever. To everything there is a certain season (vv1-8).

God determines the times and seasons for all His creatures.

As a Christian you can know that your life is in God’s hand.

He has a plan and goal for your life. Nothing is left to fate.

Although man lives in time, he has a sense of eternity. He feels that there is something that follows life on earth (v11).

In order to push away this sense of eternity, the devil tries hard to occupy and distract man with anything and everything. But for everyone the time of death will come, for some sooner than they think.

Every man has to die and after that be judged by God. This

is something that Solomon sensed as well (v17). But God offers you salvation today – eternal salvation through faith in the work of His Son, Jesus Christ.



6. What has God put into the heart of men?



To everything there is a time. Verses 1-8 mention 28 different

“times”. God’s offer of salvation also has a certain time for you: now and today. 2 Corinthians 6:2 says: “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Tomorrow doesn’t belong to you.



Make time for God!

Different situations compared



Solomon observes that the world is full of injustice and oppression

(v1). This will continue for as long as sin is in this world. Injustice and strife have been the order of the day since the fall in the Garden of Eden. Man tries to solve the problems, for example with the help of human rights organisations, but without success. The Preacher is so upset about these circumstances that he declares it would have been better not to have known life at all (vv2-3). Jealousy, competition (vv4-6) and senseless greed don't satisfy man, especially if he doesn't have anyone to share the fruit of his labour with (vv7-12). Recognition by men and the highest honours of this world

are limited by time and are basically empty (vv13-16). True satisfaction, fulfilment and recognition are only found in fellowship with God and His Son Jesus Christ.



7. What recommendation does Solomon give in verses 9-12 with regard to the problems of this world, described earlier?
8. How can you apply the "threefold cord" (v12) to marriage?



Look for recognition from God and not from men.

To possess, in order to enjoy



In verses 1-6, Solomon speaks about his behaviour towards God. The Preacher acknowledges the existence of God, but he writes his book as if a revelation of God didn't exist.

The person who loves money is never satisfied. "The more he has, the more he wants." Speculative gains, dividends, earning interest and increase stimulate the appetite for more. But how quickly – through war, natural disasters, crashes in the financial market or bankruptcies – all riches can vanish (vv10-14).

Man enters this world empty handed, and that is also how he leaves it (v15). Solomon calls this a severe evil (v16). He recommends enjoying riches, but not holding onto them or

hoarding them until it is too late. Enjoying possessions will momentarily stop you thinking about how short life is (v19). This, however, can be dangerous: Many people have already missed out on eternal salvation in Jesus Christ in this way!



9. Who is meant by "the messenger of God" (v6)? Clue: Read also Leviticus 5:5-6.
10. What kind of king should a land be glad about? Can you guess why?
11. What characterises a person who loves money?



Don't make any hasty and ill-considered promises.

Life is pointless



Some people have achieved a lot in their lives. To the one, God grants riches, to another a big family, and to the other a very long life. But all this is pointless if God suddenly draws the line: “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?” (Luke 12:20) (vv1-6).

Those who can manage to succeed in their lives are not really any better off than fools (v8). Any kind of lifestyle seems as pointless as trying to grasp the wind (v9). Dissatisfaction with a situation, fighting against the Creator or arguing against God show the pointlessness of life, and in the end, man doesn't gain anything by it. Life passes by like a shadow, and who can

predict to man what will be after him under the sun (v11)? – Does this description create in you the need for something more? God gives the answer in His Son, Jesus Christ. In Him your life will have a purpose and a worthwhile goal.



12. In what way is a stillborn child better off than a man who lives a long time, has many children and doesn't enjoy any good things?

13. What rule of life does Solomon recommend in verses 7 to 9? Clue: You find something similar in Hebrews 13:5.



Only if you put your life into God's hands will it have a deep and lasting purpose.

What's better?



Solomon had studied the world and noticed that some things are better than others. He describes his observations in seven comparisons (vv1-8). His conclusions bear witness of his great wisdom and insight, but they are based on human understanding and not on the revelation of God. Access to invisible things remains barred, yet through them man would be able to enjoy harmony and true joy. Many people have similar, praiseworthy attitudes in life, but they don't find fulfilment in their honourable way of life. Wisdom (v11) as well as riches (v12) can't solve a person's problems, even if you follow these seven recommendations of Solomon.

The will of God, His ways and decisions, are unchangeable and outside of all human influence (vv13-14). Christ is the wisdom of God. If you find Him, you will have found life. This wisdom goes far beyond human wisdom. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3).



14. Why does Solomon give preference to sorrow before joy (vv2-4)?
15. What does Solomon think of the idea that the former days were better than today?



Do you know what it is to “rejoice in the Lord”? (Philippians 4:4)

What is wisdom?



Solomon has noticed many contradictions in this world (v15), but you can learn something from his good advice. Avoid extremes (v16) and lead your life in the fear of God (v18). This is true wisdom and the same as strength (v19). Wisdom recognises God's judgment of men (v20). You are wise if you realise that others judge you (vv21-22). Ever since the fall in the Garden of Eden, man keeps falling into sin again and again, even if he desires to lead a life that is morally right. He is just bad through and through. Solomon has learnt this in his own life. Everyone who plays with sin will be caught in its net. Solomon's disappointments with regard to his contemporaries, whether

men or women, are sobering (v28). Man is not freed from the power of sin by perfecting his way of life, but only by redemption through the Lord Jesus.



16. What you read in verse 20 you can find again in the first three chapters of the letter to the Romans. Do you know which verses?
17. Can you imagine to whom the "man among a thousand" (v28) points? You can find a similar expression in Job 33:23.



"Keep yourself pure."
(1 Timothy 5:22)

Everything on earth is unjust



Despite his disappointing experiences so far, Solomon still praises human wisdom (v1). His recommendations, such as being subject to those in authority (vv2-5) and thinking about time and future (vv6-7), are worth considering. Solomon doesn't have a revelation concerning the future, but he senses that God is judging his life (vv12-13). – God judges your life as well. Who and what do you live for? Despite his great wisdom and his sound sense of fairness (vv11-13), Solomon again and again reaches his limits when he considers the unfairness in this world (v14). He reaches the conclusion: Enjoy life! There's nothing better! (v15) Many people today live by the philosophy: "Live for today!"

Only a Christian knows what is really better – what gives satisfaction and is eternal. He knows that the best is yet to come. Life to him doesn't have a hopeless end, but a never-ending hope in Jesus Christ.



18. Which biblical principle is shown in verse 6?
19. Over what does man have no power?
20. What is the reason that men do so many bad things?



You are responsible before God for your life!

Death comes upon everyone



During his further investigations into life, Solomon turns in circles.

His are the thoughts of a wise man without the Bible.

Wisdom without revelation remains limited, because it can't see further than death. Those who are alive know only that they will have to die (v5). This fate – death – comes upon all men, righteous and unrighteous, clean and unclean (v2); the future beyond this is uncertain. Solomon makes the following recommendation: Enjoy life before you die, make the best of it, because death is the end of everything (vv7-10). How short-sighted! This, in the end, also leads to a negative conclusion; and what great uncertainty can be seen in verses 11 and 12!

The fact that everything is passing leads Solomon to feel

a kind of pessimism. However, you can know the One Who has created life and brought to light immortality. The poor man in verse 15, who prepared a way of salvation, but was not heeded, reminds us of Him. The great king, on the other hand, reminds us of Satan, who is prepared to destroy everything. The Saviour is Jesus Christ, the Victor of Calvary. But many people don't think of Him. – How about you?



21. According to Solomon, what is in the heart of man?

22. What time is meant in verse 12?

23. What is better than weapons?



Don't forget your Saviour and thank Him for saving you from the "siege" of the devil.

A collection of pieces of advice (1)



Today's passage contains a number of rules of life.

Your behaviour has good or bad consequences. Something done in haste, without thought, can result in something you remember with regret for a long time. Yet years of valuable successes are soon forgotten (v1). Don't act in your anger, but remain calm and quiet (v4). You may have a superior or a teacher who is not good at his job (v5-7). Ensure that you are still useful in your place. Verses 8-10 show that wisdom in day-to-day things is useful. Do the right thing at the right time (v11). Consider what you say. Endless words inevitably lead to transgression (vv12-14). Work effectively and productively – recognise what is obvious and what is needed (v15).

Woe to the place where immaturity reigns. Self-discipline brings blessing (vv16-17).

Laziness and carelessness can ruin a life (v18). Money is the universal passport that gets you everywhere apart from heaven (v19). It's better to pray for the government than to criticise it (v20).



24. What are the consequences of laziness? What does this mean in a figurative sense?



Ointments and incense were mixed by **perfumers**

according to certain recipes and traditions. Verse 1 points to the necessary care that has to be taken. Ointments were also of importance in medicine.



Does your behaviour recommend the Lord Jesus to others?

A collection of pieces of advice (2)



Solomon continues his good advice.

In the light of

the New Testament we as Christians can apply them as follows: Pass on the good news of Jesus Christ to many people (vv1-2). There is a “too late”. “In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.” The eternal destiny is established in this life (v3). Overcome those obstacles which hinder your testimony (v4). God will bless His Word (v5). Work hard for the Lord Jesus; leave the outcome to Him (v6). Live responsibly and enjoy your life under God’s guidance (v9). A life in sin is of no value to God. Get rid of everything in your life that hinders you from following Him. Many young people want to enjoy life, but they are discontented (sorrow

in the heart) and get involved in sin (evil in the flesh). The time of youth is the best time to come to the Lord Jesus and to put our abilities at His disposal (v10).



25. Which two examples of creation does Solomon use to illustrate that you can’t understand how God works?
26. What do the “days of darkness” mean (v8)?



Spreading the gospel gives joy.

Getting old



The time of youth passes – what’s ahead is old age with its associated troubles and difficulties (v1). A young person doesn’t really want to think about this, but it is wise if you do. Verses 2-7 describe plainly the feelings and restrictions of older people. Their hands shake, their legs and back are bent, they lose their teeth, and their eyesight and hearing fails (v3). Then follows the inability to sleep (v4), dizziness, fear, not being prepared to take risks, grey hair (an almond tree bears white blossom), lack of appetite – and the decay continues (vv6-7). And in the end: the funeral (v5). The Bible takes an eminent place before all other books in this world. It is the incomparable Word of God (vv11-12).

Solomon could have enquired into lots more things, but the conclusion would have remained the same. His last thought (v13) gives the impression that he has “risen above the sun” after all. Solomon’s motivation is the assurance of coming judgment (v14), but as a Christian you do not follow your Lord out of fear: rather out of love.



27. Compare verse 9 with 1 Kings 4:32. Who is therefore the author of the book?



Goads (v11) were used to hurry along animals towards their intended destination. The books of men don’t lead you towards the goal. God’s Word shows you the right way and leads you to His goal.



Following the Lord brings rewards. Always keep this in your heart and mind.

The four-legged courier

During winter 1923, a dog ran into the yard of a hospital near Shanghai, China. When the four-legged friend was rummaging on the bottom of a bin for food, it found a part of an old book that it carried to a nearby military camp. The Chinese soldiers were intrigued by what the dog was carrying in its mouth, so they snatched the fragments away from it and started reading the pages. It was a part of a Bible, from the Old Testament, in Chinese language. The soldiers read it with keen interest. They regretted that the book was incomplete, but rightly assumed that the dog must have got it from the nearby Christian hospital.

Therefore, they went to the head physician there and asked him for a whole book – a complete Bible. The head provided the soldiers with many copies,

but they were not enough to satisfy everyone who wanted to read the Word of God. Thus, he had to send Bibles a second and a third time. But what happened then?

A number of interested soldiers decided to come to the Bible studies that took place in the hospital. The hospital invited a missionary, who came and preached the good tiding of Jesus Christ on several days. Many soldiers accepted the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour.

[illegible]

Facts and Figures

Author:

Daniel

Time of Writing:

Around 536-535 BC

Place of Writing:

Either Babylon or the fortress
Shushan

Addressees:

"Many" searchers of Scripture

Topic:

The life of Daniel and prophecies
concerning the future of the Middle
East

Peculiarities:

The original text was written in
Hebrew, and partly in Aramaic, the
Babylonian/Persian language of
government.

«He removes kings and raises up kings; ... He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.»

Daniel 2:21-22

Structure

Chapter 1-6

Daniel's experiences in Babylon

Chapter 7-11

Daniel's visions concerning the future of the empires and Israel

Chapter 12

Conclusion: The faithful remnant

How it started:

Daniel belonged to the tribe of Judah and was of noble, maybe even royal, descent. As a young man he was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar from Jerusalem to Babylon (605BC) and there received training as a government official. Under Nebuchadnezzar and his successors he held the highest positions for 70-75 years in the Neo-Babylonian and Medo-Persian Empires.

During that time he received visions through his own and other people's dreams, concerning the immediate and distant future of the people of Israel, as well as the empires of the Middle East. With the last vision he received the task of writing everything in a book, which will be searched by many ("many shall run to and fro" has also been translated "many shall diligently investigate") – "and knowledge shall increase" (chapter 12:4).

What it's all about:

The first six chapters report on the experiences of Daniel and three other Jews in Babylon, as well as dreams and visions of the relevant kings. You read about life at the Babylonian court, careers, intrigues, banquets, dreams and visions. But really, it's all about something different: First it is about the life of faithful Jews in heathen surroundings; secondly about God's plans for this earth – because the things that are reported here also often have a prophetic meaning. Even more prophetic are the last six chapters: Daniel receives visions concerning the future of the empires of the Middle East and Israel, the fulfilment of which begins in Daniel's time and reaches right into the "times of the end". In everything God's absolute sovereignty can be seen – He rules the world.

How about today?

Studying the Book of Daniel is of threefold value: First, your "knowledge will increase" – you learn something about the future of the earth and about God's sovereignty. Secondly the book contains impressive examples of fulfilled prophecy – if you want proof that the Bible is the Word of God, you will find many such examples, especially in chapter 11. And thirdly, Daniel's life shows how you can be faithful to God, despite those in your surroundings not wanting to know anything about God and despite life's many temptations.



The Book of Daniel contains lots of prophecy and impressive examples for its fulfilment.



If you're looking for an example of faithfulness and steadfastness, then Daniel is the man for you're looking for.

Taken captive



It is the seventh century BC. Cruel wars shake the Middle East.

Behind the scenes, God pulls the strings of world politics. The great Assyrian Empire is declining. Medes, Chaldeans and Egyptians are ready to take over. Between the fronts is the small kingdom of Judah. The winners are the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar. In 605BC, he has Jerusalem on his list of cities to be conquered. It will fall only 20 years later, but King Jehoiakim has to already submit now. God had already predicted this judgment a long time ago (Jeremiah 25:9).



At first Nebuchadnezzar has only some young men from the aristocracy taken captive, in order to have them trained as government

officials in Babylon. Among them are Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The first act of re-education: They receive Chaldean names.



1. Which names do they get? What is the purpose of the name change, and what danger is there for their faith?

2. Why is Nebuchadnezzar so interested in these four? The first of the four world empires is the Chaldean Empire. It is also called the **Neo-Babylonian Empire**. It took the position as the strongest power of the Middle East from the Assyrian Empire at the battle of Carchemish (609BC). The Chaldeans (v4) were one of its core nations. The capital, Babylon, was situated in the plain of Shinar (v2). The empire included Syria, parts of Arabia, Egypt and Iraq. It lasted for only 70 years.



Use your abilities for the service of God!

When God blesses ...



Imagine you have been taken captive to a foreign country.

There you get the once in a lifetime chance to take part in a three year training programme. The prospect: being a high government official; going in and out of the central court of the current world power. And on top of that, “royal” food. But Daniel and his friends don’t jump right in to this new world. They make their choice before God. They know that the royal food has been dedicated to Nebuchadnezzar’s god Marduk. They don’t want to defile themselves with it. God helps, and their relief is great: They can remain clean! This sacrifice on their part is rewarded richly. God blesses them. He gives them knowledge and skill. The Babylonian school has never had better trainees; these four are appointed by

Nebuchadnezzar. The goal has been reached – especially in the school of God.



3. How does Daniel arrange that the four friends don’t have to eat the food of the king’s court?
4. What does God give them as reward for their steadfastness?



The **Nebuchadnezzar** mentioned here is Nebuchadnezzar II, who reigned for more than 40 years, from 605 to 562BC, over the Neo-Babylonian Empire. He became famous through his gigantic buildings. It is believed that he also had the “Hanging Gardens of Babylon” built – one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. These were created alongside his palace.



Put yourself on God’s side; It’s worthwhile!

Deadly helplessness



Nebuchadnezzar is troubled with bad dreams which occupy him so

much that he can't sleep. But for such cases he has his people – or so he thinks. He calls together everyone he thinks may be able to help him: the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldean priests – all of them counsellors who get their help from occult sources. They are asked to not only tell the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, but also to tell him what he has actually dreamt. This task is too difficult; the counsellors are helpless. This is deadly: Nebuchadnezzar starts murdering them all. To get involved with the devil is deadly. God, on the other hand, gives life – God saves. That's what Daniel also experiences; you will read about it tomorrow.



5. What does Nebuchadnezzar think of his occult counsellors?

6. Does God still give revelations through dreams today?



Fortune telling

Men have always been looking for good advice. Some want to know what the future holds. Only God knows what's in store (Isaiah 45:11). Today, God does not reveal anything extra than what is in the Bible. Rather, He wants us to simply trust Him and live close to Him – whatever the future holds. Therefore: fingers off horoscopes, moving tables, pendulums and such like. For those who don't trust God but the occult, this is “deadly” – you can't obtain eternal life like that (Revelation 21:8).



**The Lord Jesus gives life.
Don't be led astray by the occult!**

The right source of help



The great slaughter among the occult counsellors had

just started, and the men came to look for Daniel. And again, God helps. No fortune teller could do it – yet Daniel can, because God reveals to him both the dream and its interpretation. Daniel doesn't hide where he got help from: of course, Nebuchadnezzar should be told about his God. Interpreting dreams is no longer a subject today (see question 6 from yesterday). But you can learn a lot more from Daniel. First of all, you should keep regular and continuous contact with God. You can ask Him for help (v18), and thank Him when you have received help (vv19-23). Secondly, close contact with God will help you get on with people around you, even when they desire your

harm. As in chapter 1, Daniel now receives wisdom and knowledge (chapter 2:19) in a very delicate situation. Where does this come from (chapter 1:9)?



7. Why does Daniel ask for some time from the king

(chapter 2:16).

8. What does Daniel say, and what do the occult counsellors say, concerning the revelation of dreams?



**“In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, For You will answer me.”
(Psalm 86:7)**

The dream of the great image



Because God has revealed it to him, Daniel can now tell Nebuchadnezzar

his dream and at the same time explain it. The dream affects Nebuchadnezzar personally. At the same time, God permits a glimpse into the future, up till the end of the Millennium.

Let's accompany Daniel on his journey into the history of the Middle East, which for him is mainly future:

- Head: Babylon. Having only just become king, Nebuchadnezzar already hears about his end.
- Chest and arms: Medo-Persia. This will be Babylon's successor around 70 years later.
- Belly and thighs: Greece. Alexander the Great will subdue the whole world as it was known to the Chaldeans.
- Legs and feet: Roman Empire. It will conquer Greece and will

later weaken and separate into Eastern and Western Empires.

- The Stone: Christ. During His millennial reign He will destroy all human kingdoms – especially the Roman Empire, which will have been revived for a short time.



9. Where does the Lord Jesus speak of Himself as a stone that will destroy others?

10. How does Nebuchadnezzar react to what Daniel says?



Of the four world empires, which are mentioned more than once in the Book of Daniel, the second one is the **Medo-Persian Empire**. It started when the Persians (under Cyrus in 550BC) broke the traditional superiority of the Medes and amalgamated them into their kingdom; together they then conquered the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 539BC.



God is all-knowing – and this God is your God!

Trial in the fire



Nebuchadnezzar had just recognised that Daniel's God is

the "God of gods and Lord of kings" (chapter 2:47), yet the next chapter reports how the king wants to be worshipped himself. He has a golden statue built, around 30 metres high: those who don't worship it are to be burnt alive. In that way, he wants to prove to all nations in his massive empire that he is the almighty ruler over life and death.

The three Jews, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego, who have meanwhile been promoted in the government of the province of Babylon, are accused because they don't worship the statue. When Nebuchadnezzar asks them the presumptuous question, "Who is the god who will save you from my hands?",

they give a courageous answer which shows their faith.



11. What is their answer? Try to put it into your own words.

12. Is it right for them not to obey the command of the ruler Nebuchadnezzar?



The third of the four empires is the **Greek Empire**, which was

at its widest expansion under the Macedonian, Alexander the Great. Alexander, among other things, was able to break Persian rule at the battle of Issos (333BC), and take over the immense empire within not much more than ten years and even increase it. When he died without a successor, his generals fought amongst themselves and the empire was divided into four parts.



God is the highest authority, higher than any human being. Allow Him to rule your life.

Saved



The unbelievable happens: God saves the three

friends from the fiery furnace.

Their experience of the first chapter is confirmed: God helps those who desire to be faithful to Him. They now experience His presence in the midst of the danger they are in: Someone comes to them in the furnace – the Son of God Himself. The men who have thrown them into the furnace have to die. The three friends themselves remain untouched. This is God's triumph over the king who wanted to be worshipped as God. Nebuchadnezzar recognises the God of the three Jews as the Supreme Ruler and commands all his subjects not to worship any other god.



13. How can you explain the survival of the three Jews in the fiery furnace?

14. Does God still work miracles today?



The fourth of the four empires is the **Roman Empire**. It made use of its great military and especially political power to expand first of all into the western Mediterranean area, and after the fall of Greece to succeed them also in the east. The area of this empire, from England, Spain and North Africa to Egypt, Armenia and Syria, is comprised differently from that of its predecessors, but as it also covers Palestine it is therefore a subject in prophecy.



“God ... does great things, and unsearchable, marvellous things without number.”
(Job 5:9)

The dream of the tree



Dreams are very important in the Book of Daniel.

The fourth chapter reports a further dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel writes as if Nebuchadnezzar was reporting his dream and experiences himself.

The dream is in three parts: First of all, there is a massive tree, visible on the whole earth and providing shelter to animals. Then comes a “watcher, a holy one” and commands for the tree to be cut down. It is strange that the roots should remain in the ground. Thirdly, the heart of the person represented by the tree was to be changed into the heart of an animal, “in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He will” (verse 17). Daniel's interpretation will follow tomorrow.



15. What contrast can you find in Nebuchadnezzar's mood between verses 4 and 5? Why?

16. Who institutes kings and governments?



In connection with the four empires, a fifth empire should be mentioned: the **Millennial Kingdom**. It will be established when the Lord Jesus comes in glory and power to this earth. It will have its centre in Israel and Jerusalem; the Lord Jesus will be acknowledged in the whole world and righteousness and peace will reign. At the end, Satan will be set free once again, but will be judged swiftly before the judgment at the Great White Throne takes place (see Info, 2 December).



Those who sleep in deceitful quiet will be woken up by God.

The dream of the tree – Daniel's interpretation



In contrast to chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar can remember

the dream this time. And again, only Daniel can interpret it – no one else (chapter 4:7-8).

The interpretation which God shows Daniel is as follows: The tree is a symbol of Nebuchadnezzar himself in his dominion over the Neo-Babylonian Empire (v22). God will take the role of king away from him – not in the sense that the kingdom falls (that happened under his successor Nabonidus in 539BC), but that Nebuchadnezzar will be unable to rule the kingdom. He will start behaving like an animal and will be cast out from men, until God restores him and gives the kingdom back to him (vv25-26).

Having interpreted the dream, Daniel then adds some good advice: The king needs to break with his sins if his prosperity is to endure (v27).



17. What aim does God pursue in allowing Nebuchadnezzar to “become an animal”?
18. What aim does God pursue by announcing that Nebuchadnezzar will “become an animal”?



However great a man is – be assured: God is even greater.

The dream of the tree – Nebuchadnezzar's lesson



Nebuchadnezzar doesn't listen to Daniel's advice.

Twelve months go by. He not only enjoys his comfortable surroundings, but he also boasts about his own power and glory (v30). Any praise received on account of his great buildings must have gone to his head. Those who are so proud of themselves and their own achievements have not yet learnt the lesson that God wants to teach every person: God rules over everyone and wants to be acknowledged as Lord and God by all. In Nebuchadnezzar's case this has bad consequences. What God has predicted happens. The king becomes like an animal (read chapter 5 verse 21). For how long this lasts is not known, but at the end of the time appointed by God his mind returns and he is again established as king.



19. What do you think about Nebuchadnezzar's statement that “all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing” (v35)?
20. Has Nebuchadnezzar learnt his lesson?



The second of the **seven wonders** of the Ancient World were the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. It is said that King Nebuchadnezzar had them built for his wife Semiramis. They consisted of an artificial terraced garden, around 30 metres high. A cellular structure was covered with massive beams of stone, then followed a layer of reeds and bitumen, then a double layer of bricks, bonded with cement, and it was finished with a layer of lead for damp proofing. The three metre high layers of soil contained the richest collection of plants in the world.



Small as man may be – God is looking for him.

Writing on the wall



We jump ahead into the year 540BC. King Belshazzar is

giving a huge banquet. At an advanced hour, he demands that the vessels taken from the Jewish temple are brought. That's not just for a bit of fun. The heathen king wants to show that he is greater than the God of the nation that has been conquered.

When he also calls on the Chaldean gods, the fingers of a man's hand appear and write something on the wall. Belshazzar's knees are literally shaking. None of his wise men can read or interpret the writing. Then the mother of the king remembers that there was a man at the court of Nebuchadnezzar who was exceptionally wise and also able to interpret dreams – Daniel.



21. Which vessels do verses 2 and 3 talk about? Read also

Exodus 37:16.

22. Can you find the passage near the end of the letter to the Galatians, where it says that God is not mocked?



Nebuchadnezzar's successor was Nabonidus (556-

539), the last ruler of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Archaeological sources say that he made his son Belshazzar chief administrator of the city of Babylon. He himself was often away from the capital and needed a trusted person to deal with the administration of the city. Daniel was the third ruler in the Neo-Babylonian Empire after these two (chapter 5:29).



God is not mocked!

The death of a blasphemer



God is not mocked. The last sentence of this chapter draws

a line under Belshazzar's life, which will certainly continue eternally in hell. Before that, God had warned him once again. Once again – because the experiences of his predecessor Nebuchadnezzar should already have been a warning to him: He should have taken God seriously and should not have given himself to illusions of his power. But back then, Belshazzar did not listen. He doesn't even listen to Daniel's clear statement that he is guilty before God. He is judged. Shortly after, as Daniel predicts here, his empire falls into the hands of the Medes and Persians (539BC). (See info text of 12 November.)



23. Every person is weighed in God's just balances. On the one

side are God's demands – His holiness. What do you have to do now so you are not found wanting (too light) in God's balances?

24. What does Daniel's statement at the end of verse 23 tell you?



God's demands are high, but they are just and righteous. You can only fulfil them through Jesus Christ.

Daniel is bullied



Again, some years have gone by. The Neo-Babylonian Empire has been

succeeded by the Medes and Persians. Darius rules over Babylon. Daniel again occupies a high office. He is one of the three highest ministers (“governors”) in the empire, and Darius wants to promote him to an even higher position. His colleagues and government officials below him (“satraps”) become jealous. They try to bully him. But since they don’t find anything to accuse him of, they resort to a crafty idea: If anyone asks anything from anyone other than Darius, they will be thrown to the lions. Darius is flattered and issues the decree.

The plan works: Although Darius tries to wriggle out of it, he has to throw Daniel to the lions in the end.



25. What do you notice if you compare Daniel’s characteristics in verses 3-5 and 11 with those in chapter 1:8+17-21?

26. What can you learn from Daniel’s prayer life?



It appears that **Darius** the Mede was a “vice-king” under Cyrus, appointed to rule in Babylon, because Cyrus himself was unable to rule the huge empire by himself. Cyrus would have been the highest ruler, but from the point of view of a government official like Daniel, Darius had enough power to be called “king”.



Don’t let anything or anybody stop you from praying!

Victory of faith



Do you think Darius really believed his farewell words

(chapter 6:16)? Daniel, at least, trusts in God to save him. That night Darius can’t sleep; while at the same time Daniel’s enemies are most likely to be already celebrating their victory. But everything is different the next day: Daniel, condemned to death, is alive and rescued; a previously sad king is happy; and the enemies, who thought they had achieved their goal, are dead.

What can we learn from this? Human plans don’t always work out – that’s what we learn from Daniel’s personal enemies. Ill-considered measures are soon regretted – that’s what we learn from Darius. And what do we learn from Daniel? He is like a rock in the waves. Maybe he is the only participant who slept well during that night, just like Peter in prison.



27. What can you learn from Daniel’s added comment in verse 22?

28. The letter to the Hebrews tells us that people stopped the mouths of lions by faith. Do you know where it says this?



The Book of Daniel can be divided into two parts. Chapters

1-6 portray **world empires** from a human perspective, as is clear from Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (chapter 2). Chapters 3-6 tell us four events which show individual characteristics of human rule, i.e. idolatry (chapter 3), over-estimation of oneself (chapter 4), blasphemy (chapter 5) and idolising of a man (chapter 6). In the second part, from chapter 7 onwards, the world empires are portrayed from a divine (i.e. God’s) perspective.



It helps when you pray.

Daniel's dream of the four beasts



In chapters 7-12 you read of dreams, visions and revelations

received by Daniel. They all have a prophetic content and deal with the history of Israel and the world empires of the immediate future and the end times.

At the beginning, four beasts come up out of the sea: A lion with wings like an eagle, a bear, a leopard with birds' wings and a "dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong" beast. It has ten horns, and between them, a little horn comes up which has eyes and a mouth, speaking pompous (or boastful) words. Then an "Ancient of Days" appears on a fiery throne. Judgment takes place. Someone "like the Son of Man" is given eternal dominion and glory by the Ancient

of Days. This all sounds mysterious – and tomorrow the mystery will be lifted.



29. The expression "Son of Man" also appears in the New

Testament. Who is meant there?

30. Which judgment does verse 10 remind you of?



After the rapture of Christians, a **time of tribulation** lasting

seven years will begin, in which Satan will expand his power over the earth and the people of Israel especially will suffer. At the end the Lord Jesus will appear and judge the nations and the godless Jews and will establish His reign of 1,000 years. At the end of that, Satan will be released once more, but he will be judged in the end.



**The Lord Jesus will judge everyone one day.
Are you prepared?**

The interpretation of the dream of the four beasts



It is with amazing clarity that the development of four world empires

is predicted in Daniel's dreams. The four beasts stand for the four kingdoms of chapter 2:

- The Lion: The mighty Babylon, which will last only for another two decades.
- The Bear: The Medo-Persian Empire, renowned for its violence.
- The Leopard: Greece, which was going to conquer the then known world in a very short time.
- The fourth beast: The renowned Roman Empire. At the beginning of the time of tribulation the Roman Empire will exist again: It has ten horns, representing ten kings. Another horn grows up and receives dominion. After God has allowed this blaspheming king some freedom, He will judge him.



31. How will God deal with the last king of the Roman

Empire (vv25-26)?

32. How does Daniel react to this dream, and how do you react?



The **Roman Empire** has long ceased to exist, but it will –

after the rapture of believers – come into existence again (Revelation 13:5). At first this empire will be ruled by ten kings, but in the end they will give all their power to one man who will blaspheme God and persecute the believers living at that time. This king will work closely with the Antichrist, the ruler over Israel. Both will take their influence from Satan, and both will be judged by the Lord Jesus on the earth.



It is God's grace that will keep you as a Christian from the time of tribulation. Thank Him for it.

Daniel's dream of the ram and the goat



Two years later, Daniel dreams of animals again.

This time there

are only two: a ram and a goat. First, there is the ram with two horns, the strongest animal around. Along comes a male goat with one great horn, running without touching the ground, and conquers him. The great horn of the male goat breaks, and four horns come up. One of them is rather special: It grows great against Israel, takes away the permanent sacrifice, throws the truth to the ground and in all this is very successful. Tomorrow you will read the interpretation of the dream. So far: The ram is the same as the bear of the previous dream, and the male goat is the leopard.



33. What parallels can you see between the ram and the

bear?

34. What parallels can you see between the male goat and the leopard?



The **coming of the Lord Jesus**, His return, is in two

phases. The first phase is the coming of the Lord Jesus to take Christians to heaven. The Lord Jesus will come again, invisible to the world, dead believers will rise and will, together with the living believers, be taken into glory (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). After that, the time of tribulation will start, from which the assembly, or church, will be kept as they will have already been taken to heaven (the rapture) (Revelation 3:10).



The Lord Jesus is coming soon – a reason to rejoice!

The dream of the ram and the goat interpreted



Daniel doesn't interpret his own dreams himself.

Gabriel, an angel,

explains to him that the ram is an illustration of the empire of the Medes and Persians, and the male goat an illustration of Greece. Under the "great horn" Alexander, Greece will conquer the Medo-Persian Empire and, after Alexander's death, will divide into four parts (roughly Egypt, Macedonia, Thrace and Syria) (vv21-22). Syria will soon become especially strong and show animosity towards Israel; under Antiochus IV Epiphanes Jerusalem will be conquered and sacrifices will be forbidden (chapter 8:9-14).

As Gabriel explains, the dream is more far-reaching, i.e. into the "time of the end", which is the time just before the establishment of the Millennium. Then the Syrian Empire will once again have the characteristics

Daniel dreamed about. It will rise up against Israel, and even against Christ Himself, the "Prince of princes" – and will be broken "without human means", that is, by God Himself.



35. How many years shall go by until the prophecies of verses 23-26 are finally fulfilled?



The **return of the Lord Jesus** in power and glory is the

second phase of His return, the first being the rapture of Christians. Christ will then end the time of tribulation ("the time of the end") and conquer Israel's enemies. With that, the Millennium will begin (Revelation 19:11-20:6). When He appears then, the Lord Jesus will be accompanied by His believers, visible to all people (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).



God has the last word. Always!

Prayer of repentance of an "innocent"



We find ourselves again at the time of the reign of Cyrus and Darius,

the Mede. Daniel reads the prophet Jeremiah, and comes across a 70-year old prophecy: Nebuchadnezzar would take the people into captivity; they would serve him for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11). Daniel has experienced for himself the fulfilment of the first part of this prophecy (chapter 1:1-7). Now 70 years have gone past – the end of the captivity is near! What about Daniel? Does he now get excited and call his people to return to their land? No, you read the prayer of repentance of a broken man of God: He personally has no part in the sin that has caused the people to be taken captive. But he identifies himself with it. He knows that the return to the land doesn't come automatically

after 70 years, but that repentance is necessary. That's why he asks God for grace.



36. Which two opposite characteristics of

God does Daniel emphasise in his prayer (vv4-19)?



The fulfilment of both Jeremiah's and also Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 44:28) really did take place when some time later a remnant of the people **returned** from Babylon to Jerusalem. God worked in such a way that Cyrus made this possible for every Jew who wanted to go. The Jews returned in several phases and slowly rebuilt the temple, city and walls. The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, as well as the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, deal with this (*Lightkeeper* Volume 1).



Repentance is the way to blessing.

The seventy weeks



The seventy weeks are the framework of the prophecy relating to Israel.

Each week stands for seven years (Leviticus 25:8):

- 7 weeks of 7 years from the command to build Jerusalem to the rebuilding under Nehemiah (v25).
- 62 weeks of 7 years until the coming of the Lord Jesus as Messiah (v25).
- After the 69th week of 7 years the Messiah will be killed and later Jerusalem will be destroyed by the Romans (v26). God then interrupted the prophetic history of Israel and founded the church, which is not a subject of prophecy. We Christians are in a kind of "prophetic gap".
- The 70th week of 7 years will start after the rapture and comprises the time of tribulation (v27).



37. What does Daniel mean when he says that God should act

for His "own sake" (v19)?

38. Why is Daniel called "greatly beloved" (v23)?



The **time of tribulation** starts after the rapture of

Christians, lasts seven years and is in two parts. It begins with a covenant of the greater part of the Jewish people and the revived Roman Empire (some Jews will repent and make up the believing remnant). After 3½ years the ruler of the Roman Empire will forbid the Jewish sacrifices and will, in connection with the Antichrist, introduce abominable idolatry. God will then send a destroyer (the "Assyrian") as judgment to Israel. All this and even more is contained in verse 27!



God especially loves those who seek HIS honour.

The appearing of Christ and battles among angels



In the third year of Cyrus (537BC), the Lord Jesus Christ Himself

appears to Daniel to prepare him for the last great vision which goes right to the end of the book. An angel helps Daniel back to his feet, after he has fallen to the ground at the appearing the Lord Jesus, and explains to him that he has been held up by battles among angels. He himself and Michael have gone through a fight with an angel who, in service to Satan, wants to provoke the Persian kings against God. Although this battle has not come to an end yet, the angel takes time, together with the Lord Jesus, to bring Daniel an answer to his prayer. In the next four days we are going to be occupied in more detail with this answer, because it is

an amazingly exact prediction of the history of the Middle East from Cyrus till 165BC – and at the same time of the time of the end, which is still future.



39. What similarities can you find in the description of the Lord Jesus here (chapter 10:5-6) and in Revelation 1:13-16?
40. Do battles among angels concern us?



It's good to be on the side of the Strongest – the Lord Jesus

Prophecy concerning the Middle East



What follows is a fascinatingly precise revelation concerning the

history of the Middle East in connection with Israel until 165BC. Only God can predict something so accurately! The angel concentrates on Syria (North of Palestine, the “King of the North”) and Egypt (South of Palestine, the “King of the South”). Two examples are: Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy I, was married to Antiochus II, but was poisoned after his death; her brother Ptolemy III took revenge and defended the riches he had obtained in Babylon against Seleucus II of Syria (250-240BC) (vv6-10). More tomorrow...



41. Do you remember where else you can find

mention of such a great empire, which was then divided into four parts (vv3-4)?
42. Can you find out who was the fourth king after Cyrus (vv1-2)? Clue: Another book of the Bible tells us in detail about this king, who had (also) taken a Jewish wife who protected her people from severe persecution.



Just as He knows the future of the world, God also knows your future.

Antiochus Epiphanes and Israel



Ptolemy IV had conquered Syria. Antiochus III of Syria then

advanced against Egypt, occupied Palestine, and then arranged for his daughter Cleopatra to marry Ptolemy V. Having conquered the coastal areas of Asia Minor, he was defeated by the Romans (vv11-19). The Romans burdened him with more and more reparation payments, which were financed through high taxes by his son Seleucus IV, who was then poisoned by his tax collectors (v20).

Antiochus IV Epiphanes came to power in Syria in 175BC. Being the younger brother of Seleucus IV, he was not heir to the throne, but reigned in the place of Seleucus' young son Antiochus, who was poisoned soon after. Instead of Epiphanes (manifestation of a god), he

was given the spiteful name of Epimanes (madman). He was a very successful general and ruler and got his way by all kinds of means – military, diplomatic, and by marriage and treachery (vv21-28). The accuracy of these prophecies is impressive. In the Book of Daniel, you can find over 200 prophecies which were fulfilled exactly in world history. If biblical prophecies were fulfilled exactly in the past, you can be certain that the outstanding prophecies will also be fulfilled just as precisely!



43. "Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Do you know where to find this verse in the second letter of Peter?



You can only find fulfilled prophecy in the Bible – the Word of God!

Antichrist and the King of the North



The last campaign of Epiphanes against Egypt was stopped by the Romans. Now Epiphanes gave in to his hatred towards Israel. Tens of thousands were killed, the temple was desecrated and Jewish worship was forbidden (vv29-33). Yet there remained a believing remnant (vv34-35). Having completed this sketch of the (then still future) history of the Middle East, the angel now speaks of the coming time of tribulation. He mentions two main characters of that time: the Antichrist and the King of the North. The King of the North (vv40-45) will go to war against Israel at the time of the end and will march all the way to Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia. Suddenly, rumours will make him turn around and he will be conquered in Palestine by Christ Himself when He comes

to set up His reign of 1,000 years.



44. Why can Edom, Moab and Ammon escape the King of the North (v41)? Read also Isaiah 11:14 and Ezekiel 25:7+11+14.



The **Antichrist** will come to power after the rapture of believers, right in the middle of the time of tribulation, and will deceive the Jews to worship him as god. In the power of Satan he will perform miracles, thus bringing people into the "trinity of evil" (Roman king, Antichrist, Satan). His insolence will be so great that he, together with the Roman king, will go to war against Christ, Who will then conquer him by the breath of his mouth and throw him into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).



God judges every one of His enemies – it's good if you are on His side!

The time of tribulation and the end



The last chapter of the Book of Daniel deals once again with the

tribulation period. The second phase of that period of refining of the believing Jews (v10), and judgment on the unbelieving Jews, will come to an end after 3½ years. These 3½ years are shown in verse 7, which speaks of a time (one year), times (two years) and half a time (half a year) (chapter 7:25).

It is good to read in the last verse that Daniel, who in his long life was often much burdened by the many dreams and visions, will “rest”. And his “inheritance at the end of days” is with the Lord Jesus, Whom he had already seen when he was still alive (chapter 10:5-9).



45. Do you understand the difference in the number of days in verses 11-12?



The end of prophecy is marked by the judgment at the **great white throne** (Revelation 20:11-15). After the Millennium, Satan will be released once more and then will be cast into the lake of fire, and after that the great and final judgment will come – the moment at which everyone who has not turned to God in his lifetime will be judged. All the dead will rise and will have to stand before the Lord Jesus. All actions, thoughts and words have been recorded and confirm the “guilty” verdict. God has the last word. The sentence is certain: the Lake of fire. The term is certain too: for eternity.

The Pianist

Arthur Rubinstein, a famous pianist, practised his instrument for several hours a day. It is said that he had the habit of saying: “If I neglect my piano for one day, I’ll notice; if I fail to practise for two consecutive days, my friends will notice, and after three days, my audience will notice.”

These words display Mr Rubinstein’s life experience as a musical artist. It was only by uninterrupted practice that he could keep the easiness and elegance of his touch and keep the status that he had reached through great patience and stamina.

What Arthur Rubinstein found out about his piano playing is similarly true for your prayer life as a Christian. If you belong to Jesus Christ and only neglect prayer for a short time, you’ll quickly notice there’s

something missing inwardly. Soon, your believing friends will notice wrong tones, inconsistency and a lack of sensitivity in your speaking and behaviour, which they have never seen before.

And then, if you keep neglecting your daily prayer, your conversation with the Lord, for even longer, your behaviour will suffer so much that everyone in your surroundings will notice this change in you. Just as a professional musician cannot afford to neglect practising his instrument a Christian cannot live without daily prayer.



Saviour or Judge?
What is the Lord Jesus for you?

Facts and Figures

Author:

John

Time of Writing:

Around 95 AD

Place of Writing:

The island of Patmos

Addressees:

The seven churches in Asia Minor

Topic:

"The things which shall be hereafter" (chapter 1:19) – the future

Peculiarities:

The book of Revelation has been mostly written in symbolic, figurative language

«Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.»

Revelation 1:3

Structure

Chapter 1

- "The things which you have seen ..."

Chapters 2 and 3

- "... and the things which are ..."
- The letters to the seven churches

Chapter 4-22

- "... and the things which will take place after this."

The future:

Chapter 4-5

- A view into heaven

Chapter 6:1-8:5

- The seven seal judgments

Chapter 8:6-11:18

- The seven trumpet judgments

Chapter 11:19-14:20

- The dragon and the Lamb

Chapter 15:1-16:21

- The seven vial judgments

Chapter 17:1-19:5

- Judgment over Babylon

Chapter 19:6-22:21

- God reaches His goal

How it started:

At the time of persecution of the Christians under the Roman Emperor Domitian, John, the disciple of the Lord Jesus, was in exile on the island of Patmos. There he received prophetic visions which he had to write in a book and send as a kind of circular letter to the seven churches in Asia Minor.

What it's all about:

The key to this book is to be found in chapter 1:19. This verse shows that the Revelation can be divided into three parts. Everything recorded in chapters 4 to 22, after the introductory chapters, is still future. It will only take place after the Lord Jesus has taken His bride (the church) to Himself into heaven. This book describes:

- God's judgments which are to come over the earth
- God's three great adversaries – Satan, the ruler of

the revived Roman Empire and the Antichrist – and their fate

- The end of apostate Christendom (Babylon)
- The Lord's 1,000 year reign
- Eternity with a new heaven and a new earth.

How about today?

God wants to show you what will happen in the future. On the one hand this is very serious – if you think of the judgments to come. It's serious for you if you aren't saved yet. But if you are saved, then remember the many people round about you who are going to have to face these judgments. The Book of Revelation is a book that should motivate you to reach out with the gospel. On the other hand, this book also gives much joy because it tells of the Christians' glorious future. Jesus is coming again!



The book of Revelation has been mostly written in symbolic, figurative language.



Even if you don't understand everything in the Book of Revelation, rejoice in the things that you understand!

A letter from exile



The Apostle John is in exile on the island of Patmos.

There the Lord

Jesus shows him the content of the Revelation. This Book of the Revelation he is to send to the seven churches in Asia Minor (vv9-11).

The Revelation is a “glimpse into the future”. God wants to “show things which must shortly take place”. From the beginning of this book the Lord Jesus is introduced in all His greatness by various names and titles: the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth (v5). In verses 5b-6, this passage contains an especially beautiful song of praise for the person and work of the Lord Jesus.



1. To whom had God “given” the Revelation and why?

2. For what does God promise special blessing (joy) (vv1-3)?

3. Which important future event is already mentioned in these early verses?



The symbolic language of the Revelation – part 1:

- “seven” = the highest one digit prime number, the number of fulness, the number of something complete in itself
- “seven Spirits” = the fulness and diversity of the Holy Spirit



Have you thanked the Lord Jesus today – for His love and for what He has done for you?

An unforgettable meeting



During the years in which they travelled together through Israel,

John got to know his Lord very well. He, the “disciple whom Jesus loved”, always stayed very close to Jesus. But now the Lord Jesus meets him in a completely new way: as Judge of the world. When he sees Him like that, John falls to the ground, as if he is dead. But then he hears the well-known voice of his Lord: “Do not be afraid”.

The Lord Jesus introduces Himself as the One Who was dead but has risen again and will be “the Living One” in all eternity. The description of the Lord Jesus in verses 13-16 is symbolic.



4. Where does John see the Lord Jesus?
5. What task does John receive from his Lord?

John receive from his Lord?



The symbolic language of Revelation – part 2:

- “girded about the chest with a golden band” = incorruptible, divine righteousness
- “eyes like a flame of fire” = revealing and testing holiness
- “a sharp two-edged sword” = the piercing Word of God
- “countenance ... like the sun” = highest authority
- “feet ... like fine brass” – divine righteousness in judgment



Thank the Lord Jesus, the Judge of the world, that He is your Saviour.

The Lord Jesus evaluates His church



Following on from chapter 1, the first part of Revelation (“the things which you have seen”) is the second part in chapters 2-3 (“the things which are”). These chapters contain the letters to the seven churches which existed at that time in Asia Minor.

However, at the same time God shows in these letters a prophetic outline of the history of the church on this earth until the end. Each separate letter is a real spiritual challenge for every church today as well as for each individual Christian. It is therefore worthwhile studying them in detail. The letters all follow the same structure:

- The Lord Jesus presents Himself
- Praise (some exceptions)
- Rebuke (some exceptions)
- A promise to the overcomer.



- What does the Lord Jesus rebuke in Ephesus, despite their good condition?
- What would happen if Ephesus did not repent of their sin?
- How long would the suffering in Smyrna last? What promise is there for the martyrs?



- The symbolic language of Revelation – part 3:
- “seven golden lampstands” = Christians should let their light shine on the earth, by witnessing for the Lord Jesus
 - “angel of the church” = the symbolic representative of the church

God’s Church History, part 1:

Ephesus = the time immediately after the death of the apostles (1st century)

Smyrna = the time of persecution of Christians (2nd and 3rd century)



What is your love for the Lord Jesus like?

Ears are there for hearing



Every one of the seven letters contains the phrase: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” – When God speaks He expects us to listen. And this shouldn’t be just that it goes in one ear and out the other, but that we give Him our full attention.

In Pergamos, many false, satanic doctrines had found an entrance. But the believers keep hold of the faith (v13).

There may be works worth acknowledging in Thyatira (v19), but they allow a false prophetess in their midst, who deceives them so that they worship idols and to whom God announces judgment (vv20-23). The believers who are faithful to their Lord are encouraged by Him to persevere (vv24-29).



- Who was Antipas and what happened to him?
- What will the overcomer in Pergamos receive?
- The letter to Thyatira is the first one to mention an event (v25), which is from now on mentioned in every letter. Which one?



- The symbolic language of Revelation – part 4:
- “hidden manna” = Christ, the bread from heaven, now “hidden” in heaven
 - “a white stone” = the personal recognition the Lord Jesus gives us

God’s Church History, part 2:

Pergamos = the time of Emperor Constantine who made Christianity his state religion (4th to 6th century)

Thyatira = the church of the middle ages (7th to 15th century)



Ask the Lord Jesus for strength to be faithful to Him, even when you are on your own.

Dead or alive?



The Lord Jesus has to tell the Christians in Sardis (vv1-6)

that they might have a good testimony, but the multitude is dead, without new life. – This is the decisive question: Do you just call yourself a Christian, or do you have life from God? Yet there are still such in Sardis – sadly only “a few names” (v4) – who belong to the Lord Jesus and to whom He gives wonderful promises. Philadelphia (vv7-13) may have only a little strength, but the Lord Jesus recognises that they use this strength to cling to Him and to live for Him.



12. What does the Lord Jesus say about the works in Sardis?

13. What happens with the names of the real believers who are written in the Book of Life (v5)?

14. What does the Lord Jesus promise to Philadelphia in verse 8?

15. What warning does Philadelphia receive (v11)?



God does not want hypocrisy but reality. It is frightening

that nearly every letter mentions persons who claim to be something that they are not (chapter 2:2+9+20 and 3:1+9+17).

God's Church History, part 3:

Sardis = the time of the post-reformation church (16th to 18th century)

Philadelphia = the time of revival (19th century)



Even if you believe that you only “have a little strength”, hold on to what the Lord Jesus has given you.

A lukewarm matter



The judgment of the Lord Jesus concerning the church at

Laodicea is frightening. They are neither cold nor hot. This indifference with regards to the person of Christ is so terrible that the Lord Jesus will vomit them out (vv13-16).

This is in spite of the fact that they have such a good opinion of themselves – which, however, is a terrible illusion concerning their own condition (v17). Help is only available through repentance (vv18-22). It is in this serious letter particularly that the Bible speaks of the love of the Lord Jesus for the last time (v19).



16. The Laodiceans consider themselves to be rich. But what is

the judgment of the Lord Jesus?

17. What does the Lord Jesus offer “for sale”?

18. Where is the place of the Lord Jesus in this church and what does He do there?



The symbolic language of Revelation – part 5:

- “gold, refined in the fire” = righteousness before God
- “white garments” = righteousness before men
- “eye salve” = anointing of the Holy Spirit, which opens our eyes

God's Church History, part 4:

Laodicea = from the time of major attacks on the Bible to the complete apostasy from Christ (from the 20th century)



Ask the Lord Jesus for a clear view (eye salve), which protects you from an illusion regarding your own condition.

Change of scene



Chapter 3 ends with a closed door, in front of which Christ

stands and knocks. Chapter 4 starts

with an opened door, though not on earth but in heaven.

This marks the start of the third

main part of the Revelation ("the things which will take place after this"). These events are still future.

John sees the throne of God in heaven. The greatness and majesty of the One sitting on the throne is so grand that it can only be described in symbolic language, comparing it to gemstones. John further sees around the throne:

- four living creatures:

These are symbolic of the execution of the judgments (four directions, i.e. north, south, east, west).

- 24 elders: These represent all believers from the beginning of creation until the rapture.



- 19. Describe the 24 elders. What are they doing in this chapter?



- The symbolic language of Revelation – part 6:

- "the four living creatures", which stand for the execution of divine judgment, are described as ...
 - a "lion" = the irresistible power of the judgment
 - a "calf" = perseverance of the judgmental power
 - a "man" = execution of judgment with insight
 - an "eagle" = speed with which the judgment will come



When God's judgments come upon the earth, all those who believe in the Lord Jesus will be in heaven.

The sealed scroll and a new song



At the beginning of this chapter our attention is drawn to a sealed scroll – the book of God's plans for this earth. The question arises: Who is able (v3) to open the scroll and who is also worthy to do it (v2)? No one in heaven seems to be able to fulfil these requirements. But one of the elders points John to the One – the Lion of Judah. But when John looks, he doesn't see a lion, but a lamb, as though it had been slain. The Lord Jesus takes the scroll from the hand of God in order to open it. As the Lion, He is able to do it, and as the Lamb, He is worthy to do it. The result is a powerful, universal song of praise.



- 20. What is the difference between the worship of the elders (v9) and of the angels (v12)?



- The symbolic language of Revelation – part 7:
 - "seven horns" (v6) = perfect strength
 - "seven eyes" (v6) = perfect insight
 - "ten thousands times ten thousand" (v11) = an unimaginable number



You can also sing a "new song" each day to the glory of your Lord.

The apocalyptic riders



The following chapter shows us what will happen on this earth once

all true Christians have been taken to heaven. Judgment over this earth will begin with the “seal” judgments:

- First seal (white horse): A ruler will arise who will be victorious without fighting wars (vv1-2).
- Second seal (fiery red horse): Worldwide conflicts will arise. “Peaceful times” are over (vv3-4).
- Third seal (black horse): There will be a general famine (vv5-6).
- Fourth seal (pale horse): Deadly epidemics will also break out (vv7-8).
- Fifth seal (souls under the altar): Those who during that time stand up as witnesses to the true God will die a martyr’s death. Other

judgments that follow are also an answer to the prayers of the martyrs (vv9-11).

- Sixth seal (natural disasters): Social and political anarchy are the result (vv12-17).

The symbolic language of Revelation – part 8:

- “a great earthquake” (v12) = The foundations of society are overthrown (social anarchy)
- “sun”, “moon” and “stars” (vv12-13) = All political powers – the highest (sun), devolved (moon) and subordinate (stars) authority – will fall (political anarchy)



There will be an overview of the judgments of the

Book of Revelation at a later point.



God does not forget anything of what you have done or endured for Him.

God has His witnesses at all times



God will have people in the future who honour Him

and who are prepared to die a martyr’s death for it. This chapter interrupts the description of God’s judgments on this earth. Why? Because God wants to point out that even at that difficult time – which is called “the great tribulation”¹ (v14) – He will have people who believe in Him and in the Lord Jesus. He will protect these people for His kingdom in the difficult circumstances.

There are two groups of people:

- People from the nation of Israel (vv4-8).
- A great multitude from all nations (vv9-12).



21. Which (symbolic) number stands for those sealed from

Israel?

22. What is said about the size of the multitude from all nations?

23. “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (v17). What does this mean?



The symbolic language of Revelation – part 9:

- “the four winds of the earth” (v1) = the elements that are ready to destroy the earth
- “the seal of the living God” (v2) = God shows those He will protect



Do you belong to the great number of witnesses, which the Lord Jesus has for as long as the earth remains?

1. The expression “the great tribulation” refers to the last 3½ years of Daniel 9 (see *Lightkeeper* 27 November)

The start of the trumpet judgments



The evil in this world increases more and more.

God appears to be silent. But a time will come when God will answer. Then He will judge this world. The judgments that have taken place so far in this book were indirect judgments through events that have always occurred (war, famine, disease). But the seventh seal marks the start of the trumpet judgments. Now God intervenes directly in events. All these events are so serious that even in heaven a time of silence is observed (v2). God still has not started His judgments on this earth. Why? So that many more people will be saved! After the rapture of the believers, those who have heard the gospel will not be

able to obtain salvation any more.



24. What is always the immediate consequence when the four trumpets are sounded?

25. What does the eagle say concerning the trumpet judgments that are still outstanding?



The symbolic language of Revelation – part 10:

- “the third part” = the western third of the Roman world. This western European part will come under particular judgment, because people there knew the Christian truth but neither believed it nor lived according to it



Thank God that Christians won't have to experience this terrible time!

Demonic powers are active



The bleak picture in verses 1-12 describes the influence satanic

powers will have at that time over the unbelievers (probably especially over those from Israel (v4)). The armies of scorpion-like “locusts” are a symbolic description of this demonic torment. They will neither destroy the sphere of life (v4) nor kill people (v5). It is rather a mental torment. The strength in their mouths and tails (see Isaiah 9:13-14) seems to point to false, satanic, doctrine.

The judgments of verses 13-19 are also of satanic origin. Evil forces will, if God allows them, be released for their destroying work. Great armies come from the east (from the River Euphrates) via the revived Roman Empire and bring

destruction. It is frightening that all these things don't lead people to repentance (vv20-21).



26. Where is the strength or power of the armies of locusts and the armies of horses?



How good that Satan does not yet have “free rein” and that you as a Christian are under the protection of a stronger One.

A mighty angel and a little book



The mighty angel in this chapter is a manifestation of the Lord Jesus.

His right foot is set on the sea – the Lord Jesus will claim His dominion over the nations of the earth. His left foot is set on the earth – Israel will also be under His rule (v2). This claim for dominion is announced in an unmistakeable manner (v3). The open book in the hand of the angel represents the declaration of judgment found in the Old Testament. All these judgments will come to pass (v2).

Those who are occupied with God's plan, i.e. take it in, will notice how pleasant it "tastes". Yet at the same time it becomes clear that "bitter" judgment is necessary in order to establish the glorious reign of peace (vv8-11).



27. In what way can the Lord Jesus be seen in the mighty

angel (v1).

28. What command is given to John with regard to the small book?



The symbolic language of Revelation – part 11:

- "an open book" (as opposed to a sealed book) = prophecies which were known and were not secret



Has the Lord Jesus already begun to rule in your life?

Two unusual witnesses of God



Two of God's witnesses come onto the scene, drawing attention

to themselves through their mighty miracles. They are invulnerable until their task is completed (chapter 11:3-6). After that the beast from the abyss, the European dictator, will kill them. This causes men to have a great celebration (vv7-10). But after three and a half days the two witnesses come back to life, and God takes them up to heaven (vv11-13).

The seventh trumpet is sounded (the third woe), marking the commencement of the reign of the Lord Jesus in His kingdom on this earth – for some a cause for joy, and for others a cause of terror (vv14-18)!



29. Which persons in the Old Testament are the two

witnesses similar to?

30. Which city is compared to Sodom and Egypt? Do you know why?



The **two witnesses** are called "the two olive trees" and "the

two lampstands". This is an allusion to Zechariah 4:2-3 where the same words are used. The comparison to olive trees and lampstands speaks of the two men being a witness to God in the power of the Holy Spirit.



The Lord Jesus is looking for witnesses to the truth – today as well.

The main actors of the future



The following chapters tell us prophetic events in symbolic

language. This list of the “main actors” in chapters 12-14 may help you to gain some understanding of it:

- The woman (vv1+6+13) = (a symbol of) Israel
- The dragon (vv3+7+13) = Satan
- The Son (vv5+13) = Christ
- The archangel Michael (v7)
- The beast from the sea (chapter 13:1) = dictator of the Roman Empire (Europe)
- The beast from the land (chapter 13:11) = the Antichrist
- The great harlot, Babylon (chapter 14:8) = what falsely professes to be Christian in the end times (apostate Christendom)

Satan throws himself angrily into the last battle, as he knows that he has little time. But his defeat can't be turned away. The victory is Christ's.



31. What happens to the male child?

32. What names are given to the devil in this chapter?



In today's chapter John sees various “great” things and persons:

- A great sign (v1)
- A great dragon (v3)
- A loud (literally: great) voice (v10)
- Great wrath (v12)
- A great eagle (v14)

The Greatest though is the “Son” (v5), the Lord Jesus.



Jesus Christ is victor over hell and death and the devil: follow Him now!

A satanic alliance



John now sees the tools of Satan which are going to appear in the

end times. The first beast rises out of the sea of the nations. It is the dictator of the revived Roman Empire who will receive his power from Satan. Satan makes sure that this dictator and he himself will be worshipped (v4). Those who do not follow this command to worship will be persecuted (vv7-8).

The second beast, the one from the earth, is the Antichrist, also called the “false prophet”. He will deceive apostate Israel and apostate Christendom to perform idol worship (vv11-15). And in order to confirm that he is a “prophet”, he will perform “great signs” or miracles.



33. Who does the number 666 in verse 18 refer to: the first

beast (Roman dictator) or the second beast (Antichrist)?

34. What term does Paul use to describe the signs and wonders of the Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2:9?



The **blasphemous name** (v1) is a name which the beast

bears, which should only belong to God. The Roman emperors of history had already borne such names. Augustus was called “divine”, Nero allowed himself to be called “saviour of the world” and Domitian was called “our lord and god”.



Thank God for the liberty to live your faith freely and to be allowed to witness to it publicly.

Picture gallery of the end times



This chapter, in a sense, paints various pictures of the different

groups which are going to play a role on this earth after the rapture of all true Christians:

- The 144,000, a believing remnant from Judah. They are in the land of Israel during the “great tribulation” (vv1-5).
- A believing remnant from the nations. They are those who accept the eternal gospel (vv6-7).
- Babylon, the false church, which stays behind after the rapture (v8).
- The ungodly men who take part in the idolatry of the beast (vv9-12).
- The martyrs who die because they don't worship the beast (v13).



35. What is the striking difference between the people in verse 1 and those in verse 9?



The term “believing remnant” describes the minority of the Jewish nation (or also the heathen nations) who, in contrast to the majority who have fallen away from God, will accept the Lord Jesus.



Only One is entitled to be worshipped: the living God.

Ripe for harvest



The judgment on this earth is illustrated in two ways:

1. The harvest with a sickle (vv14-16) – this judgment targets the non-Jewish nations on this earth
2. The grape harvest (vv17-20) – the vine of this earth is Israel. A sickle is used here as well – because of their falling away from God.

Then the angels with the seven golden bowls appear, speaking of God's last judgments over the earth. As terrible as these judgments will be, they will have an end, when God has reached His aim! In the midst of all these judgments John sees the overcomers in heaven. Note: It is not said that the beast has overcome these believers with death. No, these believers have

overcome the beast because they have not joined in the falling away from God. Even if they had to pay for their faithfulness with their lives – now they are able to sing (vv1-8)!



36. What songs do the various groups of people sing in chapter 5:8-9; 14:2-3; 15:2-3?



The symbolic language of Revelation – part 12:

- “the grape harvest” = judgment over apostate Israel
- “the winepress” = the holy wrath of God
- “seven golden bowls” = the execution of the righteous wrath of God



As a Christian you can already here and now begin to sing songs to the Lord Jesus.

The seven bowls of wrath



The seven bowls of wrath mark the end of God's judgments before

the Lord Jesus appears to establish His kingdom.

These terrible judgments demonstrate the following:

- God's judgments are righteous. Even when under God's punishment, people do not acknowledge Him. Three times it says that they blaspheme (vv9+11+21).
- God's patience and grace come out even here. Twice it is said that the people don't repent (vv9+11) – which is what God was waiting for.

The dictator of the Roman Empire and the Antichrist will, under Satan's guidance, gather the nations of the earth to the "battle of that great day of God Almighty", the battle of Armageddon (vv12-16).



37. Onto whom is the first bowl poured out?

38. Onto whom is the fifth bowl poured out, and what is the result?

39. What is the result of the pouring out of the sixth bowl?

40. Which sentence makes it clear that these judgments mark a kind of end (vv17-21)?



Just as there will be an Antichrist (an "against Christ", a false

Christ), in the end times an antichurch, a false church, will arise out of nominal Christendom (all true believers will have been taken to heaven already). This antichurch will have great influence, but it will be annihilated under the leadership of the Roman dictator (vv15-18).

The true church is compared to a city (Jerusalem) and the false church as well (Babylon). While the church is the bride of Christ (bride = purity, devotion, faithfulness), Babylon is a harlot (harlot = defilement, sin, unfaithfulness). Babylon is characterised by pomp and luxury (v4). She is responsible for the death of many martyrs (v6) and has great international influence (v15).



41. What does Babylon "drink" (vv4-6)?

42. What battle will the nations of Europe fight, which they can – and will – only lose (v12)?



Verse 8 describes three phases of the **Roman Empire**:

1. "The beast ... was" – The Roman Empire we know from history was founded in 753BC and ceased to exist in 476AD (Western Empire), and 1453AD (Eastern Empire).
2. It "is not" – At present, this empire doesn't exist. "It will ascend out of the bottomless pit." This empire will come into being again. Its origin is satanic.
3. It is going "to perdition" and will be brought to an end by the Lord Jesus (v14).



**No one can hide from God.
Have you come clean with Him?**



Are you an original, or just a fake copy? The Lord Jesus is looking for true witnesses and not for lifeless members of a register.

The downfall of Babylon



The false church is referred to on one occasion as a woman

(chapter 17), an illustration of the religious power of the antichurch, and on another occasion as a city (chapter 18): This symbolises its political, economic and cultural power. An angel announces the end of this false system. In contrast to the true church, the “dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22), the false church is a “dwelling place of demons” (v2).

After the downfall of Babylon, the merchants recognise how much of their economic wealth they have had to attribute to this false church. The expressions “in one day” (v8) and “in one hour” (v10) hint at the suddenness of the judgment on Babylon and its

annihilating force. The list of merchandise (vv12-13) displays a frightening order: The first place is taken by gold and the last by men’s souls. The false church also trades in people, but they don’t have much value.



43. What is God’s command for His people (vv4-5)?

44. How will Babylon be judged?



Test yourself: What place and value do material things have in your life?

Lamenting on earth – joy in heaven



The consequences of this final judgment on the false church are

felt in the whole world. All trading nations lament her downfall because this system has supplied them with infinite wealth (vv15-19). But then another voice is heard: yet not on earth but in heaven. God commands to rejoice those who, down the long dark centuries, have died a martyr’s death through the persecutions of this false church. God Himself will take on their case and judge their persecutors (v20). The final divine judgment is announced by an angel (vv21-24).



45. What indicates clearly that the judgment on Babylon is final (vv21-24)?



So far a **strong angel** has been mentioned three

times in Revelation: in chapter 5:2 in connection with the judgment over the earth; in chapter 10:1 in connection with judgment over Israel; and here in verse 21 in connection with judgment over Babylon.



Those who suffer unjustly and hand the matter over to God have the best solicitor.

The marriage supper of the Lamb



God's righteous judgment over Babylon causes praise with all

believers in heaven (vv1-5). Now the great event can take place: the marriage supper of the Lamb. The judgment over the false church had to take place first. The wedding dress is woven from the "righteous acts of the saints". Remember that you are working on this dress today through your practical behaviour as a Christian (vv6-8). Wedding guests are also present. These are the believers of the Old Testament who do not belong to the church and are therefore not part of the bride of the Lamb. They too will be completely happy (vv9-10).

In verses 11-16, the appearing of the Lord and His heavenly

hosts is described, when the Lord Jesus intervenes directly in events on the earth. Four names are given to Him here: Faithful and True (v11); a name that no one knows except Himself (v12); the Word of God (v13); King of kings and Lord of lords (v16).



46. How is the voice that is heard in heaven described (vv1+6)?

47. How does the angel react to John wanting to worship him?



Worship God – not idols or celebrities.

Christ judges Satan and his tools



An angel announces God's judgment over His enemies. It

is the terrible "supper of the great God", which stands in remarkable contrast to the marriage supper of the Lamb (v17).

The Roman dictator and the nations betrayed by him really try to fight directly against Christ and His heavenly hosts! Nothing is reported of the actual battle, only of the end: The dictator (the beast) and the Antichrist (the false prophet) will be cast alive into the lake of fire. All those who fight against Christ will die in this battle (vv19-21). Satan himself will be bound and kept in the bottomless pit, so that he will not be able to be active during the Millennium. After that he will once more

be released for a short time (vv1-3). The martyrs who were faithful to God in this difficult time and gave their lives will be raised again at the beginning of the Millennium (vv4-6).



48. What is the reward for the raised martyrs?

49. What happens to the other dead?



In the battle against Satan, Christ will always be the victor!

The great white throne



God makes it very clear: Neither Satan nor sinful man have really

changed. After the 1,000 years Satan will be released once more, and he will immediately begin to deceive men again. Those who have experienced the decades of the Lord's reign of peace will also allow themselves to be deceived again. Satan can only lose this battle. It is his last and final resistance against Christ (vv7-10).

All the unbelieving people who have died up to this point must now appear before the Lord's throne. They are judged according to their works. Their destination is eternal damnation because they are not found in the Book of Life (vv11-15).



50. Which people will Satan deceive?
51. Which books are opened at this court session?



This is the last phase of **Satan's** defeat, as described in the

Book of Revelation: After being cast onto the earth (Revelation 12:9) and being bound in the bottomless pit (Revelation 20:1-3), there follows his eternal judgment, the lake of fire, which is the destiny for him and his demons. The beast and the false prophet are there already, and Death and Hades will also be there, as well as all unbelievers (vv10+14+15).



**"But rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."
(Luke 10:20)**

Eternity



In these verses, God shows the author John in a vision what

it will be like when God has finally reached His goal. John sees a new heaven and a new earth. Everything that could bring a reminder of sin – also everything belonging to the first creation – has passed away. "Behold, I make all things new."

Two groups of people are mentioned:

- "the tabernacle (tent) of God" (v3) – this is the church consisting of all people who have believed in Jesus in the time in which we live
- "men", the believers of other times (see info text).

The place where all unbelievers are is also their final destination and cannot be

changed any more – the lake of fire: hell (v8).



52. What will there be no more of in the new earth?

53. What is another name for the eternal lot of the unbelievers?



In the **eternal state**, Revelation 21 distinguishes two

"groups" of people:

- the people on the new earth, who are called the people of God (v3) – believers who don't belong to the church
- the believers of the church symbolised as the tabernacle of God coming down out of heaven to be with men.



Where will you spend eternity?

The city from heaven



As the Book of Revelation is not always presented in a chronological

order, we take a step backwards today. Yesterday's text took you into eternity. But in today's passage God again gives us a detailed description of the church as the bride of Christ in the Millennium. As before, the two illustrations of the church – as bride and as city – are connected with each other. Some beautiful statements are made in respect of this city of God:

- It has the glory of God (v11).
- The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb (Christ) are its temple (v22).
- Its lamp is the Lamb (v23).
- There will be no more danger and no more night (v25).



54. What is the order of the gates of the city?

55. What is said about the structure of the gates?

56. Who will enter into this city?



The symbolic language of Revelation – part 13:

- “city” = an ordered community system
- “wall” = protection, security
- “gate” = administration
- “square” = perfection
- “street” = direction, course, marching route of man
- “clear glass” = fixed holiness



Heaven is a wonderful place!

The water and the tree of life



The description of the heavenly city is continued here.

There is the river of the water of life – the pure, unadulterated truth of the Word of God. The tree of life is there as well. In the Garden of Eden, the way to the tree of life was barred for man because of sin. But at the end of man's history, this tree will be a blessing for all nations (v2). Where the authority of God and the Lord Jesus (the throne) is recognised, there will be no more curse, but joyful service to God (vv3-4). This is the first time, though not the only time, in this last chapter of the Bible, that you hear the promise of the Lord Jesus: “Behold, I am coming quickly” (v7)!



57. What does the text say about the position, the fruit

and the leaves of the tree of life?

58. How does John react to the revelation given to him by the angel?

59. What does the angel answer him?



The instruction of the angel is always relevant: Worship God!

Jesus is coming again



These verses mark the end of the last book of the Bible. God

makes it very clear in His last words:

- The Lord Jesus is the beginning and the end of all the plans of God (vv13+16).
- There are two groups of people: those who are saved and those who are lost (v14).
- The Lord Jesus is coming again – quickly (vv7+12+20)!
- His bride longs for His coming (vv17+20).
- It is still possible to be saved (v17b).
- A terrible judgment will meet those who alter the Word of God (v18).



60. What does the Lord Jesus call Himself in verses

13-16?

61. These verses contain the shortest prayer in the Bible (only one word). What is this word and who prays it?

62. What is no one allowed to do with the words of the Book of Revelation and ultimately with the whole Word of God (vv18-19)?



Three times this chapter contains the promise of the Lord

Jesus: “I am coming quickly.”

Take note of what is said in connection with this:

- Verse 7: Blessed are those who keep the words of this book.
- Verse 12: There will be a reward when the Lord Jesus comes again.
- Verse 20: The believers answer to this promise of their Lord with the call: “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”



Are you like a servant who is waiting for his Lord?

Gone Missing

“Have your values in life changed since your never-ending days in the mountains?”, the interviewer asks Australian medical student James Scott.

“Such a question isn’t easy to answer”, James begins. One can feel that he is trying to answer this question honestly. He can still see the nightmare of the past weeks.

James had actually come to Nepal to do an internship at a hospital in Kathmandu. But he was turned down after he wasn’t able to pay the high sum demanded of him. Without further ado, he had changed his plans and set out for a hike on the “Helambu Trek” in the mountains.

Nobody had expected the blowing snow on December 22, 1991, underneath the Laurebi-nayak pass. That was why James had returned due to safety reasons because he deemed crossing too risky. On his way back to the safety hut he had become hope-

lessly lost: missing in a side valley of the Himalayas!

Finally, James found a dry shelter, only a few square metres in size, under a rock on the mountainside. A few bars of chocolate were the last solid nourishment for the coming days in solitude. James was trapped in deep snow in Nepal’s untouched mountain world.

His sister organised a large-scale search. After 40 days, all accessible valleys in the region of Annapurna had been systematically searched. Rational people had now given up any hope.

The military supported the search by doing flight exercises over the inaccessible side valley of the province. On 2 February, the most incredible thing happened: a helicopter spotted the missing man!

“I can safely say that my faith in God has become much stronger”, James replies to the journalist. “I am sure he exists.”



1. Trials should work patience (v4). They should help you to look to the Lord Jesus, to become more like Him and to please God. They should work trust in God and dependence on Him.

2. He willingly gives wisdom (v5).

3. Ask in faith, praying without doubting.

4. The cause for these temptations is your own lust, the outcome of which is sin. They don't have their origin in God but come from your own sinful nature (v14).

5. God is the giver of all good gifts and He doesn't change.

6. Christians should receive the Word of God with meekness (v21), but they shouldn't only be hearers (or readers) of the Word, but also doers of what the Bible says (v22).

7. God says that such behaviour is evil (v4).

8. A footstool (v3).

9. God promises a special blessing to those who are willing to give. In Old Testament times this blessing consisted of earthly goods. In Christian times the same promise is true, but the blessing of God is now spiritual (not material) blessing. For example, God gives you real joy and makes you happy inside if you give something to someone.

10. The Apostle Paul speaks of justification before God – and that is only by faith. James speaks of justification before men – and that's where works count; because the faith in the heart is not observable as such by others.

11. By hell (v6). This doesn't mean hell as a place, but the evil powers for which hell was prepared (Matthew 25:41). James wants to say that the tongue is an important tool of evil (satanic) powers.

12. A spring can't bring forth sweet and bitter water at the same time (v11), a fig tree can't bear olives (v12), a vine can't bear figs (v12), and salty water

and sweet water can't come from the same source (v12).

13. It is pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy (v17).

14. "Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." And, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

15. With a vapour, visible for a short time and then vanishing away (v14).

16. No, only by the prayer of faith (v15). To dig deeper: At the beginning of the Christian era, the gift of healing did exist, but this is not what James is talking about here. God had given this special gift as a sign to unbelievers. Here, it's all about a believer who is sick. The New Testament doesn't mention a single occasion when a believer was healed through the gift of healing. Anointing with oil was a customary Jewish treatment (see Mark 6:13 and Luke 10:34).

17. He talks about Elijah, who prayed for a drought. It didn't rain for three and a half years. After that he prayed for rain, and God answered this prayer as well. The prayer of a righteous man avails much, as long as it is in accord with God's will!

1. In order to be able to fight, the men had to be mature both physically and mentally.

2. Sadly, yes. These may be people who don't belong to the Lord Jesus, or those who are Christians who have become tired and weary. They don't use the weapons which God has given them any more, and they are no longer useful fighters for the Lord Jesus.

3. Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, are counted as one tribe each.

4. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

5. A person must be converted first of all, i.e. to feel deep sadness for their past sinful life, to confess their sins and to repent. Then they will be suitable for the service of the Lord.

6. The tribe of Levi (v6).

7. Yes, you can compare these princes with the leaders mentioned in the New

Testament (Hebrews 13:17) and with those who are over the believers (1 Thessalonians 5:12).

8. The mobilisation of 600,000 men – plus women and children – needs an enormous amount of organisation. Fast and problem-free camping and setting off are only possible with extreme discipline and exact fulfilment of all duties by everyone. Everyone has to take heed to all the commands.

9. Suggestion: If the Lord Jesus is the centre of your life, the first thing you do is ask Him what He wants you to do. You are obedient to His Word and love those who are also children of God.

10. It was easier to protect the tabernacle from attacks. When settling down, the Israelites found it easier to settle around the tabernacle in the centre.

11. The priests had a privileged position near God – but at the same time greater responsibility to live up to His holiness.

12. 1 month (vv11-13).

13. 22,000 (v39).

14. No, it's a much smaller number than the other tribes (who were counted only from 20 years and onwards).

15. There were 22,273 firstborn. Every firstborn was redeemed by one Levite. But there were only 22,000 Levites that were counted. That means that 273 firstborn could not be redeemed by a Levite. Redemption money had to be paid for them.

16. 5 shekels per head (v47). Altogether that is 1,365 shekels (v50).

17. The veil covers the Ark of the Covenant.

18. Because the Ark of the Covenant was not allowed to be touched when it was carried (v15).

19. Aaron and his sons covered all the articles of the sanctuary and then led the Kohathites to the covered items which they had to carry.

20. 2 Samuel 6:6-8.

21. Moses and Aaron; Moses and Joshua (Exodus 17); Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2); Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:25); Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25), etc.

22. People who wanted to annoy Paul (Philippians 1:16), Euodias and Syntyche (Philippians 4:2); in some way Barnabas and Paul (Acts 15:39-40), etc.

23. In the Bible, leprosy is a picture of sin, excluding us from the presence of God and "incurable" for man.

24. Because the holy God lives in the midst of His people (v3).

25. One who is separated, devoted.

26. We may enjoy earthly joys, given by God, in fellowship with Him. We should also thank Him for them, for example food, a place to live, marriage, family ... The enjoyment of worldly joys interrupts enjoyment of fellowship with God.

Answers Numbers

27. Samson (Judges 13).
28. To the Lord Jesus (see Ephesians 5:2).
29. In chapter 4:4-15.
30. King David, who had the Ark transported on a cart pulled by oxen (2 Samuel 6:2-3).
31. Offering >Use
Silver platter, silver bowl,
with fine flour and oil
meal offering
Gold pan with incense
to be burnt
Young bull, ram, lamb in its
first year
burnt offering
Kid of the goats
sin offering
2 oxen, 5 rams, 5 male goats,
5 lambs in their 1st year
peace offering
32. At the Passover (Exodus 12:5).
33. Of the Holy Spirit. The whole life of the Lord Jesus (meal offering) was marked by the Holy Spirit.
34. Yes! Again and again the Lord Jesus is called the Lamb of God (John 1:29+36). Being the "true" Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7), He is our redeemer through His once for all sacrifice.
35. Three times (2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chronicles 29-32; Isaiah 36-39).
36. The number 7 is often a symbol of completeness, perfection, a finished state: 7 days = one week.
37. The number 12 speaks of divine rule over the earth (Revelation 21:12).
38. The burnt offering is all for God. It points to the complete devotion of the Lord to His God and Father on the cross of Calvary (Ephesians 5:2).
39. To be in the sanctuary means to have fellowship with God through prayer and reading the Bible. We speak to Him by prayer, and He speaks to us through His Word, the Bible.

Answers Numbers

40. The Ark of the Covenant.
41. Because it is very hard physical work to carry the various parts of the tabernacle all the time. God doesn't want the older Levites to be overworked.
42. No, they shouldn't serve officially any more, but they can continue to help.
43. On the 14th day of the first month (Abib) (vv1+3).
44. Through sin: in thoughts, words and actions.
45. When the pillar of cloud or of fire lifted itself or settled (vv21-22).
46. Silver (v2).
47. Of the Lord Jesus, the perfect Man (wood) and eternal God (gold).
48. Three days' journey (v33).
49. It seems that this is not very important. The reason is not given in the text.
50. The people should have turned directly to God, confessed their sins and thanked Him for their salvation.
51. Because he thinks he has to carry it on his own and doesn't rely completely on God and His promises.
52. Moses shows that he has little faith. He can't imagine how God can provide meat for such a crowd (vv21-23).
53. Because the people – without thinking of God or thanking Him – crave the quails with animal-like greed.
54. 10 homers (v32). It can't be determined exactly how much a homer contains. Some speak of 393 litres, others of 220. Whatever it is, it's quite a lot!
55. Meekness (v3) – an important characteristic for everyone who wants to serve God.
56. 7 days (vv15-16), because Miriam had been shut out of the camp and the people were not to start journeying before she was restored.

57. The people want to send out spies (Deuteronomy 1:22). God instructs Moses to send them out, in order to fulfil the demands of the people (Deuteronomy 1:22). – If God gives in to demands made in self-will, it is not for blessing, but for discipline.

58. Yes, certainly! It is a fertile land with marvellous grapes, pomegranates and figs, and much more (v23).

59. They said: We will be victorious (v30), the land is very, very good (v7), the LORD will give us the land (v8), the enemies' protection has departed from them (v9), the LORD is with us (v9). 60. They are under the influence of the ten spies who want to spread a bad report concerning the land (v32).

61. They had despised God (v11+23), hadn't believed Him (v11), had put Him to the test ten times (v22) and had not obeyed Him.

62. Because there was a different spirit in Caleb and he followed God fully (v24).

63. The people try to avoid the judgment (to endure the wilderness for 40 years). That's why they try to conquer the land. Here, the first part of the judgment pronounced by God (v29) is executed (v45).

64. No! OK, they feel sorrowful (v39), but rebellion against God's judgment proves that there has not been real repentance (v41).

65. Fine flour points to the perfection of the human nature of the Lord Jesus. In His whole life, there was nothing unclean or uneven.

66. The drink offering is an addition to a sacrifice – wine that is poured out over an animal sacrifice or grain offering.

67. God had repeatedly reminded the people of the law of the Sabbath, beginning at the time the law was given (Exodus 20:8-11). The Israelite knows the commandments. Therefore it is presumptuous sin.

68. Because God commands it, and so that all would feel the responsibility of the sin and have a part in dealing with it (v35).

69. It means something like: "All Israelites are equally holy and can sacrifice to God." This, however, is opposed to God's instructions, because only the Levites were separate (i.e. made holy, for God) instead of the firstborn.

70. They don't perish, as Numbers 26:11 tells us. This also becomes evident in the Psalms where the sons of Korah are often mentioned as authors of psalms.

71. Censers are a symbol of their presumptuous ambition to be priests. And because of this presumptuousness, they are judged by God. The reason for this judgment therefore becomes evident to everyone.

72. Only by turning away from Korah's followers (v26).

73. In neither verses 21 and 45 do Moses and Aaron make use of the opportunity God offers to turn away. Instead, they

intercede for the people so that God doesn't destroy them.

74. 14,700 (v49).

75. God knows His people, who will murmur again and again. Through this confirmation, the question of priesthood and privilege is settled once and for all (vv5-10).

76. In the Ark of the Covenant.

77. They are responsible for the sanctuary. Therefore they are also responsible to bring the relevant offerings so that the sanctuary remains sanctified for God and is not defiled by the sin of the people and the priests.

78. All except the Levites and priests.

79. God Himself is their part and inheritance (v20).

80. Hebrews 13:16.

81. The red heifer is given to the priest, Eleazar, who takes it outside the camp. There it is killed before the priest, who takes some of its blood and sprinkles it against the front of

the tent of meeting. The heifer is then completely burnt (vv3-5).

82. The ashes are collected by a clean man and poured out outside the camp in a clean place – until they are used for the water of purification (vv9-10).

83. Judgment can meet anyone who has been defiled by a dead person but does not want to be cleansed by the water and the ashes of the burnt heifer (v13).

84. The principle that association with what is unclean, with sin, defiles (or makes unclean).

85. The rod of Aaron, which had budded (chapter 17:8).

86. The murmuring of the Israelites (v13).

87. Because they are descendants of the brother of the forefather of the Israelites. God Himself had given them the land of Seir (Deuteronomy 2:4-6).

88. He made the golden calf (Exodus 32).

89. John 3:14-15

90. The manna.

91. After they passed through the Red Sea, when they were saved from the Egyptians (Exodus 15).

92. Among other things, the bed is a symbol of idleness – those who love idleness are not ready for battle.

93. Jude 11.

94. He questions God's first answer.

95. The snake in Genesis 3:1ff.

96. No, it isn't. There is no repentance. The rest of the story makes that clear. It also seems that Balaam thinks that his mistake was not to recognise the Angel of the LORD as such when He stood in his way (v34).

97. We read of Saul that he prophesied (1 Samuel 10:10-11).

98. This is said to Abraham on multiple occasions, for example in Genesis 13:16.

99. That God has led Israel out of Egypt (v22).

100. Moses (Deuteronomy 3:27).

101. Poetry.

102. The lion, the lioness and the wild ox (vv8-9).

103. The star out of Jacob, the Lord Jesus, the Christ of God.

104. The descendants of Esau who live on Mount Seir.

105. An idol!

106. The descendants of Phinehas should always be priests and high priests (vv12-13). He is a type of the Lord Jesus, our great High Priest, Who is priest forever (Hebrews 7:17).

107. Chapter 1.

108. By 2,770 people (compare chapter 1:21 with verse 7).

109. Judah is the mightiest of the tribes.

110. There are only daughters in this family.

111. Decreased (chapter 1:46).

112. Simeon (v14) has the fewest.

113. They don't receive any inheritance (v62).

114. In the plains of Moab, by the Jordan, across from Jericho (v63).

115: To the tribe of Manasseh (v1).

116. He died in the wilderness but didn't belong to Korah's followers, and he didn't have any sons (v3).

117. He had been disobedient to God, and didn't sanctify God before the eyes of the people, when he struck the rock instead of speaking to it (v14).

118. From now on, the High Priest Eleazar will have a privileged position and will

Answers Numbers

communicate the words of God to Joshua.

119. It is a sacrifice offered to God by burning it with fire.

120. It is to the joy of God; He “feeds” on it, so to speak.

121. Because the sacrifices point to the Lord Jesus, His life and His work on the cross of Calvary.

122. In the letter to the Hebrews.

123. On the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10). That’s Saturday.

124. The sin offering is an illustration of the Lord Jesus bearing our sins on the cross.

125. The animals are a type of the Lord Jesus, Who was without fault.

126. No, there were also voluntary offerings (v39).

127. No! (James 5:12)

128. Ecclesiastes 5:3-4.

129. Because he was the reason for the sin of the people (v16).

130. The sacrifice of the red heifer (chapter 19). The purification happened by the cleansing water made from the ashes of this red heifer.

131. Anything that doesn’t burn, for example gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, lead (vv22-23).

132. Because these things couldn’t be offered on the altar but were divided and then given to the Levites.

133. 16,750 shekels (v52).

134. Around 200 kilograms (one shekel weighed approximately 12 grams).

135. The two tribes camped together (with Simeon).

136. Because he was worried that the whole people would give up on conquering the land which God had intended to give them (v7) – as they had done once before when they were discouraged by the ten spies.

137. It seems that half the tribe of Manasseh has been “infected” by the ideas of the other tribes (chapter 32:7).

138. The east.

139. The bitter water in Mara becomes sweet (Exodus 15:22-26).

140. Moses strikes the rock so that water comes out (Exodus 17:1-7).

141. Jericho.

142. Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7).

143. The Dead Sea.

144. The Mediterranean Sea.

145. Because two and a half tribes live east of Jordan. And they also need cities of refuge in case of manslaughter (v14)!

146. The Levites, because the six cities of refuge were part of the 48 cities belonging to the Levites (v6).

147. Because the LORD lives in their midst (v34).

Answers Numbers

148. Yes, but the man had to be from the tribe of their father (v6).

1. He witnesses of the light, of Jesus Christ, in order to bring people to faith in the Lord Jesus. 2. John the Baptist called the Lord Jesus the “one who comes after [him]”, because he, as the one who prepared the way for Him, started his public ministry before Him. Yet the Lord Jesus has priority over John the Baptist, since He “was before [him]”, i.e. because He is an eternal being. But John the Baptist, as any other man, had a beginning.

3. In verses 19, 32, and 34.

4. Under a fig tree (v48).

5. Nathanael is sceptical because Jesus comes from the despised city of Nazareth, which is not really renowned for what is good (v46). Philip doesn't argue and thus try to convince Nathanael of the opposite, but he just tells him to come and look at this Person (v46).

6. There are 6 water pots, containing 20 or 30 gallons each. A gallon is 4.54 litres. That means that the Lord Jesus turned between 544 and 817

litres of water into wine! That's more than enough, you may think. But remember that at wedding feasts at that time, very many guests were invited and the celebrations often lasted for a number of days.

7. The glory of the Lord Jesus (v11).

8. The Jews speak of the temple in Jerusalem, but the Lord Jesus means the temple of His body. Further, the Jews talk about Jesus destroying His body (Matthew 26:61); but He spoke of them doing that (vv19-21).

9. They believed because of the signs – because they saw something impressive – not because they recognised Him in their hearts as Lord of their lives. The Lord Jesus, however, sees into their hearts.

10. You can find this expression three times in John 3:1-21: in verses 3, 5 and 11. By the way, the expression “most assuredly” only occurs in the Gospel of John – 25 times!

11. The sentence has already been passed on those who reject

the Lord Jesus. There is only judgment for those who reject Christ. But the execution of the sentence is still future. However, it will certainly come to pass for those who remain in unbelief.

12. At Aenon (v23).

13. It's John the Baptist himself.

14. In Samaria, in Sychar, near a field which Jacob had given to his son Joseph; at the well which Jacob had had dug (vv5-6+12).

15. It was the sixth hour (v6). As time was counted in 12 and not 24 hours, this could have been either 6 o'clock in the morning or 6 o'clock in the evening. It's more likely that it was in the evening: Jesus sat down at the well, tired after a long day's walk. For those who are interested, here's some additional information: John in his Gospel uses the Roman way of counting time, which is the same as ours. You count the hours of the day from midnight till midnight, separated into two times 12 hours. The other

Gospels use the Jewish way of counting time. There as well, the day is separated into two times 12 hours, but the day, according to Jewish understanding, begins in the evening. That's at (approximately) 6 o'clock. When they report of the third hour of the day, that means the ninth according to our understanding; if they mention the sixth, it's the twelfth, and so on. One example: John 19:14 tells us that the trial before Pilate took place at the sixth hour. The other Gospels mention that the crucifixion took place at the third hour (Mark 15:25) and that the darkness began at the sixth hour (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44). These times are only in agreement if you understand that John, when mentioning the sixth hour, means 6 o'clock in the morning. The writers of the other Gospels speak about the third hour and mean 9 o'clock in the morning and the sixth hour is 12 noon.

16. They were surprised that He was speaking with a woman, who was also a Samaritan (v27). At that time, it was unusual to

Speak alone to a person of the opposite sex.

17. There are four months until the harvest (v35). But the spiritual harvest can already be brought in; the time is available to gather fruit to eternal life (vv35-36).

18. It was the seventh hour (v52). That means it was either seven o'clock in the morning, or seven o'clock in the evening.

19. In Jerusalem, at the sheep gate, at the pool of Bethesda (v2).

20. On a Sabbath day (v9).

21. By the word of the Lord Jesus (vv8-9).

22. You've probably guessed that the correct answer is "no". Verse 25 refers to those who are spiritually dead, dead in their trespasses and sins, i.e. they are not born again; verse 28 on the other hand refers to those who are bodily dead (corpses).

23. In the Name of His Father (v43).

24. Pride.

25. The miracle takes place just before the Passover feast (v4). This was celebrated in the month of Nisan, the first month of the religious year of the Jews.

26. The report doesn't give a precise figure. We know that it was around 5,000 men (v10). You can only estimate the number of women and children.

27. The disciples are able to fill 12 baskets with leftovers (v13). That's more than they had at the beginning.

28. Natural food passes away; spiritual food has an eternal benefit (v27).

29. This verse says that the Lord Jesus can and wants to give every person in this world new and eternal life. Whether someone actually receives this life depends on whether he believes on the Lord Jesus.

30. The will of the Father: 1. That the Lord Jesus doesn't lose any of what the Father has given Him, but raises it up on the last day (v39). 2. That everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him receives eternal life (v40).

31. Three times (vv39+40+44) – tomorrow you will come across this phrase another time in chapter 6:54.

32. "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" (v60).

33. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (vv68-69). – Do you know these words off by heart?

34. The Feast of Tabernacles (v2).

35. Because the Lord Jesus testified that the world's works are evil (v7).

36. He who wants to do the will of God (v17).

37. An Israelite boy had to be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. He would still be circumcised even if the eighth day was a Sabbath. People were ready to do this work on the Sabbath because circumcision, as the law demands, is important. Why shouldn't a man

be healed on the Sabbath – isn't that much more important?

38. The Lord Jesus speaks about Him going to the Father (v38) – the unbelieving Jews won't be able to go there. The Jews don't know what He means, but they wonder whether Jesus might want to go to those Jews who are living dispersed among the Greeks, in order to teach them (vv35-36).

39. It was the eighth day.

40. They say: "No man ever spoke like this Man!" (v46).

41. The Romans had forbidden the Jews from executing the death sentence (chapter 18:31). If the Lord Jesus had said that the woman should be stoned, they could have accused Him before the Romans of not complying with the regulations of the occupying power.

42. If the Lord Jesus had meant that the executor of the sentence had to be sinless, no one on this earth would be allowed to execute any kind of judgment. This can't be the will

of God, as He has instituted authorities for the judgment of evil (Romans 13:4). The point is: The Lord Jesus wants to make the self-righteous accusers aware of their own sin. Before judging others by the Word of God, you must have put yourself into the light of this Word! What the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 2:17-24 on this subject is very helpful.

43. Because He always does what is pleasing to His Father (v29) – clearly different to the people who surround the Lord Jesus.

44. To be a descendant (“seed”) of Abraham is a question of biological descent. To be a child of Abraham is a moral question: You must do what Abraham did (v39), that is, believe.

45. It means that believers won’t see the second death, eternal separation from God. The Lord Jesus doesn’t speak here of the first, natural, death.

46. It is the pool of Siloam (“sent”) (v7).

47. As the healing took place on the Sabbath, some said that Jesus couldn’t have come from God. Others note that a sinful man is not able to do such signs (v26).

48. You can find this question four times: Verses 10, 15, 19 and 26.

49. Because they are afraid of the Jews who have agreed to exclude from the synagogue everyone who would confess Jesus as Christ (v22).

50. This verse deals with the spiritual blindness of a person. If a person acknowledges this before God, i.e. realises his sinful condition, he doesn’t have any sin any more because it is forgiven. If he refuses to do so, he claims to see, is self-righteous, and his sin remains.

51. Because they don’t know the voice of the stranger (v5).

52. The other sheep are the believers from the nations. They, together with the believers from the Jews, form a new flock.

53. Through His death – which is a command of the Father (v17) – the Lord Jesus gives His Father a new reason to love Him. It’s a “new” reason because the love of the Father for the Son has, of course, already been there from eternity.

54. Where: In Solomon’s porch, which was part of the temple in Jerusalem (v23). When: in winter (v22). What: They wanted to know whether He was the Christ (v24).

55. He waits for a while and goes only when the right time has come. He always does what God wants.

56. Four days (at least) (v17). Actually, if you assume that the Lord Jesus started His journey when Lazarus died (v11), the journey to Bethany took 4 days. If the messengers who reported Lazarus’ illness travelled for the same length of time, and Jesus then waited for 2 days (v6), then the two sisters were waiting for Him for 4+2+4=10 days!

57. In chapter 9.

58. The people who stood around (v44). We humans can’t give new life to other people. Only the Lord Jesus can do this, as He also raised up Lazarus here. But He wants us to help young believers (to whom He has just given new life) to get rid of old ties and to live as believers (“Loose him, and let him go”!).

59. It is called “the Passover of the Jews” (v55), i.e. it is now only a religious tradition of the Jews.

60. On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit came to earth and “we were all baptised into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13). That was the moment the church was formed.

61. 300 days, because one denarius is the daily wage. The ointment is therefore worth a whole year’s salary!

62. No, because the Lord Jesus says, “The poor you have with you always” (v8). But God wants the rich people to help the poor; see for example 2 Corinthians 8:14.

63. God the Father had glorified the Lord Jesus when He had Him raise Lazarus (chapter 11:4+40-42). Now He will glorify Him again (v28) by raising Him from the dead!

64. It means to be hanging on an erected cross (chapter 3:14, 8:28, 12:34). Also: It is the crucified Christ Who will draw men after Him ("And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (v32)).

65. No one believes in the Lord Jesus on the basis of miracles (signs) (v37). The Word of God is decisive (vv47-48). (Compare also Luke 16:27-31).

66. The Lord Jesus (v41)!

67. When the actual betrayal took place, the Lord Jesus didn't want the disciples to have doubts in Him. He didn't want them to think: "How can this happen seeing He is the Son of God. Maybe He isn't the Son of God after all?" They were to understand that He knew beforehand that it was meant to happen like this (v19).

68. As always in the Gospel of John, it is John himself – who also wrote this Gospel. He never mentions his own name.

69. We should love one another as the Lord Jesus has loved us (v34)! – Think about how far that goes!

70. They must be prayers "in His name". That means requests which the Lord Jesus can agree with.

71. Answers to these prayers are always for the glorification of God!

72. The Holy Spirit will be with us forever. He lives in each believer who believes in the Lord Jesus at this time – and this will continue in eternity.

73. It was love to His God and Father. Out of love to Him (and therefore also to us) He was obedient: He did what the Father commanded Him (v31). He died for our sins because that was the plan of God!

74. By remaining conscious of His love and obeying Him (vv9-11).

75. If a branch is going to bear much fruit, the vinedresser has to prune it, i.e. he must cut out all wild shoots. In the same way the Father has to take everything away from us that hinders us from bearing more fruit (v2). Maybe God has already had to take something away from you (your bike may have been stolen, you may have broken your leg, your dog has died, your friend has moved away ...), so that you have more time and strength for the Lord Jesus.

76. They are thrown into the fire! This refers to the lake of fire, i.e. hell.

77. So that we bear fruit in this world. You can find some examples of fruit in Galatians 5:22-23.

78. The Lord Jesus is really thinking of His disciples, the apostles, who had been with Him from the beginning.

79. First the Lord Jesus had to die, rise again and be glorified, i.e. He had to return to heaven. Only after that could He send

the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus had already spoken about that in chapter 7:38-39.

80. It leads to the glorification of the Lord Jesus. – That's why words which offend the Lord Jesus can never be attributable to the Holy Spirit.

81. No, the Father is with Him (v32).

82. Because we love the Lord Jesus and believe that He came forth from God (v27). The Father is happy about that.

83. No, because the Lord Jesus says: "All Mine are Yours and Yours are Mine" (v10).

84. Judas Iscariot. He is the only one of the twelve disciples who was lost.

85. The Father loves us as He loves His own Son (v23)!

86. The Father loved the Son "before the foundation of the world", i.e. before He created the universe – from all eternity (v24)! This love doesn't have a beginning. The Lord Jesus has

always been the beloved Son of God.

87. Jesus of Nazareth (vv5+7)! In saying that, they expressed their contempt, because people from Nazareth were despised.

88. Chapter 17:12.

89. John is known to the High Priest, which gives him access to the court of the High Priest. He takes Peter into the court (vv15-16).

90. At night! They came with lanterns and torches when they captured Jesus (chapter 18:3) and then led Him immediately to Annas, where the trial took place. Then early in the morning the cock crowed (vv27-28).

91. The Passover feast (v28). At that feast, a lamb was killed. That was a type to be fulfilled right at that time: The Lord Jesus is the Lamb of God (1 Corinthians 5:7).

92. Because His kingdom is not a kingdom of this world. It is a heavenly kingdom.

93. He testifies to His innocence three times: chapter 18:38 and 19:4+6. And His death is demanded three times: chapter 18:31 and 19:6+7.

94. At the sixth hour, i.e. 6 o'clock in the morning (vv14+16).

95. Near the city of Jerusalem (v20).

96. Vinegar (v29).

97. So that we believe it.

98. In chapter 3.

99. "Brethren", because His Father is also our Father, and His God is also our God (v17).

100. On the first day of the week, i.e. Sunday (vv19+26).

101. So that we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And whoever believes that has eternal life (v31).

102. "The disciple whom Jesus loved", that is John. He is especially aware of the love of the Lord Jesus and therefore knows Him better (v7).

103. Yes, they can bring of the fish which they have caught. But in the end, they have in reality also been provided by the Lord Jesus, because these fish only went into the net after He said that they should cast it on the right side.

104. The shepherd should "feed" the lambs (=young believers) (v15) – they need food in order to grow.

105. If John had written down every single thing, he would have had to explain every detail. In order to do that, he would have had to write countless books ...

1. They are called ungodly, sinners and scornful.

2. The tree planted by the water is not in danger in the heat. That means that “periods of drought” can’t harm you if you trust the Lord Jesus.

3. (King) Herod and Pontius Pilate (the Roman governor of Judea).

4. This means the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. Because he feels especially the nearness of the LORD, Who supports him (Psalm 3:5) and lets him dwell safely (4:8).

7. Both passages speak of falsehood, being angry and sinning.

8. It’s in the morning (v3).

9. All people are sinners by nature.

10: 1 Chronicles 15:20-21 mentions two groups of musical instruments that accompanied the singing of the choirs of the Levites: psalteries and harps. The word “Sheminith” was in

connection with the harps and possibly set a certain pitch.

11. First David reminds the LORD of His mercies (v4). Then he says that he won’t be able to praise God any more when he is in the grave (v5).

12. Verse 15 is the basis of the proverb: “You can easily get caught in your own trap”.

13. David mentions the heart and the reins (kidneys). The heart is the seat of the emotions and the understanding (Proverbs 23:26). The kidney is often considered in the Bible to be the seat of wisdom and insight into God’s thoughts (Psalm 16:7).

14. The Lord Jesus quoted this verse when the children in the temple called to Him: “Hosanna to the Son of David!” This annoyed the High Priests and scribes. Quoting Psalm 8, Jesus (Matthew 21:16) shows that the behaviour of the children had already been mentioned in this psalm. Children would praise Him while the rulers of the people rejected Him.

15. The writer of Hebrews makes it clear in Hebrews 2:8 that everything is subject to Christ, but that this is not visible yet (in the time of grace). That means: After the work on Calvary God put the Lord Jesus above all things. But this power will only be seen on earth when the Lord Jesus rules as King of Peace in the Millennium.

16. We could think of the blood of Abel, who was killed by his brother Cain (Genesis 4:10).

17. David “promises” God that he will tell others if God helps him. This would give him a reason for praising God and for joy (v14).

18. He blots their name out for ever and ever (v5).

19. The ungodly sits in the lurking places of the villages (v8) – the believer lives openly and visible to those around him; the ungodly murders (v8) – the believer endeavours to see that those around him don’t perish; the ungodly fixes the eye to the helpless (v8) – the believer lovingly looks out for

the helpless; the ungodly lies in wait secretly (v9) – the believer approaches those in need; the ungodly wants to and will catch people – the believer wants those that have been caught to be freed by the Lord Jesus; the ungodly crouches and lies low (v10) – the believer may stand in faith and be steadfast in view of the attacks of the devil.

20. Fire, brimstone and burning wind (v6). These things speak of divine judgment coming over the ungodly.

21. He watches men carefully and tests them (v4).

22. Idle words, flattery, double-heartedness, pride.

23. Both verses mention that the human tongue is inclined to boast (it boasts great things).

24. Hebrews 11:6.

25. Because God has dealt bountifully with him (v6).

26. You find it in Romans 3:12. The quote confirms that no one, as they are by nature, can have a relationship with God.

Answers Psalm

27. It describes the characteristics of those who can live in God's tabernacle and dwell on God's mountain.

28. His heart (v7) – other translations: his reins (kidneys).

29. Because God is at his right hand (v8).

30. He speaks of the shadow of wings (v8), just like a bird keeping her babies warm.

31. To a (young) lion (v12).

32. Verse 14: 1. They are only focused on earthly things. 2. They therefore try to enjoy life to the full (the filled belly), 3. They have many descendants. 4. They leave their possessions to their children.

33. Rock, fortress, deliverer, strength, shield, horn and stronghold.

34. He brings them into a broad place (v19).

35. Suggestion: When administering judgment God acts with each person in the way they deserve.

36. Two times: verse 20 and verse 24. It means perfect

behaviour before God. Only the Lord Jesus could display this in a perfect way.

37. God's gentleness (v35).

38. David speaks of the shield of divine salvation. Ephesians speaks of the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation.

39. He wants to praise God and sing psalms to Him (vv49-50).

40. Characteristics: perfect, sure, right and pure.

Effects: They convert the soul, make the simple wise, rejoice the heart and enlighten the eyes.

41. In their horses and chariots (v7).

42. In God's salvation (v5).

43. He will destroy them from the earth (v10).

44. To bulls (v12), lions (vv13 and 21), dogs (v16) and wild oxen (v21).

45. The following list quotes the passage from one of the Gospels. 1. The cry of the Lord Jesus "My God, My God, why

have You forsaken Me?" in verse 1 (Matthew 27:46), 2. The mocking of the enemies of the Lord Jesus in verses 7 and 8 (Matthew 27:39-44), 3. The thirst of the Lord Jesus on the cross in verse 16 (John 19:28), 4. The piercing of the hands and feet of the Lord Jesus at His crucifixion in verse 15 (John 19:17-18), 5. The looking on of the bystanders in verse 17 (Luke 23:35), 6. The sharing out of His clothes and the gambling over His garment in verse 18 (John 19:23-24).

46. "The great assembly" refers to the restored people of Israel in the Millennium.

47. All nations (v27). This prophecy refers to the time in which the Lord Jesus will reign as King in His 1,000-year reign of peace over the whole earth.

48. Those who seek Him (v26).

49. 1- He makes me lie down. 2- He leads beside still waters. 3- He restores. 4- He leads in the paths of righteousness. 5- He is present. 6- He comforts. 7- He prepares a table. 8- He anoints with oil. 9- He causes his cup to run over.

Answers Psalm

50. He will dwell in the house of the LORD forever (v6).

51. 1- clean hands, 2- pure heart, 3- not an idol worshipper, 4- doesn't swear deceitfully.

52. King of glory (vv7+8+9+10).

53. He promises them that He will help them to find the right way (to make the right decisions) (v12). He will further be led into the secret and covenant of God.

54. Through the characteristics of integrity and uprightness (v21).

55. Five times: Verse 2: "I trust in You"; Verse 5: "On You I wait all the day"; Verse 15: "My eyes are ever toward the LORD"; Verse 20: "I put my trust in You"; Verse 21: "For I wait for You".

56. God's lovingkindness (v3).

57. Pontius Pilate had water brought to him and washed his hands in public. He thought he could wash away his guilt for the death of the Lord Jesus. See Matthew 27:24.

58. When the High Priests and their soldiers wanted to take the

Answers Psalm

Lord Jesus captive in the garden of Gethsemane, He made Himself known with the words “I am He”. As a result, they fell to the ground (John 18:6).

59. Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!

60. In the direction of the “holy sanctuary” (the holy of holies in the temple) (v2).

61. First of all the ungodly are deceitful, because they speak of peace but have evil plans (v3). Secondly, they are not interested in God’s deeds and works (v5).

63. Seven times (vv3-9).

64. The voice of the LORD is: v.3 exalted (above the waters), v.4 powerful, majestic (controlling the waters), v.5 strong (it can break strong trees), v.7 controlling (dividing the flames), v.8 forceful (shaking the wilderness), v.9 irresistible (makes the deer give birth).

65. God’s anger lasts for a moment, but His favour lasts for life (v5).

66. According to Luke 23:46, these were the last words of the Lord Jesus before He died.

67. Those who regard useless idols (v6).

68. You should have noticed that the letter to the Romans states that God’s goodness extends to all people in order to bring them to repentance. Verse 19, on the other hand, says that God’s goodness is laid up for those who fear Him. Is this a contradiction? No, but the psalm expresses that there is a special measure of goodness for those who fear God.

69. From the plots of men and the strife of tongues (v20).

70. Romans 4:7-8.

71. The horse and the mule (v9).

72. The harp and an instrument with ten strings (v2).

73. God spoke, and the things He created were there immediately. The theory of evolution doesn’t at all agree with this verse.

74. He encamps around those who fear God (v7).

75. In verse 14: 1- Depart from evil, 2- do good, 3- seek peace, 4- pursue peace.

76. The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart (v18).

77. Shield, buckler (long shield) and spear (vv2+3).

78. David’s enemies are particularly those who want to be king instead of him. They predominantly come from Israel. Even members of his own family are against him.

79. The eyes (vv19+21) and the mouth (v21).

80. All the day long (v28).

81. He thinks concerning the ungodly: “There is no fear of God before his eyes” (v1).

82. It is infinitely great – immeasurable. That’s what is meant by “in the heavens” (v5).

83. From God (v9).

84. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5).

Answers Psalm

85. It will enter their own heart (v15).

86. “The wicked borrows and does not repay, but the righteous shows mercy and gives” (v21).

87. He has never seen a righteous person forsaken by God (v25). Actually: Once, God forsook a Righteous man for three hours – the Lord Jesus.

88. The blameless and upright man (v37).

89. It was his own sin (v4).

90. He confessed it (before God) and was sorry for it (in anguish over it) (v18).

91. With a muzzle (v1).

92. He compares human life to a vapour (v5) and man to a shadow (full of restlessness) (v6).

93. Verse 2.

94. The wonderful works of God and the sins of David can’t be counted (vv5+12).

95. He was betrayed by His own disciple, Judas.

Answers 1 Chronicles

1. In his days the earth was divided (shared out) (v19).

2. Abraham's concubine (v32).

3. In verse 48 (however, the man mentioned here is not the Israelite King Saul, but a King of Edom with the same name).

4. Mehetabel (v50).

5. David had six brothers and two sisters (vv13-16).

6. In the Book of Ruth.

7. Joshua 15 implies that she is a woman who can't get enough of the blessing of God (the Promised Land). An admirable attitude!

8. Kirjath-Jearim (1 Samuel 7:1-2), Bethlehem (Micah 5:1).

9. David has six sons in Hebron (v4).

10. Altogether 20 children (vv4-9); the children of the concubines are not listed.

11. He asks for four things: rich blessing – more land –

success – preservation from evil (v19).

12. They defeated the rest of the Amalekites (vv42-43).

13. They cry to God and trust Him. That's why God grants them victory (v20).

14. He didn't have to do anything: he had to be a descendant of Aaron to be a priest.

15. Azariah (v9).

16. Heman (v18), Asaph (v24), Ethan (v29).

17. Yes, all three: see for example Psalm 83, 88, 89.

18. Worship means bringing God something. The worship of the Israelites was marked by outwardly visible signs and actions (for example sacrifices). God had ordered everything in detail. Today, God especially wants to see an inward attitude pleasing to Him (John 4:23+24), a heart full of praise and thanks, to honour Him.

19. Hebron and Shechem.

20. 5 times, in verses 2, 5, 7, 9, 11.

21. Not much care was taken sometimes with regard to the maintenance of the registers which had been ordered by God. Therefore some lines are not known. This points to the spiritual weakness of the people.

22. Cain (Genesis 4:17).

23. Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah (Numbers 27:1).

24. 26,000 (v40).

25. Gibeon (v29).

26. They were mighty men of valour – archers – and had many sons and grandsons (v40).

27. Judah is taken captive to Babylon (v1).

28. Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh and Levi (vv3+14).

29. Eleazar = son; Phinehas = grandson. They are High Priests (Numbers 25:11).

Answers 1 Chronicles

30. The singers are occupied day and night and therefore also live directly in the rooms of the temple (v.33).

31. On Mount Gilboa (v1).

32. He commits suicide. He falls onto his own sword (vv4-5).

33. Jerusalem has not been conquered yet (v4).

34. Against 300 (v11).

35. He saves a piece of land from the Philistines and defeats these enemies (vv12-14).

36. This additional information shows us the difficult conditions under which the battle took place. It is not only important to God what we do, but also under what circumstances.

37. After Benaiah has conquered him with nothing more than a staff, he kills the Egyptian with his own spear (v23).

38. They have weapons for defence (shields) as well as weapons for attack (spears) (v8).

Answers 1 Chronicles

39. 347,822 people.

40. The people of Hebron are hospitable (v39). Those living nearby bring many food items: baked goods, wine, oil and meat (v40).

41. Uzza touches the Ark, which was forbidden; neither was it permitted to transport the Ark on a cart. The instruction was to carry the Ark with poles (Numbers 4:15).

42. Obed-Edom is blessed because the Ark is kept in his house for three months. For us this means that if the Lord Jesus 'lives' in our families, we will also experience God's blessing.

43. He sends messengers, cedar wood, masons and carpenters for the building of the temple (v1).

44. They are burnt with fire (v12).

45. The priests sanctify themselves before the start (v14). The Ark is carried on poles by the Levites (v15).

46. It is obvious that she is not interested at all in the Ark of the Covenant, and therefore Michal has no understanding of David's joy.

47. Harps, stringed instruments, cymbals and trumpets (v5).

48. No, he instructs Asaph and his brothers in it (v7). Furthermore, the whole psalm is an instruction to the whole people to praise God.

49. The covenant of God with Abraham (vv15-16) (Genesis 17:4).

50. Strength and gladness (v27).

51. In the morning and in the evening, so that it is a continual offering (v40).

52. The singers were to give thanks that God's mercy endures forever (v41).

53. David wants to build a house for God. He considers it inappropriate that he has a nice house for himself while the Ark

of the Covenant dwells in a tent (v1).

54. In short: God builds him a house (v10)!

55. With the words, "Who am I?" (v16).

56. Moses (Exodus 3:11).

57. Gold, bronze, silver (vv7+8+10).

58. Six men (vv15-17).

59. David wants to show his sympathy and wants to comfort Hanun because his father had died (v2).

60. 32,000 (v7).

61. Joab, together with a group of chosen soldiers, fights against the Syrians; the rest of the army fights against the Ammonites under Joab's brother, Abishai.

62. The Syrians make peace with David and become his servants. And they don't want to help the Ammonites any more (v19).

Answers 1 Chronicles

63. They are Philistines (vv4+8). (Gath was a city of the Philistines).

64. Great strength (v5), gigantically built and 24 fingers and toes (v6).

65. Joab omits the tribes of Levi and Benjamin (v6).

66. He doesn't choose a punishment but leaves the choice to God. But David asks that he would not be punished through men (v13).

67. 70,000 (v14).

68. David sees the angel above Jerusalem, between heaven and earth (v16).

69. David has waged many wars and shed much blood (v8). God wants His house to be built by a king of peace (Solomon – the peaceable one), who can devote himself in peace to the building (v9).

70. Solomon was to keep God's laws (v13).

71. As they don't have many sons, they are combined into one division (v11).

72. When the Israelites went through the Red Sea, they sang the first song that the Bible tells us about (Exodus 15).

73. No, they were ordinary Levites (v14).

74. In the morning and in the evening (v30).

75. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, belonged to the division of Abijah (Luke 1:5).

76. What is meant here are the 24 elders around the throne in heaven, who perform priestly service.

77. King David, the priests Zadok and Ahimelech, as well as the leaders of the priests and Levites (v31).

78. With harps, stringed instruments and cymbals (v1).

79. It takes around 5½ months.

80. Because God blessed him (v5).

81. Four times (vv6-9)

82. One is the temple treasure (v22), which consists of the holy utensils for the religious services. Then there was another treasure which contained the booty obtained in wars and was kept for the future building of the temple (vv26-27).

83. Samuel, who anointed Saul and David; King Saul.

84. He killed two lion-like heroes of Moab, one lion on a snowy day, and a giant from Egypt.

85. David had 12 “departments” – treasures, storehouses, workers in the field, vineyards, produce of the vineyards, olive and sycamore trees, stores of oil, cattle (1), cattle (2), camels, donkeys and flocks.

86. He was a wise man and a scribe (v32).

87. No, but because God had said that Solomon was going to become king (v5).

88. No, there are others who are especially engaged and gifted. Further, he can instruct

the leaders and all the people what to do (v21).

89. Gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, precious stones and marble (vv2+7+8).

90: 100,000 talents of gold, 1,000,000 talents of silver (chapter 22:14), 3,000 talents of gold from Ohpir, 7,000 talents of refined silver (v4), 5,000 talents of gold, 10,000 talents of silver, 18,000 talents of bronze, 100,000 talents of iron (v7). This adds up to 43,500 tons, which is more than the weight of a large cruise ship.

91. In public, before the eyes of the gathered Israelites (v10).

92. Uprightness and willingness (without being forced) (v17).

93. 3,000 animals are sacrificed as burnt offerings (v21).

94. David reigned for 40 years, seven of which were in Hebron and then 33 in Jerusalem (v27).



Answers 2 Chronicles

1. There was so much gold and silver in Jerusalem that it wasn't of any greater value than common stones.

2. Wisdom is characterised by the words: pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

3. God had given David clear instructions: "You shall not build a house for My name", because David was a man of war and had shed blood.

4. He ordered a skilful workman and the following materials: cedar, cypress and algum wood (vv6-8).

5. Hiram praises King Solomon and calls him a wise man endowed with prudence and understanding (v12).

6. 153,600 (v17).

7. The history of the threshing floor is reported in 1 Chronicles 21 and 2 Samuel 24. David had sinned and therefore the judgment of God came over the people. This judgment was stopped at the threshing

floor of Ornan, which David subsequently bought off Ornan.

8. The right pillar is called Jachin. This means "He will establish". The left pillar is called Boaz, meaning "In Him is strength" (v17).

9. There was one in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:31), and there are 10 in the temple (v7).

10. Verse 18 tells us that the weight of the bronze was not determined.

11. 1 Chronicles 25 describes in detail how David and the leaders put together the "orchestra".

12. In Ezekiel's vision, the glory of the LORD leaves the temple.

13. The Ark contains the tables of the law which Moses had put into it. You find this in Deuteronomy 10:5 and also in Hebrews 9:4.

14. In Exodus 20:1-17.

15. For example: Elijah (1 Kings 18:42), Daniel (Daniel

6:11), Paul (Ephesians 3:14), the Lord Jesus (Luke 22:41).

16. As Solomon mentions in his prayer, a desperate situation is generally the result of sin among the earthly people of God.

17. It was at the time of Elijah, when the people served Baal (1 Kings 17-18). It didn't rain for three and a half years.

18. Some conditions: to fear God and do His will, to abide in the Lord Jesus (to have fellowship with Him) and to have the Word of God abiding in you, so that your desires are according to His Word, and to believe that the Lord Jesus can do everything.

19. Romans 3:23.

20. The expression "the feast" probably means the Feast of Tabernacles, because it lasted seven days.

21. The part of the sentence of verse 6 "for His mercy endures forever" is repeated again and again in this psalm.

Answers 2 Chronicles

22. The people would be taken out of their homeland and the temple would be destroyed (v20).

23. Yes.

24. 2 Corinthians 6:14.

25. According to David's commandment (v14). He didn't only think about the building of the temple, but also about how the temple worship should be performed.

26. Part of the treasure in the house of God was booty obtained by David during his wars, which he had then put at God's disposal.

27. Solomon's wisdom, the house, the food, the servants and their clothing and Solomon's ascent to the temple (vv3-4).

28. She calls these people "happy" (v7). The Lord Jesus calls His disciples (and all of us) who can hear His words "blessed" (same word as "happy"), but how much more happy or blessed are we than those who heard only Solomon's words.

Answers 2 Chronicles

29. He attributes the building of the house to God and makes it clear that the success of this project depends on God.

30. Of ivory, covered with gold (v17).

31. Idolatry, which has to be judged by God, is the reason for what happens here. God promises Jeroboam that he will be king over the 10 tribes. But all in all, it is God's judgment.

32. He means that he would discipline them with especially painful knotted whips as punishment for their crimes.

33. Deuteronomy 17:17 tells us that a king should not have many wives. But that's just what Rehoboam did, as did David and Solomon before him.

34. The Levites received cities in the areas of the other tribes. Therefore, they were scattered all over Israel.

35. A humble person takes the position a man has before God. Those who humble themselves recognise that they

have left this position and that they would like to take it again.

36. Shemaiah is called a prophet (v5).

37. Abijah doesn't ask after God's plans and thoughts, but goes immediately to battle against the northern kingdom. He seems to know very well what is wrong with the northern kingdom. He is certainly right in this, but maybe not everything is in order in his own kingdom either.

38. In Exodus 32, when Moses received the tablets of the law on Mount Sinai.

39. For example Joshua in Joshua 8.

40. It is mentioned especially that Abijah's sayings are written down (v22).

41. His army is about half the size of that of Zerah. This would have meant his defeat had God not intervened.

42. ... enemies of God. This is very clear from verse 10.

43. They should: 1. Be with God, 2. Seek God, 3. Not forsake God, 4. Work and not be weary. God will: 1. Be with him/them, 2. Be found by them, 3. Not forsake them, 4. Give them a reward for their work (vv2+7).

44. By swearing an oath a person gives extra weight to what they have said. God wants everything we say to be true and not needing special confirmation.

45. The key verse is verse 9! God will be with those who rely only on Him and expect Him to show His strength on their behalf.

46. Asa suffers from an illness on his feet. He goes from one physician to another but doesn't ask what God wants to tell him through the illness (v12).

47. The neighbouring countries of the southern kingdom recognise the power and strength of Jehoshaphat and therefore don't start a war (v10). The Philistines and Arabs pay tribute (v11). The might and

Answers 2 Chronicles

wealth of Jehoshaphat grow (vv5+12).

48. Jehoshaphat allies himself with Ahab by marriage (v1). His son Jehoram marries a daughter of Ahab.

49. Very strongly. He says to Ahab: "I am as you are, and my people as your people; we will be with you in the war" (v3).

50. You would have expected Jehoshaphat to take God's warning through Micaiah seriously, but sadly Jehoshaphat considers other things more important in this situation.

51. He only got bread and water (v26).

52. For example, the Lord Jesus Himself in Matthew 26:64-68.

53. All should act faithfully and with a loyal heart. They should also be impartial and not take bribes. To act according to God's commandments – that's most important to Jehoshaphat.

Answers 2 Chronicles

54. The seer Hanani comes to visit Asa in chapter 16. He is the father of Jehu (v2).

55. Yes, God had said explicitly that they should spare these nations because they were related to them, being descendants of Lot.

56. To seek God means to ask what God wants – i.e., not to push your own ideas but to do God's will, observe His commandments and follow His direction.

57. God commands Jehoshaphat and the people not to fight, but to see how God fights for them (v17). While they advance on the enemy, they make a joyful noise and sing praises (vv21-22).

58. God fights the battle by confusing the enemy so that they were fighting against each other. The people were to stand still and watch God defeat the enemy.

59. Other countries become afraid of Israel and leave them in peace (vv29-30).

60. He allies himself again with an ungodly king of Israel (vv35-37 to chapter 18:1).

61. Because a daughter of Ahab was his wife (v6).

62. Jehoram loses: his possessions, his family, his health and finally his life (as a result of his disease).

63. Joash is saved from certain death by his aunt Jehoshabeath, who hides him and his nurse in a bedroom.

64. Because the line of David would be broken – the line leading up to Christ, the Son of David.

65. Because God had determined that this should be so. The sons of David were to rule (v3).

66. He is a priest (v14).

67. They both meet a cruel end.

68. A chest is used and it is placed outside the door of the temple (v8).

69. He is given the honour of being buried with the kings of Israel. Jehoiada has done much good in his life for Israel, God and His house (vv15-16).

70. Rehoboam listened to the advice of the young ones and the consequence was the division of Israel into northern and southern kingdoms (chapter 10).

71. Epaphras prays that his brothers and sisters should stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

72. Amaziah does what is right in the eyes of God, but not with an undivided heart. That's his mistake (v2).

73. Jehoshaphat also joined himself to Israel, in that case with King Ahab (chapter 18).

74. Amaziah doesn't listen to the message which God gave to him through a prophet. He follows his own plan (v16).

75. Because they sought the gods of Edom (v20).

Answers 2 Chronicles

76. Near Beth-Shemesh (v21).

77. Uzziah destroys the walls of Gath, Jabneh and Ashdod (v6). (See the map with additional information on 2 Chronicles.)

78. Uzziah is occupied with working the land (v10).

79. Korah and some other men wanted to perform the service of the priests, although they weren't priests. They were swallowed up by the earth before the eyes of everyone (Numbers 16). Saul: not his son, but David becomes king after him (1 Samuel 13:12-14).

80. The law of the leper – according to this law, a leper had to live outside of society (Leviticus 13-14).

81. None!

82. He doesn't consider these commandments of God. On the contrary: He does exactly what God had forbidden His people from doing (vv2-4).

Answers 2 Chronicles

83. Ahaz gives the temple treasures to the king of Assyria. 2 Kings 16 tells you why: He wants to bribe him to fight against his enemy, the king of Syria.

84. The Lord Jesus says it to the church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:20).

85. Zechariah is also his grandfather (the father of his mother Abijah) (v1).

86. He wants to make a covenant with God (v10).

87. The last mention of joy was in chapter 20:27 (Jehoshaphat). So you have read nothing about joy in 8 chapters (21-28).

88. James 5:13, or Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16.

89. On the 14th day of the first month (Exodus 12:2+6).

90. It is celebrated in the second month (v2), as God allowed in some exceptional circumstances.

91. Yes (v20).

92. King Jeroboam set up golden calves in Bethel and Dan, a kind of substitute sanctuary.

93. Hezekiah first of all gives something himself (the part of the king) (v3) and is therefore a good example to the people.

94. In both cases there is a lot leftover. In Exodus 36, the Israelites even had to be told to stop giving.

95. Asa (14:1), Jehoshaphat (17:3-4), Joash (24:2), Amaziah (25:2), Uzziah (26:4), Jotham (27:2) and Hezekiah (29:2).

96. Three times (2 Kings 18, here, and Isaiah 36). It can be implied that the story of Hezekiah is especially important.

97. He tells him that he is coming to him in the name of the LORD of Hosts. He means that Goliath is not fighting against him but against God Whom He had mocked.

98. Hezekiah and Isaiah pray together to God and cry out to heaven (v20).

99. He gets well again and is permitted to live for another 15 years. As a confirmation of this promise, God makes the shadow on the sundial of Ahaz go back by 10 degrees (2 Kings 20:11 and Isaiah 38:8).

100. Ahaz (chapter 28:3).

101. God acts by allowing Manasseh to be taken into captivity by the Assyrian king (v11).

102. Amon is no better than his father. Sadly, unlike his father, he does not turn back from his evil way.

103. 31 years. – He only lives to be 39 years old.

104. The house of God had to be repaired. Josiah assigns the job to Shaphan, Maaseiah, and Joah (v8).

105. They do everything in the way that it is expected of them (vv16-17).

106. He makes a covenant before the LORD for the people (v31).

Answers 2 Chronicles

107. Yes, during the time of his reign (v33)! This of course doesn't mean that all Israelites are converted. For many this service is merely outward. But at least they don't serve idols any more.

108. 1 Corinthians 5:7.

109. The mourning for Josiah is very intense (vv24-25).

110. The donkey on which Balaam was riding tried three times to avoid the angel of the LORD. Only then did Balaam recognise that the angel of the LORD was the reason for the stubbornness of his donkey. – God can step into people's paths in unusual ways and communicate His thoughts to them!

111. The first step would have been to take the message God gave through His prophets seriously and to return to God (vv12-13).

112. So that Jeremiah's prophecy is fulfilled (v22).

1. He was king (v1).
2. "There is nothing new under the sun" (v9).
3. Solomon arrives at the conclusion that the pursuit of pleasure is not of lasting value (v11). Enjoyment of pleasures is of little profit to men (v2) and gives joy for only a short time.
4. The result of work is only sorrow, burden and restless nights for his heart (v23).
5. No, because the conclusion of the Preacher is based on human wisdom. Life is more than eating, drinking and temporal pleasures (Luke 12:28-21).
6. Eternity (v11).
7. Solomon emphasises the advantages of fellowship and partnership. Suppression, injustice and loneliness are easier to bear together. – Christians may enjoy fellowship with each other and with the Lord Jesus in all of life's circumstances.

8. A Christian marriage needs three persons: the Lord Jesus, the husband and the wife. In this sense, marriage is a threefold cord, providing something to hold onto in life.

9. The messenger of God is the priest.

10. A king who works the land (v8). He does something that's productive for his country, while someone who doesn't do that only lives in the pockets of the citizens of his land. The result of this is described in verse 7.

11. They can't get enough of it and want more and more (v9).

12. According to Solomon, a stillborn child has more rest (v5) – not the stress and frustration of such a man.

13. Man should be content with what he has.

14. When faced with death, people start thinking – and everyone should start thinking early about the end of their life, with a view to drawing the right

conclusions. That's the most important thing in life!

15. He doesn't think much of such comparisons. They are not wise (v10).

16. The sense of this verse is taken up in Romans 3:10-12. The third chapter of the letter to the Romans explains that every man is evil, through and through.

17. It points to the Lord Jesus.

18. Man is responsible before God for his life. God will pronounce a judgment on the life of every human being.

19. Over the day of death (v8).

20. One reason is that they are not punished sooner for their evil deeds (v11).

21. Evil and madness (v3).

22. What is meant is the day when a person must die.

23. Wisdom is better than weapons (v18).

24. "The building decays, and ... the house leaks" (v18). This means that through laziness things are destroyed with time, like a house that decays if it is not maintained. The same principle can be transferred to a friendship for example: If it is not maintained, it will wane and in the end break down!

25. The "way of the wind", or how a baby grows in the womb of his mother (v5).

26. The time after death.

27. This verse gives an important clue that Solomon wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes, although he is nowhere else mentioned by name as its author.

1. Daniel – Belteshazzar, Hananiah – Shadrach, Mishael – Meshach, Azariah – Abed-Nego. A name gives you an identity. The four Jews were in danger of not feeling part of the Jewish nation and of their relationship to God being impaired. – Something else: If someone gives someone a new name he shows that he is in charge of the other person's life. In a positive sense, this is true of God: He did so with Jacob (Genesis 32:28), and He will also do it in the future (Revelation 2:17).

2. They are noble, healthy, good looking, educated and able to work (vv3-4). Nebuchadnezzar was therefore interested in having them work in his administration. – God gives you abilities, which can be enhanced through good training. You have to face the decision whether you want to use your abilities for God or for the world (of which Babylon is an illustration).

3. Daniel speaks to his superior clearly yet emphatically, and points out that the royal food would defile him (v8). –

You can learn from this in the way you deal with people who present you with something that would defile you (spiritually). It is always worth it to be consistent with the help of God (vv9-13).

4. God helps the four young men so that they are able to know, understand and apply the historical, political, legal and religious writings of the Chaldeans, as well as their language (chapter 1:4) (vv17-20). In addition, Daniel receives understanding for all visions and dreams (v17).

5. Little or nothing. He believes they tell only lies, until time passes and something happens that they can claim to be the fulfilment of their foretelling (vv8-9).

6. No. God has told us everything we need to know in His Word.

7. So that he could pray together with his friends and to wait for God's answer.

8. According to the occult counsellors, no man can reveal dreams, but only "the gods"

(chapter 2:11). The first part of the statement is true, but the second isn't. Daniel knows that it is God Who reveals secrets (vv28-29).

9. That's in Matthew 21:44. – The Lord Jesus points out there that no one can withstand Him successfully. Those who don't accept Him as Saviour today will be eternally lost.

10. He worships Daniel (v46) (that of course goes too far). It is better that he recognises Daniel's God as the true God (v47). He doesn't speak of his Babylonian god Marduk. And he promotes Daniel to be ruler over the province of Babylon as well as to the position of highest counsellor (v48).

11. Suggestion: Whether God will save us or not is not up for debate – we won't serve your gods. We are convinced that He will save us, but that's not the point: You must know that we will never worship your image.

12. Yes, certainly. Of course, we must obey governments and authorities (Romans 13:1ff). But

if they demand something that is directly against God's will, we must obey God more (Acts 5:29). That's the case here.

13. God has created every person with a body that cannot withstand fire and is destroyed. As Creator, God can overrule these laws of nature at any time He wishes.

14. God can still work miracles today, as much as then, and it pleases Him when Christians believe this. However, the time when God accompanied the spread of His Word "systematically" with signs and wonders is now past – this belonged to the time of the apostles (Mark 16:20). But this doesn't prevent God from working miracles on a personal level. Isn't every conversion a miracle in itself?

15. You read in verse 4 that Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in his house. Then he is suddenly afraid and troubled (v5). The reason for this is the dream that God sent him. God wants to challenge him about his relationship with Himself. Those

who rest on their laurels and don't count on God count wrong (Luke 12:16-21). But God does not leave these people in peace.

16. It is God (v17) (chapter 2:21). It doesn't matter whether a dictator believes he has taken over power himself; whether a king thinks he is in his position because of his ancestry; or whether a chancellor or president has been elected by the people – what you see at the front of the political stage happens in accordance with Romans 13:1: All government is instituted by God.

17. Nebuchadnezzar needs to recognise that God the Most High rules over the kingdoms of men and gives it to whoever He wants and sets over it the lowest of men (chapter 4:17). If Nebuchadnezzar considers himself to be the greatest, he will be humbled (Luke 18:14).

18. God often announces judgment, discipline or punishment beforehand, so that people start thinking and change their behaviour. It may be that God will not allow what

He has announced to happen! It's the same here. Daniel has recognised that and gives the king the good advice to repent.

19. Nebuchadnezzar is right to confirm that God is almighty and sovereign. No one can stop Him doing something, and He doesn't have to give account to anyone. In that sense, whole nations are like "a drop in a bucket" and "as nothing" (Isaiah 40:15+17). On the other hand, God cares about people, and He wants the best for everyone, small and great (1 Timothy 2:4). He also cared for Nebuchadnezzar.

20. It seems yes. At least he recognises God's authority, praises, extols and honours Him (vv34-37). He may still speak of his own glory and splendour (v36), but these are factual items which God has given him (again). What is important is the lesson that God puts down those "who walk in pride" (v37) – as he has experienced.

21. Dishes, cups, bowls and pitchers. All were made of gold. There were no vessels of

silver in the temple (contrary to what Belshazzar thought – v2), that's why only the gold ones were brought (v3). They were used to bring offerings to God, especially the drink offering. To be a heathen and to drink from them was blasphemy, which God punished.

22. Galatians 6:7 says: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked".

23. You can put the death of the Lord Jesus on the other side of the balance. He has fulfilled God's righteous demands – instead of you.

24. What is true for Belshazzar is also true for you. God gives life and sustains your life; you are dependent on Him for your entire existence (1 Timothy 4:10). God is also Lord over your life and wants you to act according to His will in every situation and concerning any decision (Ephesians 2:10).

25. Since chapter 1, more than 60 years have passed. Daniel is now approximately 80 years old. His character remains

the same: Then and now, he lives for God. No outside influences can stop him from doing what he believes is right before God.

26. Suggestion: He prays three times a day, not "just a few words" but on his knees. He brings requests before God, but also maintains fellowship with his great God in praising Him. He is looking towards what is important to God (at that time Jerusalem: for Christians today it is God's assembly, the church).

27. A suggestion: Daniel first of all emphasises that God has protected him because he is innocent. This is the first and most important thought. He also adds that he has not done anything wrong towards the king either. Daniel's first concern is to be clear before God, and then, if possible, also before his bosses (chapter 1:11-13 and 2:14-16). Christians should also provide for "honourable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (2 Corinthians 8:21).

28. Hebrews 11:33. Read the next verse as well, and you will “recognise” Daniel’s friends.

29. The Lord Jesus, Who calls Himself the Son of Man (for example Matthew 16:13).

30. Of the judgment at the great white throne. Books are also opened there (Revelation 20:11-15).

31. At first He will allow him to continue. This will be a terrible time, in which Satan will have enormous influence through this king together with the Antichrist. Power will be given to him to rule for 3½ years (that is the “time and times and half a time”, the second half of the seven year period of tribulation.) At the end the Lord Jesus will Himself intervene and destroy them.

32. Daniel was very troubled (vv15+28). How about you? Of course, it is frightening to have this view into the future. Many terrible things are seen. But at the same time, you have no reason to be scared if you belong to the Lord Jesus Who will be

the Victor in the end. Then you will not experience the time of tribulation. It is sad if you are still on the wrong side – you will end up in the lake of fire, together with the last king of Rome, the Antichrist and Satan himself (Revelation 20:10+15).

33. For example, both bear and ram are described as mighty and powerful. The ram has two great horns of different size, because the empire consists of Medes and Persians, and the Persian people are more influential than the (older) Medes; for the same reason the bear rises up on one side (the Persian).

34. For example: the leopard with his wings, and the male goat which doesn’t touch the earth when running, are both a picture of the speed with which Alexander the Great would conquer the world then known to the Chaldeans. The four heads of the leopard correspond to the four horns of the male goat. After the death of Alexander, his empire would be split into four.

35. No one can answer that. The prophecy refers to the “time of the end” which has not started yet. The prophetic clock has stopped ticking for the time being, until the rapture of believers.

36. Righteousness (vv7+14+16) and mercy (vv9+18). On the one hand Daniel recognises that the judgment the people experienced (captivity in Babylon) is righteous, because the people had always sinned and proved themselves before the prophets to be unwilling to learn. On the other hand he is aware of the prophecy that God will be gracious after 70 years and he counts on God’s mercy. The way to forgiveness is to confess the sin and to repent.

37. He continues: “Your city and Your people are called by Your name” (Isaiah 43:6-7). He wants to have a people for His glory again, not one that dishonours Him through their sins. – Have you ever thought about it that every public sin of a Christian dishonours God, and

that this dishonour remains until he openly repents?

38. We know from earlier chapters that Daniel is generally faithful and God-fearing. In the context of this chapter God rejoices that Daniel displays a similar feeling to that of God with regard to the weight of the guilt of the people, identifies himself with the sins of the people and repents, so that God’s rights are re-established.

39. The things that are similar are the shining, searching eyes; the golden girdle; the feet as of brass; the shining face and the overwhelming voice, at the sound of which the person He speaks to falls to the ground.

40. Yes, you can conclude from these verses that there is a connection between the invisible spirit world (according to Hebrews 1:14, angels are spirits) and the visible world. We don’t need to know any more because God doesn’t tell us any more.

41. It’s the empire of Alexander the Great, which was divided amongst his generals

(and not his descendants) after his death (chapter 8:21-22).

42. After King Cyrus came Cambyses, Smerdis, Darius I and in the end Xerxes I, the fourth king. He was very rich and started a great campaign against Greece, which ended in 333BC with a serious defeat at Issos. The Book of Esther speaks about him; there he is called Ahasuerus (Esther 1:1). He took Esther as his wife.

43. 2 Peter 1:21.

44. Because God has reserved judgment on these arch enemies of the people of Israel through Israel themselves.

45. 3½ years, the second half of the tribulation period, is 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6). Then the Antichrist and the king of the Roman Empire will be put away. The King of the North will also have to be conquered, maybe only after another month (1,290 days, v11). 1,335 days go by until the kingdom is finally established (v12).

1. God gave the Revelation to the Lord Jesus to show His servants things which must shortly take place (v1).

2. If anyone reads or hears the words of this book and keeps them in their heart, they are

called “blessed”.

3. The Lord Jesus is coming again (v7).

4. John sees the Lord Jesus in the midst of seven golden lampstands (v13).

5. John was to write what he saw and what the Lord Jesus would still show him (v19).

6. The Lord Jesus rebukes Ephesus because they have left their first love (v4).

7. The Lord Jesus would take their lampstand away. They would then no longer be a witness for Him (v5).

8. The time of suffering will last 10 days, i.e. a time limited by God. The martyrs are promised to receive the “crown of life” (v10).

9. Antipas was a faithful witness for his Lord. He was murdered because of it (v13).

10. The hidden manna, a white stone and a new name (v17).

11. The coming again of the Lord Jesus (“... till I come”).

12. The works of Sardis are not perfect (v2).

13. The names will not be blotted out of the Book of Life – eternal security.

14. The door which the Lord Jesus opens, no one can shut.

15. Philadelphia is to hold fast what they have until the coming of the Lord Jesus, so that no one will take their crown.

16. According to the Lord’s judgment they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked (v17).

17. Gold, white garments and eye salve (v18).

18. The Lord Jesus is standing outside and is knocking. Is there still someone

there who will open the door for Him? (v20).

19. The 24 elders are sitting on thrones, having white garments and golden crowns (v4). They fall down before Him Who sits on the throne, cast their crowns before Him and worship Him (v10).

20. The elders (the believers) sing, whereas the angels speak. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that angels sing. Singing is the privilege of the redeemed.

21. The number is 144,000 (v4).

22. An innumerable multitude (v9).

23. God will ensure that the memory of all the difficulties they have experienced and have shed tears over will not burden or trouble them any more.

24. First trumpet: hail, fire and blood are thrown onto the earth (v7); second trumpet: a great mountain falls into the sea (v8-9); third trumpet: the star "Wormwood" falls from heaven (vv10-11); fourth trumpet: the

third part of sun, moon and stars is struck (v12).

25. He announces a threefold woe. The following judgments will therefore exceed what has gone before (v13).

26. The strength of the locusts is in their tails (v10); the strength of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails (v19).

27. The cloud (points to divine presence); the rainbow (the sign of God's faithfulness with regard to His covenant); His face like the sun and feet like pillars of fire (chapter 1:12-16).

28. He had to take the book out of the hand of the angel and eat it (vv8-9).

29. They bear resemblance to Elijah, who also destroyed his enemies by fire and who caused the rain to stop, and to Moses, who changed water into blood.

30. The city of Jerusalem is compared to Sodom (because of their corruption and sin) as well as Egypt (because of their proud independence from God) (v8).

31. The child is caught up into heaven (v5).

32. The great dragon, the old serpent, the devil, Satan (v9).

33. The context points to the number being the number of the first beast, because it is the Roman dictator who has political and economic power. The second beast, the Antichrist, is busy in the religious sphere and dependent on the first beast.

34. He calls them power, signs and lying wonders.

35. The 144,000 in verse 1 bear the name of the Lamb (the Lord Jesus) and that of His Father on their foreheads. The ungodly in verse 9 bear the mark of the beast on their forehead or on their hand.

36. In chapter 5:8: They sing a new song. In chapter 14:2-3: They also sing a new song. In chapter 15:2-3: They sing the song of Moses (the first song in the Bible; Exodus 15) and the song of the Lamb (from the last book of the Bible).

37. The first bowl is poured onto the earth, and therefore onto the people who have worshipped the beast (v2).

38. The fifth bowl is poured onto the throne of the beast. The result is that the domain of darkness becomes even darker (v10).

39. The River Euphrates dries up, and this prepares the way for armies to come to the battle of Armageddon.

40. There was a loud voice from heaven saying "It is done!" (v17)

41. She drinks from a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication, and she drinks the blood of martyrs. She gets drunk on that. That means: She is intoxicated by the persecution of believers.

42. They will wage war against the Lamb, i.e. against the Lord Jesus (v14). But no one stands a chance against the Lord of lords and King of kings.

43. God commands His people to leave this sinful system (v4).

44. Babylon will be burnt by fire (vv8-9).

45. Babylon shall not be found any more (v21).

46. The voice is like the voice of a great multitude and sounds like the sound of many waters and the sound of mighty thunderings.

47. The angel stops John worshipping him and says: "Worship God!" (v10). Only God has a right to be worshipped.

48. They will reign with Christ for 1,000 years (v4).

49. They are not (yet) made alive. That will happen only after 1,000 years – for judgment, because the only people who are still dead at this time are unbelievers (v5).

50. Satan deceives the nations "in the four corners of the earth" (Gog and Magog); they are as numerous as the sand of the sea, i.e. an

innumerable great number from the whole world (v8).

51. "Books" will be opened, in which the actions of everyone are recorded, and also the "Book of Life" (v12). The Book of Life is "negative proof", because none of the people before the great white throne will be listed in it.

52. There will be no more tears, death, sorrow, crying or pain (v4).

53. The lot of the unbelievers is also called "the second death" (eternal separation from God) (v8).

54. Three gates are facing east, three south, three west and three north (v13).

55. The gates are made from one pearl each (v21).

56. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (v27).

57. The tree is positioned on both sides of the river, it bears fruit every month and its leaves are for the healing of the nations (v2).

58. John falls down before the angel's feet and wants to worship him (v8).

59. The angel stops him and commands him to "Worship God" (v9).

60. The Lord Jesus calls Himself: the Alpha and Omega; the First and the Last; the Beginning and the End (v13); the Root and Offspring of David; the Bright and Morning star (v16).

61. The bride prays: "Come!" (v17)

62. No one is allowed to add anything to or take anything from the Bible, the Word of God.

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