

PRAISE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
of LOS ANGELES

2024:
The Year of Vision & ProVision

**BIBLE STUDIES RELATED
TO THE SUNDAY SERMON SCHEDULE**

Prepared By
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Updated 5/11/24

INTRODUCTION TO 2024 AS "THE YEAR OF VISION & PROVISION"

THEME VERSES FOR 2024

- **Habakkuk 2:2** → "Write down the vision & make it plain, so that the one who is to proclaim it may run."
- **Ephesians 1:18** → "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people..."

FIVE YEARS OF PURPOSE (2021-2025)

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE." (Romans 8:28)

- **2021 – The Year of Purpose** / **Exodus 9:16**, "But I have raised you up **for this very purpose**, that I might show you My power & that My Name might be proclaimed in all the earth."
- **2022 – The Year of Patience** / **James 1:4**, "Let **patience** produce its perfect work, so that you may be mature & complete, lacking nothing."
- **2023 – The Year of Perseverance** / **Hebrews 10:36**, "You need to **persevere** so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised."
- **2024 – The Year of ProVision & Vision** / **Proverbs 29:18**, "Without **VISION** [revelation], the people roam wild, but the one who keeps to God's Word is bound to be blessed [**PROVISION**]."

ON "VISION & PROVISION"

This year's theme calls us to consider how God's purpose for us is conveyed to us by His Holy Spirit in such ways that we have a clear **vision** of who He is, what He wants, & what He calls us to do (see Ephesians 1), and also so that we are **provisioned** (equipped, enabled, & enfranchised) to carry out what He calls us to do (our commission / Matthew 28:19-20) in obedience to the ways that He wills (our discipleship / Matthew 16:24-27; John 8:31-32; 1 Peter 1:13-25) for our mutual maturation & growth as the Body Christ (our sanctification / Ephesians 4:11-16; Col 1:28-29) so that we become increasingly more reflective of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:16-18; 1 John 3:1-3).

It is important to note that in this process, PROVISION refers to any & all material & palpable resources that may be truly useful & necessary for us to fulfill our call & live a godly life. Yet these resources come to us according to God's will, on God's terms. Often a *lack* of resource in the natural produces opportunity for some of the greatest miracle manifestations of God's supernatural resource (for instance, consider Jesus' feedings of the multitudes in the Gospels; Elijah & the widow of Zarephath [1 Kings 17:7-16] or Elisha & the widow with the jar of oil [2 Kings 4:1-7]; the prophet's inspired message in Habakkuk 3:17-19; or Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10). "**Provision,**" then, **may be best thought of as "Pro + Vision," as in whatever effectively affirms, aids, augments, and actualizes God's plan & purpose (i.e. His vision) in our lives & in our world at a given time.**

In summary, it is God's stated purpose & promise that we should know (*have the VISION*) that He exists & is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb 11:6). He, through this divine power (the Holy Spirit) gives us everything we need (*the PROVISION*) to live according to this truth (2 Pet 1:3-4) & to share it powerfully with others (Mark 16:17-18; Matthew 16:18-19; Luke 12:11-12; 24:45-49; John 14:12-14; 15:1-8, 26-27; Acts 1:80), standing strong against the spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6:10-18) and standing firm in the things of God & His holy Kingdom (Hebrews 10:19-25).

USING THIS BIBLE STUDY

Over the next fifty-two weeks of this year, our weekly Sunday preaching subject matter covers a diverse range of scriptural passages & subjects. Yet nearly all of these sermon series & teachings will also reflect strongly on **our main themes of purpose, vision & provision**. This devotional provides discussion questions that can be used by a group or individuals for exploring further in each week's Sunday sermon texts & subjects.

For every other day of the week (Mon-Sat), additional Bible readings & reflection questions are provided so as to go deeper in discovering connections in the Word & applications in the world for what the Lord is revealing to us of His will. Reading, discussing, & continually meditating on the teaching of the Word helps each of us to mature further in the faith personally & collectively.

2024 SERMON SERIES

NOTE: *This schedule is subject to change. It does not include all topics for guest speakers, etc. The titles & topics provided are for the English and combined services but in many instances may be used for the Tagalog service messages, as well.*

- **Dec. 31, 2023–Feb. 4, 2024 / *The Year of Vision & ProVision***
- **Feb. 11–Mar. 17 / *The Days of David (Vol. 3): Final Days – The Reign of David***
- **Mar. 24–31 / [PASSION WEEK] *The Provision of the Passion: An Easter Sermon Series***
- **Apr. 7–Oct. 27 / *Visions of the Prophets***
- **Nov. 3–27 / *Psalms of Thanksgiving: Provision & Praise***
- **Dec. 1–24 / [ADVENT] *The Candles of Christmas: Vision for Advent & Provision from Christ***

THIS DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET WILL BE UPDATED AS THE YEAR PROGRESSES. PRESENTLY IT CONTAINS STUDIES FOR WEEKS 1-20 (for the period Jan. 1–May 18).

UPDATED: 5/11/24 (CRH)

SERMON SERIES (in six parts)
2024: THE YEAR OF VISION & PROVISION
DECEMBER 31 (2023) – FEBRUARY 4

DECEMBER (2023)

- 12/31 –Pt 1: “Pursuing God’s Vision: The Purpose of God” (Prov 29:18)

JANUARY

- 1/07 (Combined Communion Service) – Pt 2: “Receiving God’s ProVision: The Spirit of God” (Hos 4:1-7; Zech 4:1-14; Rev 1:10-20; 11:3-12)
- 1/14 (MLK Jr. WKND) – Pt 3: “The PURPOSE of Vision & ProVision: To See Beyond Sight” (2 Cor 5:1-19)
- 1/21 – Pt 4: “The PATIENCE of Vision & ProVision: To Follow ‘Blindly’” (Matt 15:7-20; Ps 119:100-105; John 9:1-5, 39-41)
- 1/28 – Pt 5: “The PERSEVERANCE of Vision & ProVision: To Tarry As We Carry On” (Hab 2:1-4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:8-14; Heb 10:35-39)

FEBRUARY

- 2/04 –Pt 6: “The PROVISION of Vision: To Flow in the Stream of God’s Spirit” (2 Pet 1:1-11)

WEEK ONE (December 31 — January 6)
PREACHING: “Pursuing God’s Vision: The PURPOSE of God”
READ THE TEXT – PROVERBS 29:18

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Vision is one of the basic five human senses granted us by the Creator. God did not grant vision to all living things (e.g. plants don’t have sight & neither do many creatures, such as certain moles, insects, snakes, sea life, etc.). Why do you think God gave human beings sight? (Consider your answer in light of Genesis 1:27 saying God made us in His image.) Why is physical sight important to you? How can you give glory to God for your physical vision today?

2. The word “vision” is commonly used in a metaphorical sense in most languages to describe “conceptual sight,” that is, the capacity to perceive and understand not only visual stimuli but also abstract ideas, and the ability to conceive of constructs for planning and achieving creative goals. “Vision” is often used this way in the Word of God, too, and there is great overlap between literal visual sight, spiritual visions of signs & symbols, and conceptual conveyance of ideas and plans. Why do you think visual sight and spiritual insight are tied together in this way? How does this inform your understanding of what God is doing in your life and in our church today?

3. Considering your answers above, how would you describe spiritual blindness, or the inability to see what God is doing or showing to His people in a spiritual context?

4. In John 9:39-41, Jesus describes the Pharisees not only as blind but also as ignorant of their blindness. How could someone be spiritually blind and yet *think* that they have spiritual insight (as the Pharisees apparently did)? How can you avoid this mistake?

5. In light of Sunday’s sermon & your own reading, how would you state Proverbs 28:19 in your own words? How would you explain its meaning to someone unfamiliar with the verse?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 1/01	Joel 2:1-32	Why do you think God grants visions to His people (see v. 28)?
Tue. 1/02	Acts 2:1-47	Why did Peter say that Joel 2 was being fulfilled on this Day of Pentecost (v. 16) & how did he know that?
Wed. 1/03	Habakkuk 2:1-20	How does the Lord in this chapter answer the prophet Habakkuk’s question as to why God tolerates wicked people (see Hab 1:12-17)?
Thu. 1/04	Jeremiah 29:1-23	God’s promise to His people of “a future & a hope” (v.11) comes in the middle of His telling them also to be prepared for hardships. Why is this important, and how might it relate to what God is saying to you today?
Fri. 1/05	Acts 1:3-8	The disciples saw the resurrected Jesus many times in the 40 days following His resurrection (vv.3-4). Why is their literal seeing Him in His bodily form important? Why is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit essential to their (and our) being “[His] witnesses” (v.8)?
Sat. 1/06	Ephesians 1:1-23	In vv. 17-18, Paul says that he prays that we may see by the Holy Spirit “the hope of [God’s] calling [&] the riches of His inheritance.” How can you receive more of this vision & understanding from the Holy Spirit today?

WEEK TWO (January 7 — 13)
PREACHING: “Receiving God’s ProVision: The SPIRIT of God”
READ THE TEXTS – HOSEA 4:1-7; ZECH 4:1-14; REV 1:10-20; 11:3-12

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Considering Hosea 4:1-7 and this week’s preaching, how do you think that the lack of spiritual knowledge and understanding among people can contribute to negative impacts in the world around us, including animal life and the ecological state of the land and sea?
2. Hosea 4:1-7 also suggests that violence and social crises increase as a result of spiritual blindness (i.e. rejection of God and ignorance of His word and ways). How does this inform our understanding of the violence and social problems we presently see increasing in our society? How does it guide us in terms of how we respond to that violence and crisis?
3. The name of the prophet Zechariah means “YaHWeH remembers” (YaHWeH being the covenant Name of God meaning “I AM that I AM”). Why is it important that God remembers? How does this affect our understanding of how to live?
4. What does it mean to you when God says that He accomplishes His miraculous works through His chosen people “not by might nor by power but by My Spirit” (Zech 4:6)? How is the power of the Holy Spirit at work in you to accomplish God’s works through your life today?
5. In both Zechariah 4 and Revelation 11 (as well as other locations in Scripture), the image of an olive tree is used to symbolize God’s people. Why do you think the Lord uses this particular symbol? What is the significance of there being *two* olive trees in both of these chapters? What significance do you see in the Zechariah passage being in the Old Testament while the Revelation passage is in the New Testament?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 1/08	Hosea 1:1-11	Why do you think God wanted the prophet Hosea to marry “a promiscuous woman” (v.2)? What do the children born to Hosea & Gomer & the names God gives them tell you about God’s relationship to His people?
Tue. 1/09	Hosea 2:1-23	Imagine the words in this chapter were being said by God to our nation today? How best could we respond to what God says here?
Wed. 1/10	Hosea 3:1-5	What does this chapter teach us about forgiveness, grace, & mercy? How can it be applied in your life & relationships today?
Thu. 1/11	Hosea 4:1-19	How does your reading of the first three chapters of Hosea this week inform your understanding of what God says in Hosea 4? How can we help others around us hear from the Lord & to be open to His words?
Fri. 1/12	Ezra 5:1-17	This chapter describes the process by which Zerubbabel & the people of Judah successfully rebuilt the Temple of God despite enemies & opposition, just as the Lord had promised through the prophet in Zechariah 4 in this week’s sermon. What parallels can you see in terms of how God has helped you in your life?
Sat. 1/13	Ezra 6:1-22	Why did the people dedicate the rebuilt Temple to God with animal sacrifices (v.17)? What does this chapter’s final verse (v.22) tell us about God’s ways?

WEEK THREE (January 14 — 20)
PREACHING: “The PURPOSE of Vision & ProVision: To See Beyond Sight”
READ THE TEXT – 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-19

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think Paul refers to our mortal earthly bodies as “the earthly tent we live in”? Consider the experiences of God’s people dwelling in tents in the wilderness in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, & Deuteronomy. Remember that God Himself is described as dwelling in the Tent of Meeting (i.e. the Tabernacle) in these books. How do these references connect & what might they mean to us today?

2. In Genesis 3, humanity’s sin in eating of the forbidden fruit seems to represent an instance of operating by our own vision (i.e. our fleshly sight & carnal insight) in order to gain what seems desirable provision (i.e. the forbidden fruit) rather than relying upon God’s vision (i.e. His Word & His insight) & trusting in His provision (i.e. His Presence & the fruit of all the other trees in the Garden). Where in your life are you tempted to seek some kind of provisions (position, money, status, relationships, physical comforts, etc.) contrary to God’s will?

3. Compare 2 Cor 5:7 (“For we live by faith & not by sight”) with Rom 13:12b (“So let us put aside the deeds of darkness & put on the Armor of Light”). Both of these statements come from the writings of the Apostle Paul. How do they relate to each other?

4. In 2 Cor 5:10, Paul says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” How do you interpret this in light of the Scriptures’ other statements on the grace & mercy of God available to us in Christ Jesus (e.g. John 5:24; Rom 8:1-4)?

5. Paul speaks admonishingly about “those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart” (2 Cor 5:12). What do you think he means by this (considering also Gen 3)?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 1/15	Genesis 2:15-25	This chapter ends declaring “Adam & his wife were both naked, & they felt no shame.” Why do you think we’re told this? What significance does it have in light of what happens in the Garden in Gen 3 & also in terms of Paul’s statements about being unclothed & clothed in 2 Cor 5?
Tue. 1/16	Genesis 3:1-24	How does humanity’s sin in the Garden relate to this week’s teaching out of 2 Cor 5? Why did God clothe Adam & Eve in animal skins (v.21) after their sin?
Wed. 1/17	Isaiah 61:1-11	Jesus read from this passage in the synagogue in Luke 4 as He began His earthly ministry. How does it relate to our understanding of vision & provision in God?
Thu. 1/18	Romans 13:1-14	Why does Paul so frequently use the language of being clothed in God? How do obedience to earthly rulers & rejection of fleshly sin relate to this idea?
Fri. 1/19	Ephesians 6:10-18	Armor is a kind of clothing that provides special protection for battle. In Rom 13:12, Paul refers to “the armor of light.” How does God provide us spiritual armor, & how can you “wear” these elements of armor in your daily life?
Sat. 1/20	Luke 24:45-49; Acts 1:4-8	Considering this week’s teaching & readings, why is it significant that in Luke 24:49, Jesus describes the fullness of the Holy Spirit coming upon believers as “being clothed with power from on high”? How does this relate to divine vision & provision?

WEEK FOUR (January 21 — 27)

PREACHING: “The PATIENCE of Vision & ProVision: To Follow ‘Blindly’ By Faith”

READ THE TEXTS – MATTHEW 15:7-20; PSALM 119:100-105; JOHN 9:1-5, 39-41

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In Matt 15:9, Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 in describing the Pharisees as teaching “merely human rules.” Yet we know the Pharisees highly prized knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures. Why does Jesus accuse them of teaching merely human rules? How might this happen in the church today?
2. Psalm 119 states: “I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey Your word. I have not departed from your laws, for You Yourself have taught me.... I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.” How does this passage reflect PATIENCE at work in the life of a believer?
3. In John 9:4, Jesus says, “As long as it is day, we must do the works of Him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.” What do you think He means by this, and how does it impact your understanding of the way you should live day to day?
4. In John 9:39, Jesus says, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see & those who see will become blind.” Why would Jesus want “those who see [to] become blind”? How do you interpret this verse in line with John 12:47-50, in which Jesus also says, “I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world”?
5. In John 9:41, Jesus tells some Pharisees, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.” Describe any ways in which we might have “vision” that God could consider to be “blindness.”

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 1/22	Proverbs 3:1-12	Verse 5 of this passage describes trusting in the Lord as including actions both positive (actively obeying God’s word) & negative (refusing to “lean on your own understanding”). How are those <i>both</i> aspects of genuine PATIENCE with faith?
Tue. 1/23	Psalm 119:89-99	These verses precede the passage in this week’s teaching (Ps 119:100-105), and vv. 99-100 actually reiterate each other (an example of Hebraic poetic parallelism). How does PATIENCE factor into a truly heartfelt, applied love for God’s word and ways in our lives?
Wed. 1/24	John 9:1-12	There are instances of Jesus healing the blind merely with His words (e.g. Mk 10:51-52; Lk 18:40-43). Why do think Jesus made clay to heal this blind man & sent him to wash in a pool called “Sent” (<i>Siloam</i>) (vv.6-7)? What could this teach us about PATIENCE, vision, & provision?
Thu. 1/25	John 9:13-23	The blind man’s parents are obviously afraid of receiving punishment from the religious leaders for their son’s healing. What do their responses teach us about facing persecution for our faith?
Fri. 1/26	John 9:24-34	Imagine how the blind man must have felt being put on trial because of his healing. Because of this prosecution, he faced the prospects of real punishment (imprisonment or worse). How does he exhibit both PATIENCE & faith in his responses to the leaders who are grilling him?
Sat. 1/27	John 9:35-41	People who doubt that divine miracles occur sometimes say they <i>would</i> believe if they saw proof of such a miracle. Yet the Pharisees, supposedly faith <i>leaders</i> , have full evidence of such a miracle & yet they vehemently deny it. How are people sometimes “blind” to God’s miracles today?

WEEK FIVE (January 28 — February 3)

PREACHING: “The PERSEVERANCE of Vision & ProVision: To Tarry As We Carry On”

READ THE TEXTS – HAB 2:1-4; ROM 1:11-19; GAL 3:8-14; HEB 10:35-39

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. The prophet Habakkuk wrestled with a common human critique of God, namely that He may seem to us indifferent to our cries of complaint about injustice, oppression, and evil. How does Habakkuk’s determination to “stand at my watch” (i.e. my appointed assignment) & “look to see what [God] will say to me” reflect the PERSEVERANCE of faith?

2. Why do you think God directs the prophet in Hab 2:2 to write the vision (i.e. the prophecy revelation) clearly in print & send it via a herald to be broadcast to the people throughout the land? How does this relate to our charge & daily living today?

3. In Hab 2:3, when the Lord says that Habakkuk & the people are to wait faithfully for the arrival & fulfillment of “the vision” of God, the language can be interpreted in personified terms—that is, the vision’s coming can be described as a Person’s coming. Who do you think this Person might be, and how are we called today to “wait” for His coming on a **daily** basis?

4. Why do you think the statement in Hab 2:4 that “the just shall live by faith” became one of the Old Testament verses most quoted in the New Testament?

5. Heb 10:35 warns believers “do not throw away your confidence” in God fulfilling His Word. Why & how would any believer be tempted to “throw away” this confidence? (Consider that the author of Hebrews was writing to people facing intense persecution from the government for their faith, including loss of business & assets, imprisonment, and even the risks of corporal & capital punishments.)

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 1/29	Habakkuk 1:1-17	In v.1 (as in other prophetic passages, e.g. Is 13:1; 22:1; Jer 23:33; Nah 1:1; Zec 9:1; Mal 1:1, etc), the Hebrew word for “oracle” or prophetic vision also means “burden,” as in a heavy load to bear. What does this tell you about the PERSEVERANCE called for in receiving divine guidance?
Tue. 1/30	Ezekiel 7:1-27	The prophetic message God gave in Habakkuk 2 contained many warnings of woe to the faithless & judgments on the land. Ezekiel 7 gives a similar message. How would you describe these warnings & judgments to someone today in the context of the Gospel of Jesus?
Wed. 1/31	Habakkuk 3:1-19	This passage praises God in a psalm for His glorious wrath, a concept arguably very foreign to the modern mindset prevalent in our culture. How can God’s wrath be considered glorious & good? Why does the chapter end with determination to rejoice in God even in a time of famine?
Thu. 2/01	Romans 1:18-32	In Rom 1:18, Paul says, “the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness & wickedness of people.” The rest of the chapter goes on to describe this godlessness in greater detail. How should we as believers respond to such behavior?
Fri. 2/02	Galatians 3:1-7	In Gal 3:5, Paul implies that God grants His Spirit & works miracles among people by the belief of those people in what they’ve heard (i.e. the Gospel). How does this make people “children of Abraham” (v. 7) & what does it teach us about PERSEVERING in the faith?
Sat. 2/03	Hebrews 10:1-34	What do you think is meant by the statement, “It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (v.31)? How can this rouse our faith and faithful PERSEVERANCE?

WEEK SIX (February 4 — 10)
PREACHING: “The PROVISION of Vision: To Flow in the Stream of God’s Spirit”
READ THE TEXT – 2 PETER 1:1-11

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In 2 Pet 1:3, the Apostle Peter says that by divine power, God gives us everything we need to live a godly life through our knowledge of Him. In the sermon, this knowledge of God was discussed. Describe your understanding of this kind of knowledge of God. What actions can you take in your daily life to grow further in this kind of knowledge of God?

2. Peter describes attributes we should “make every effort” to add to our faith (2 Pet 1:5), such as goodness, self-control, perseverance, & love. How could our “vision” of God (i.e. knowledge of & intimate connection with God) be a channel by which the Holy Spirit could provision us with these attributes? Consider also Galatians 5 and John 15 in your answer.

3. 2 Pet 4 tells us that through God’s great & precious promises we may participate in God’s divine nature. As described in the sermon, the Greek term used for “participate” can be translated literally as “to become communioners” with God. In other words, through His promises, God provides us a real communion with Him in which His holiness transforms us. Describe this concept in your own words. How do you see it at work in your life & personhood?

4. 2 Pet 1:9 says that if a professed believer lacks the character attributes of knowledge of God (as described in #2 above), they are “nearsighted & blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed of their past sin.” What does Peter mean by this? Why do you think he uses metaphors of visual impairment to describe this condition?

5. What does it mean to you when Scripture describes God’s desire to give us His Kingdom?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 2/05	Galatians 5:13-26	Those who belong to Christ Jesus are to “crucify” their flesh (v.24). How can we do this? How can showing love & care for others help us “keep in step with the Spirit” (v.25)?
Tue. 2/06	John 15:1-27	How does Jesus’ description of Himself as the Vine and we as His branches relate to the reading yesterday about the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5?
Wed. 2/07	Romans 12:1-21	Describe the aspects of humble service & active love delineated in this chapter as model behavior in the Church. How can you enhance these attributes in our local congregation?
Thu. 2/08	Luke 12:22-48	In this passage, Jesus tells us not to worry; God is pleased to give us His Kingdom. But He also warns us that to know God’s will & fail to do it brings penalties. What responsibilities come with revelation, since “to whom much is given, much is required” (v. 48)?
Fri. 2/09	Romans 8:1-39	Romans 8 is yet another passage in the New Testament that describes living in & by the Holy Spirit. What does living in or by the Spirit mean to you?
Sat. 2/10	Ephesians 5:1-20	In view of everything Paul says in this passage, how would you explain v.8 in your own words when it says, “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light”? What does this passage teach you about living in the Spirit as a community of faith?

SERMON SERIES (in six parts)
THE DAYS OF DAVID (VOLUME III): FINAL DAYS – THE REIGN OF DAVID
FEBRUARY 11 – MARCH 17

FEBRUARY

- 2/11 – Pt 1: “Provision for Conclusion”/DAVID’S RESOURCE in Famine, Fighting, & Fatigue (2 Sam 21)
- 2/18 (PRES. DAY WKND) – Pt 2: “Provision for Praise”/DAVID’S SONG to God (2 Sam 22; Ps 18)
- 2/25 – Pt 3: “Provision Through Pestilence”/The Sin of DAVID’S CENSUS (2 Sam 24; 1 Chron 21)

MARCH

- 3/03 – Part 4: “Provision for Worship”/DAVID’S PREPARATIONS for the Temple (1 Chron 22-29)
- 3/10 – Pt 5: “Provision for Posterity”/DAVID’S DEATH (2 Sam 23; 1 Kings 1-2; 1 Chron 29:23-30)
- 3/17 (PCF-LA 35th ANNIV) – Pt 6: “Provision of Wisdom: The **Vision** of Solomon” (2 Chron 1:1-13; 1 Kings 3:1-15)

WEEK SEVEN (February 11 — 17)

**PREACHING: “PROVISION for Conclusion”/DAVID’S RESOURCE in Famine, Fighting, & Fatigue
READ THE TEXT – 2 SAMUEL 21:1-22**

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

- As mentioned in this week’s preaching, details in this chapter indicate that it compiles events from a variety of periods during King David’s reign. Why do you think the Holy Spirit inspired the biblical author(s) to put the record of these disparate events together and to place them at this point in the biblical story of David?
- This chapter begins describing three years of famine brought on by Saul’s sin against the Gibeonites (2 Sam 21:1). It concludes describing the defeat of four mighty enemies of God (2 Sam 2:22). The pattern of “three, then four” is a Hebraic rhetorical form that appears in a variety of places in Scripture. For instance, it indicates expansive listings in Prov 30:18-19 & 29-31. Or very notably, the prophet Amos repeatedly refers to God’s judgments on “three sins...even four” (Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6). In Hebrew numerology, three represents Divine perfection (or in its negative aspect, it can refer to pride) and the number four relates to the earth (which was created on the fourth day in the Genesis creation account). “Three...even four” can thus be used to indicate either positive expansiveness (in the sense of the Creator’s perfection being brought to bear in compounding effect upon His creation) or, in negative aspect (as in Amos’ references to “three...even four” sins) as the sins of pride produce an overflow of evil in the earth. Given these rhetorical and poetical sensibilities in the prophetic approach, discuss how this relates to 2 Sam 21’s implied commentary on Saul’s sin, its effect on the earth (i.e. his descendants in vv. 5-9 & “the land” [see v.14]), and the ultimate demise of the four enemies of God (i.e. the descendants of Rapha mentioned in vv.15-22).
- In yet another element of potential numerological prophetic significance, verses 5-9 relate that seven of Saul’s descendants suffered capital punishment in final judgment for Saul’s sin. Since the number seven (the days in which God completed creation in Genesis) represents completion & spiritual perfection in Hebrew numerology, how does this color your reading of this passage? Why would God allow or even potentially desire Saul’s descendants to pay the penalty for their ancestor’s wrongs? Why did David spare Saul’s grandson Mephibosheth (2 Sam 7) & what meaning does that hold for us?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 2/12	Psalm 51:1-19	In this psalm, David repents to God of his sins of adultery with Bathsheba that led to his arranging the death of her husband. How & why did David & Saul differ related to their sins?
Tue. 2/13	Romans 3:1-31	Paul quotes David’s Psalm 51:4 in this passage (v.4). How does he apply it? How do Psalm 51, Romans 3, and 2 Samuel 21 all interrelate?
Wed. 2/14	Psalm 59:1-17	This psalm of David conveys his worshipful trust in God when Saul sent men to kill him in bed. How do David’s words here relate to his protection in 2 Sam 21:17? How do they apply to you?
Thu. 2/15	Exodus 34:5-17	How does this passage, which mentions God punishing children for their parents’ sin (v.7) & prohibiting treaties with idolatrous peoples (vv.12, 15) inform your understanding of 2 Sam 21?
Fri. 2/16	Joshua 9:1-27	In this chapter we learn how the Gibeonites craftily fooled Joshua & the Israelites into entering a treaty, many generations prior to the days of David. How could the Israelites have applied God’s word in Exodus 34 to that situation & how might that have changed the events of 2 Sam 21? What parallels can you see in your own life & dealings with others today?
Sat. 2/17	Deut 28:1-68	This passage goes into great detail contrasting the blessings found in obeying God with the devastations that come from disobeying Him. Why do you think the effects of disobedience are so widespread? How should we understand this passage as followers of Christ today?

WEEK EIGHT (February 18 — 24)
PREACHING: “PROVISION for Praise”/DAVID’S SONG to God
READ THE TEXT – 2 SAMUEL 22:1-51; PSALM 18:1-50

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. David described God as “my strength” (Ps. 18:1). Is God *your* strength? Consider how you would describe to a non-believer why and how an “invisible” Being like God can be your strength in practical terms that reflect your daily living as well as in periods of major life challenge. Try to be as specific as possible in giving your description.

2. Think of a time in your life when you could have said like David “The waves of death swirled about me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.” How did God preserve & protect you through that time? How have you given Him thanks for that protection & deliverance? How can you continue to give Him thanks & praise for His goodness to you in this way?

3. Why do you think the Holy Spirit inspired such vivid & gothic imagery of God personified & descending in wrath in this psalm? How does this striking & rather terrifying view of God enhance your understanding of His justice & love, particularly coming as it does in the context of His defense of the psalmist?

4. 2 Sam 26 says of God, “To the faithful You show Yourself faithful, to the blameless You show Yourself blameless...” Was David always faithful to God & blameless in His sight? Consider David’s sins with Bathsheba, Uriah, or later with the census (2 Sam 24; 1 Chron 21) that we’ll study next week. What then could the psalmist mean when he says, “I have kept the ways of the Lord; I am not guilty of turning from my God” in 2 Sam 22? And how does God make us blameless if we have faults & sins in our record?

5. As Christians, how do the statements about being made “head of nations” in 2 Sam 22:44-46 relate to us & to our Great Commission in Christ?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 2/19	Psalm 2:1-12	In Acts 4:25, the early disciples ascribe this psalm to David. How does the text of this psalm compare to David’s song 2 Sam 22/Psalm 18? How does it add to your understanding of faith?
Tue. 2/20	Psalm 144:1-15	This psalm of David says, “I will sing a new song to You, my God” (v.9)? Try writing “a new song” to God today—what would you say & how would you praise Him at this time?
Wed. 2/21	Psalm 29:1-11	Yet another psalm of David offers a paean to God. Why does it describe God’s voice as breaking cedar trees & making lands jump like young cattle (vv.5-6)? How is God “over the flood” (v.10)?
Thu. 2/22	Psalm 65:1-13	This ode of David to the Lord describes valleys & meadows as singing God’s praises with joy (v. 13)? How can the land do that? Why do you think David spent so much time singing to God?
Fri. 2/23	Psalm 36:1-12	If pride & deceitfulness resides in the hearts of the wicked, as this Davidic psalm states, what does it tell us about lies in the hearts of God’s righteous ones? How can worship fill your heart?
Sat. 2/24	Psalm 3:1-8	Psalm 18 & 2 Sam 22 describe David’s joy in the Lord when God delivered him from “all his enemies.” Psalm 3 reminds us that one of those enemies was David’s own son Absalom. Have you ever faced opposition or conflict with a close family member? How can God help in that circumstance? Pray about any family conflicts around you today—ask for God’s guidance & help.

WEEK NINE (February 25 — March 2)
PREACHING: “PROVISION through Pestilence”/The Sin of DAVID’S CENSUS
READ THE TEXT – 2 SAMUEL 24:1-25; 1 CHRONICLES 21:1-30

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. The sermon points this week utilize some old-fashioned English terms. “Whence” means “from what place or source.” From what place or source did David’s strength & Israel’s provision actually come from—was it to be determined by the number of the nation’s fighting men & productive citizens? Why or why not, and how does this relate to the issue of David calling for a census to count these numbers?

2. “Whither” is another old-fashioned English word used in this week’s sermon, meaning “unto what place or state of being.” In the context of this week’s message, the term calls us to consider what useful purpose did God see being accomplished by the plague that came as a result of the sin of the census? What good could such a bad thing do? How could God use “bad things” like disease or a national crisis to bring about good results in our lives today? *Why* would God do such things?

3. Imagine you’re sharing this week’s Bible passages with someone unfamiliar with the Bible. Explain to them how you reconcile the apparent discrepancy between God initiating the census in 2 Sam 24:1 & Satan initiating it in 1 Chron 21:1.

4. Why do you think God gave David the choice between three options of judgment for the sin of the census (2 Sam 24:13; 1 Chron 21:10-12)? Why did David choose as he did? What choice would you have made in his position & why? Do you think God has ever offered a choice like this to you in your life? Think carefully about how such choices might have appeared to you.

5. Why did David offer the worship of sacrifice to God in this situation? How was it instrumental in ending the plague? What role does worship play in your life when facing crisis? Could your worship affect outcomes for an entire nation? Explain why or why not.

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 2/26	2 Chron 3:1-9	Why do you think David’s son Solomon choose the threshing floor of Araunah (location of David’s worship in 2 Sam 24 that ended the plague) as the site for the Lord’s Temple?
Tue. 2/27	2 Chron 3:10-17	Solomon named the twin pillars of the Temple “He Establishes” (<i>Jakin</i>) & “In Him is Strength” (<i>Boaz</i>), in which the “He” is God. How do these names reflect David’s lesson from the census?
Wed. 2/28	1 Kings 6:1-14	The Lord says, “As for this temple...if you [obey] My commands...I will fulfill [My] promise...to David [&] live among [you].” Describe how obedience equals worship & invites God’s Presence.
Thu. 2/29	2 Chron 7:1-22	When David’s son Solomon offered worship in the newly finished Temple, the Lord’s response connects worship with healing the land. How does this relate to this week’s sermon material?
Fri. 3/01	Job 1:1-12	The Old Testament makes relatively few direct references to Satan (“Adversary”) such as in 1 Chron 21:1. Job 1 includes Satan among God’s angels conversing with God. Why does God allow Satan’s activity in our world? How does God use Satan in Job’s life & what does it teach us?
Sat. 3/02	Luke 4:15	After His baptism, the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. What usefulness came from this temptation experience, and how does it relate to Jesus’ later ministry?

WEEK TEN (March 3 — 9)

PREACHING: “PROVISION for Worship”/DAVID’S PREPARATIONS for the Temple

READ THE TEXT – 1 CHRON 22:1-19; 23:1-32; 24:1-31; 25:1-31; 26:1-32; 27:1-34; 28:1-21; 29:1-22

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean in your life for you to “devote your heart & soul to seeking the LORD your God” (1 Chron 22:19)? Do you have a dedicated space in your home or work place that you use especially for prayer & worship of God—and if not, could you arrange such a space? Why are specific places of worship valuable in our daily routine?
2. In ancient Israel, priests were assigned to give thanks & praise to God every morning & every evening (cf. 1 Chron 23:30). Do you have a set time in the morning & evening to remember God with thanks and praise? If so, how can you ensure that practice remains vital & doesn’t become rote & merely routine? If you don’t have such times set aside, consider what thanking God each morning & evening could do to enhance your appreciation of His goodness & love.
3. Why do you think musical worship of God with instruments & singing have always held such an important place in the lives of His people? What kind of music do you listen to regularly? How does it impact your mood, emotions, & thoughts? Is God blessed by what you hear & sing?
4. In Ephesians 6:10-18, the Apostle Paul describes believers as being soldiers engaged in a spiritual battle against the forces of spiritual wickedness currently at work in the world. Yet David also understands from God that he was not to build the Temple because he was “a warrior [who has] shed blood” (1 Chron 28:3). Instead, David made preparations for his son Solomon (whose name means “peace”) to build the Temple. In your own words, describe *how* worship of God both equips us with His peace (cf. Ephes 6:15) and also armors us for battle not against flesh & blood but against spiritual forces of darkness (cf. Ephes 6:12).

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 3/04	Deut 6:1-25	This passage contains the Shema Yisrael (v4, “Hear O Israel”), the central Judaic prayer for morning & evening worship that affirms love for God with all one’s heart, soul, & strength (v5). How can you engage this kind of totality of being & intensity of affection to your daily worship?
Tue. 3/05	Matt 22:34-46	Jesus referenced Deut 6:5 (from yesterday’s reading) & Lev 19:18 (“Love your neighbor as yourself”) as being together the greatest commandment: to love God & others. In what ways can you enhance your worship of God today by showing love to others around you? Ask for His help.
Wed. 3/06	Psalms 110:1-7	In yesterday’s reading from Matt 22, Jesus quoted Ps 110 as evidence that the Messiah is both the Son of David (as a descendant) & yet also the great King’s LORD (v1). Why does this matter?
Thu. 3/07	Acts 2:29-41	In his famed Pentecost Day sermon, the Apostle Peter also referenced Ps 110. Why is the physical resurrection of Jesus so central to our worship? How does this passage demonstrate that this awareness in worship also leads to love among the brethren of believers?
Fri. 3/08	Psalms 69:1-36	This imprecatory psalm calls for judgment against God’s enemies. How does this inform our holy worship? What “enemies” should a Christian have & how should we respond to them?
Sat. 3/09	John 2:13-25	Jesus’ disciples saw Psalm 69:9 being fulfilled when Jesus cleared the Temple courts of merchants. What zeal should modern believers have for purity in the local church organization?

WEEK ELEVEN (March 10 — 16)

PREACHING: “PROVISION for Posterity”/DAVID’S DEATH

READ THE TEXT – 2 SAMUEL 23:1-39; 1 KINGS 1:1-53; 2:1-46; 1 CHRONICLES 29:23-30

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What provision have you made for your posterity (that is, for the generations that will follow you)? Have you shared with your spouse, children, or other loved ones your advice on how they might manage circumstances once you pass on? How might God have you handle those conversations & why do you think that would matter to Him?
2. Some of David’s counsel to Solomon regarding judgments coming to individuals guilty of past wrongs might strike us as vengeful or retributive in a way that some might say is “contrary to Christ.” Do you think this is accurate? How would *you* explain these remarks of David—what do you see as his motivation and attitude in them, & is there anything Christ-like to be found there?
3. What do the actions of David’s son Adonijah reveal about him in these passages? How are Adonijah & Solomon different, and what do those differences teach you about how you can follow God?
4. How often do you think about the limited time of your own earthly life & the legacy of your life that will be left to others in your sphere of influence? Do you have a sense of confidence & peace like David that “surely I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Ps 23:6)? Why or why not? How might that peace guide your life in the time you have remaining to you here on earth?
5. Leadership transitions can be rocky times. Our nation is presently in the process of democratically determining our presidential leader for the next four years, and whether we will have a leadership transition. What insights can you draw from the passages & lessons from this week’s teaching that could be applied to our present context?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 3/11	Phil 2:1-30	Compare this passage to David’s remarks & action of pouring out the water in 2 Sam 23:13-17. What can you do today to demonstrate that you regard others as more important than yourself?
Tue. 3/12	2 Tim 4:1-8	How can you develop your faith further to “be ready in season & out of season” (v2) to declare the truth of God to those around you through your daily living? Are you familiar with and submitted to the sound doctrines of the Christian faith even if that means hearing hard things?
Wed. 3/13	Psalm 23:1-6	This Psalm is so familiar that we may neglect to explore the power of all its poetic language & imagery. What has “the valley of the shadow of death” looked like in your life so far, & how has Jesus the Good Shepherd led you through it? What words of hope can you hear from Him today?
Thu. 3/14	Acts 4:23-31	King David said the Holy Spirit spoke through him (2 Sam 23:2) & here the apostles affirm that (v25). Christians are to expect & rely on the Holy Spirit to speak through us (cf. Lk 12:12; Acts 2:17-18). How can you invite more of the Holy Spirit’s utterances to come through <i>you</i> today?
Fri. 3/15	Psalm 16:1-11	David wrote to God, “You will not abandon me to the [grave]” (v10). Do you ever feel afraid of your own death? How can you share in David’s confident hope in God beyond the grave?
Sat. 3/16	Acts 13:13-41	In v22 Paul references 1 Sam 13:14 in saying David was a person “after [God’s] own heart.” How can you live each day in such a way that God could say this also about <i>you</i> ?

WEEK TWELVE (March 17 — 23)
PREACHING: “PROVISION of Wisdom”/The Vision of SOLOMON
READ THE TEXT – 2 CHRONICLES 1:1-13; 1 KINGS 3:1-15

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think it was important that Solomon called all the national & regional leaders of Israel, along with all of the people, to worship the Lord with sacrifices as a national event at the very beginning of his reign? What does this tell you about the primacy of worship & also about the value of corporate group (i.e. collective or group worship)?

2. In Matthew 18:19, Jesus says, “If two of you on earth agree about anything [you] ask for, it will be done for [you] by My Father in Heaven.” Why do you think agreement among believers is so important & potent in the fulfillment of prayer? How often do you seek the agreement of other believers in making your prayers to make? How could you enhance the frequency of your agreement in prayer with other believers & what effects might that have?

3. In John 14:14, Jesus says, “You may ask Me for anything in My Name, & I will do it.” What does it mean to you to ask Jesus for something “in [His] Name”? Some think this means it is necessary to always conclude (or include) in a prayer the literal words “in Jesus’ Name”—how might that legalistic notion actually *contradict* Jesus’ intention in this statement? Asking for something “in Jesus’ Name” isn’t just a formular for words to use in prayer, but rather refers to the motives of our hearts when we prayer & the degree to which we seek to know God’s will in our prayer. How would you explain this to someone less familiar with the concept of prayer in Jesus’ Name?

4. The book of Psalms concludes with Psalm 150, which calls for worship praising God to be raised up by every breathing thing, in every conceivable place, including in the formal sanctuaries of churches & temples but also out under the open sky of nature. Do you have a practice of praising God everywhere you go and all throughout the day? How can you expand your praise to Him today? Could you model this kind of praise in a way that persuades others to praise Him, too?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 3/18	Matt 6:25-33	Honestly appraising your inner thought life & daily behavior, how often do you worry about meeting the needs of you & your family? How can you increase your trust in God’s provision?
Tue. 3/19	Matt 7:7-8	The Greek grammar of this passage indicates that Jesus used each of the verbs in ongoing fashion (i.e. keep on asking, seeking, & knocking). If God cares for us & already knows our needs, why would it be necessary for us to persist in our requests this way? How might it benefit us?
Wed. 3/20	Luke 11:11-13	Whatever else we seek from God, His greatest provision to us comes through His own Holy Spirit. How does this echo Solomon asking for wisdom as a “kingdom first” principle? Have you ASKED God to grant His Spirit to you? Resolve to ask for <i>more</i> of the Holy Spirit daily.
Thu. 3/21	James 1:1-18	In this passage, we again see the availability of divine wisdom described in the context of regular & ongoing challenges. How can God’s wisdom deliver you from daily trials & temptations?
Fri. 3/22	James 4:1-10	Why do you suppose that our inner motives & the level of our unity or discord with others have such a major impact on the efficacy of our prayer? Is there greater unity with others that you can seek today that might make your prayers more wise in God’s eyes & more effective in our world?
Sat. 3/23	Prov 4:1-27	Were your parents godly like Solomon’s? If so, thank God for them! If not, thank God that He reached your heart anyway. Ask for God’s help in walking faithfully as you influence others.

SERMON SERIES (in three parts)
THE PROVISION OF THE PASSION: AN EASTER SEASON SERMON SERIES
MARCH 24-31

MARCH

- 3/24 (PALM SUN) – Part 1: “The Provision of PALM SUNDAY: A Perfect Fix” (Zech 9:9-17)

- 3/29 (GOOD FRI) – Part 2: “The Provision of THE CROSS: A Perfect Failure” (Ps 22:1; Zech 13:7; Matt 26:31; 27:45-46; Luke 22:48, 61; John 6:66; 2 Cor 5:21; Col 2:15)

- 3/24 (EASTER SUN) – Part 3: “The Provision of RESURRECTION: A Perfect Failure” (John 16:1-24; Heb 7:11-28; Rom 8:1-11)

WEEK THIRTEEN (March 24 — 30) | PASSION WEEK
PALM SUNDAY PREACHING: “The Provision of PALM SUNDAY: A Perfect Fix”
READ THE TEXT – ZECHARIAH 9:9-17

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. All four of the Gospels relate how Jesus made His entry into Jerusalem for the Passover to great acclaim of the people, riding on a donkey consistent with the Messianic prophecy in Zechariah 9:9, given hundreds of years earlier & familiar to all those acquainted with the Scriptures. When then do you suppose that, as John 12:16 states, even Jesus’ closest disciples didn’t realize until later that these things were happening as a fulfillment of prophecy? What does this tell you about your own awareness of “the signs of the times” (Mt 16:3) today in terms of fulfilling God’s prophetic word?
2. Zechariah describes how, despite the disobedience of His own people & the disdain of foreign peoples, God triumphs in reconciling people to Himself through a blood covenant of redemption (Zech 9:11). With this in mind, read Romans 5:6-11 & 8:1-6 that were quoted in this week’s sermon. How does the book of Zechariah & especially Jesus’ fulfillment of passages in Zechariah 9 upon His entry into Jerusalem & heading to the Cross shed light onto your understanding of Paul’s description of our reconciliation with God and our deliverance from sin & into eternal life?
3. Through the mouth of the prophet Zechariah, God uses the phrase “prisoners of hope” to describe His people (Zech 9:12). Why do you think He uses such a phrase and how does it apply to us as followers and disciples of Jesus Christ today?
4. In the sermon, Pastor Court talked about two ways of understanding Zech 9:15 (“They will drink blood like wine...”) that, taken together, afford us an enriched & encouraging understanding of this potentially disturbing language. What are those two interpretations of the verse & how does each understanding potentially enhance the other?
5. How is it significant that Jesus gives His “new command [to] love one another” (John 13:34) immediately following the departure of Judas Iscariot from the Last Supper in order to betray Jesus? Relate this understanding to Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:45-48 about the longsuffering tolerance of our Heavenly Father & our call to love our enemies.

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 3/25	John 6:26-71	Many of Jesus disciples abandoned Him after His statements about how they must eat His flesh & drink His blood (v. 53). What did Jesus mean by this & how might it relate to Zech 9:15 (“They will drink blood like wine...”) mentioned in this past Sunday’s sermon text?
Tue. 3/26	Matt 26:14-56	Given that Jesus knew Judas Iscariot would betray Him to the authorities, why do you think Jesus allowed Judas’ presence among the Twelve, & what might it teach us for our own relationships?
Wed. 3/27	John 15:18-27	Much of our focus this Passion Week revolves around various passages on the persecution God’s people face. What do Jesus’ words teach you about how to respond to wrong done against you?
Maundy Thu. 3/28	Psalms 22:1-31	This is a psalm of David, whom we’ve spent months studying. But it also clearly prophetically anticipates the Passion of the Christ. Meditate on how this OT passage refers to Jesus’ sacrifice.
Good Fri. 3/29	Col 2:8-15	How does this passage warn us against empty, vain, & divisive religious legalism? How does it instead alert us to the miraculous power of Christ’s Cross to deliver us from the debt of our sin?
Silent Sat. 3/30	2 Cor 5:14-21	What do you think Paul meant when he wrote, “One died for all, & therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died & was raised again” (vv. 14-15). How does this inform how you live your daily life today?

GOOD FRIDAY (March 29) | PASSION WEEK
GOOD FRIDAY EVENING PREACHING: “The Provision of THE CROSS: A Perfect Failure”
READ THE TEXT – ZECHARIAH 13:7-9

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. John 6:66 describes many of Jesus followers deserting Him after His preaching about eating His body & drinking His blood. Considering Jesus’ words in reaction to His twelve apostles in John 6:67 (“You do not want to leave too, do you?”), what emotions do you think Jesus experienced by this mass abandonment? Consider times in your life when you may have also experienced abandonment or betrayal from friends or family. What can Jesus teach you by His Spirit about your emotions & memories in this area of your life?

2. One of the more notable events during Jesus’ final hours of trial and execution comes when Peter denies even knowing Jesus three times, just as Jesus had predicted, despite Peter’s assurances to Jesus that he would never do so but would in fact stand by Him. Why do you think Jesus told Peter in advance of His knowledge that Peter would betray Him? Have you ever denied the Lord or your faith in Him to others in the past? (Think carefully—ask the Lord to reveal to you times when you may have do so in ways you haven’t closely considered before.) What can we learn about our faith from coming to terms with our rejections, rebellions, or resistance toward God? Ask Him to fully cleanse you today from the effects of any past disobediences and to walk in a greater humility and faithfulness, dependent more on Him than upon yourself in order to walk in obedience and faithfulness. Ask God in prayer to help you to do even as Jesus had urged Peter and the others to do on the very night of this betrayal: “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt 26:41).

3. In Zechariah 13:7-9, when the Lord through His prophet describes the event in which the Shepherd is struck and the sheep are scattered, God says, “two-thirds [of the people in the land] will be struck down & perish; yet one-third will be left in it. This third I will put into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on My Name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God'" (Zech 13:8-9). Why would God subject His people to such a challenging process? What does this tell you about how you are to respond to challenges & trials in your life, particularly in terms of challenges faced because of your faith? How can you “call upon God’s Name” today? How did Jesus call upon God’s Name during His Passion on the Cross?

WEEK FOURTEEN (March 31 — April 6) | EASTER WEEK
EASTER SUNDAY PREACHING: “The Provision of RESURRECTION: A Perfect Future”
READ THE TEXT – JOHN 16:1-24; HEBREWS 7:11-28; ROMANS 8:1-11

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Followers of Jesus know that there is no greater event than the Resurrection of Jesus from the grave to assure us of His victorious power to save us from the death that comes through sin & into the eternity of life that is found in God alone. Meditate on Jesus’ words to His disciples in John 16:22, “Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, & no one will take away your joy.” Do you have this joy of the Lord operating within you today? How can you more fully & regularly tap into the joy of the Lord that is our abiding strength (Neh 8:10)?

2. Paul states that the same Holy Spirit who resurrected Jesus on Easter will bodily resurrect us in Him, too (Rom 8:11) for Jesus Christ is “the firstfruits [in whom] all will be made alive” (1Co 15:20, 22). In light of this, Paul also says, “my dear brothers & sisters, stand firm [&] give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Co 15: 58). What is God calling you to do with your life today that you can offer up to Him as your reasonable act of worship as a living sacrifice (cf. Rom 12:1-2)?

3. The whole purpose of Christ’s coming to us was so that in Him we could have life & life more abundantly (John 10:10). Where is the enemy trying to rob you of joy, faith, & hope in your circumstances today? Are you letting any worry, fear, indulgence of temptation, or other delusions of the flesh inhibit your confident receipt of Jesus’ victorious resurrection life today? As the Holy Spirit to show you where you can invite His delivering power to operate more fully in your heart & mind today.

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 4/01	Prov 30:1-33	Verse 16 of this passage describes death (“the grave”) as one of four things that are never satisfied. Death keeps on swallowing up everything. Yet the victory of Christ’s sacrifice & resurrection has now swallowed up death itself (Is 25:8; 1 Co 15:54). How does the fact that Jesus has conquered death change the way you live your life today?
Tue. 4/02	John 13:1-17	Jesus stated that we as His servants are to follow His example of self-sacrifice & service to one another in His Name & in His love. How does His resurrection fully empower you to do this? How can you serve others today in His Name & in the power of His resurrected life?
Wed. 4/03	Gen 14:18-24	In the process of thanking God for delivering him from oppressive enemies, Abraham was led by the priest called Melchizedek to worship God in a covenantal ceremony involving bread & wine (v. 18). What does Abraham’s engagement in this Communion covenant tell us about worship?
Thu. 4/04	Heb 7:1-10	Hebrews chapter 7 explains the connection between the Old Testament appearance of the priest Melchizedek that we read about yesterday & Jesus Christ. What can you bring in offering to Jesus today as the “King of Righteousness & Peace” to show gratitude for our eternal life in Him?
Fri. 4/05	Rom 8:12-25	What is your obligation in Christ to live according to the Spirit rather than the flesh? How can you pray for the Spirit to help you “put to death the misdeeds of the body” today (vv. 12-13)?
Sat. 4/06	Rom 8:26-39	Why do you think Ps 44:22 & Rom 8:36 state that God’s followers are “considered as sheep to be slaughtered” for His sake? How does the fact that in Christ even death cannot separate us from God’s love empower us to face our present sufferings with peace, joy, & courage?

WEEK FIFTEEN (April 7 — 13)
THEME: “Times of Refreshing: A Marathon of Worship”
READ THE TEXT – PSALM 22:3; 95:1-3; ACTS 3:19

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean when Psalm 22:3 says that the Lord is enthroned on the praises of His people? Consider that in the ancient Tabernacle/Temple design, the Mercy Seat of God’s Throne was seen as covering the Ark of the Covenant, the container of His holy accord with His people. In light of these things, how might your worship invoke a greater receptivity to the Presence of God in your world, since praising God in your home, vehicles, workspaces effectively makes all of those places for His enthronement?

2. In Matthew 6:9-10, Jesus stated this “is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, may Your Name be revered as holy, and may Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.’” In light of your reflections on Psalm 22:3 & the enthronement of God on the praises of His people in reflection question #1 above, how do these concepts correspond & connect in your thinking? How can worship be an actualization of the Lord’s Prayer in your daily life?

3. Why do you think that the Scriptures (such as Psalm 95:2) make such a point of calling for us to “come before [God] with thanksgiving and extol Him with music & song”? Why is giving God thanks so pivotal to a healthy lifestyle? And what makes musical worship of God so vital & unique when compared to other kinds of worship?

4. If the sins of the whole world are already forgiven by Jesus’ sacrifice on the Cross (cf. 1 John 2:2), what do you think Peter meant when he preached for people to “Repent...& turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out” in Acts 3:19? How are repentance & worship linked? What do you suppose Peter meant by the “times of refreshing” that would come from the Lord in this process?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 4/08	Psalm 22:1-31	We’ve just recently celebrated Easter again. Jesus quoted Psalm 22:1 during His death on the Cross (Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34). How can Jesus’ sacrifice be seen as an act of worship?
Tue. 4/09	Psalm 95:1-11	This psalm emphasizes trust in God as an essential element of real worship. What are some ways today that you can enhance your trust in God as an act of practical worship?
Wed. 4/10	Exodus 17:1-7	This episode of Israel’s lack of trust in God was referenced in yesterday’s psalm. What does it tell you that doubt in God is the opposite of worship & results in rebellion?
Thu. 4/11	Hebrews 3:1-19	This passage brings together the scripture readings from the prior two days (Ps 95 & Ex 17). What things can “harden” your heart to God? How can worship “soften” your heart toward Him?
Fri. 4/12	Acts 3:13-26	Peter states that all God’s “prophets who have spoken have foretold these days” (v. 24), meaning “the last days” of evangelism leading to Christ’s return. How familiar are you with the prophets’ words & works? Consider finding a Bible reading plan that will educate you further in the prophets’ books & what they say. (We’ll also be studying this together as we progress this year.)
Sat. 4/13	Deut 18:14-22	Peter’s sermon in Acts 3 that we read yesterday references this passage & makes clear the Messianic prophet Moses predicted is in fact Jesus. Are you listening to (hearing & obeying) “everything He tells you” to do (v.15)? Jesus said real love of God is obedience (Jn 14:15; cf. 1 Jn 5:3). It seems then that obedience also constitutes real worship on our part. Pray for the Spirit to help you today to (as the old hymn says) “trust & obey, for there’s no other way.”

SERMON SERIES (in twenty-two parts)
VISIONS OF THE PROPHETS
APRIL 14 – OCTOBER 27

APRIL

- 4/14 – #1: “Divine Encounters: The Visions of **ABRAHAM**” (Gen 15, 17, 18)
- 4/21 – #2: “The Call Through It All: **JACOB**’s Visions in the Night” (Gen 28:10-22; 32:22-32; 46:1-7)
- 4/28 – #3: “The Burning Bush: The Vision of **MOSES**” (Exodus 3)

MAY

- 5/05 – #4: “The Commander of Heaven: The Vision of **JOSHUA**” (Josh 5:13-15)
- 5/12 (MOTHER’S DAY) – #5: “By the Word of the Lord: The Vision of **SAMUEL**” (1 Sam 3)
- 5/19 – #6: “Because He Was a Prophet: The Vision of **DAVID**” (Ps 16:8-11; 110:1; Acts 2:22-36)
- 5/26 (MEMORIAL DAY WKND) – GUEST PREACHER (Message TBA)

JUNE

- 6/02 – GUEST PREACHER (Message TBA)
- 6/09 – #7: “Fire from Heaven: The Visions of **JOEL**” (Joel 1-3; Acts 2)
- 6/16 (FATHER’S DAY) – GUEST PREACHER (Message TBA)
- 6/23 – #8: “Old Mantle, New Yoke: The Vision of **ELIJAH**” (1 Kings 19)
- 6/30 – GUEST PREACHER: *Pastora Venida Antonio, “Praying the Vision” (1 Peter 1:13)*

JULY

- 7/07 – #9: “Chariots of Fire: The Vision of **ELISHA**” (2 Kings 6:8-23)
- 7/14 – #10: “Signs of Judgment: The Visions of **AMOS**” (Amos 7-9)
- 7/21 – #11: “Holy, Holy, Holy: The Vision of **ISAIAH**” (Isaiah 1:1; 6:1-13; 21:2)
- 7/28 – #12: “What Do You See? The Visions of **JEREMIAH**” (Jeremiah 1:1-19)

AUGUST

- 8/04 – GUEST PREACHER (Message TBA)
- 8/11 – #13: “Dry Bones, Living Creatures, & Flowing Waters: The Visions of **EZEKIEL**” (Ezek 1-3; 8-11; 37-39; 40-48)
- 8/18 – #14: “Son of Man: The Visions of **DANIEL**” (Daniel 1-12)

AUGUST (CONT'D)

- 8/25 – #15: “Eight Visions of **ZECHARIAH**” (Zechariah 1-6)

SEPTEMBER

- 9/01 (*LABOR DAY WKND*) – *GUEST PREACHER (Message TBA)*
- 9/08 – #16: “Visions of the Twelve: More Prophecies from **THE MINOR PROPHETS**” (Hosea 12:10; Obadiah 1:1; Micah 1:1; Nahum 1:1; Habakkuk 2:3-4)
- 9/15 – #17: “Transfigured by Glory: The Visions of **PETER**” (Matt 17:1-9; John 21:1-22; Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18; Acts 12:1-19)
- 9/22 – #18: “The First Witness: The Vision of **STEPHEN**” (Acts 7:44-60)
- 9/29 – #19: “Blinded by the Light: The Visions of **PAUL**” (Acts 9:1-22; 22:6-21; 26:12-20; Gal 4:13-15; 6:11; 2 Cor 12:1-10)

OCTOBER

- 10/06 – #20: “Signs & Wonders: The Spirit of Prophecy in **THE EARLY CHURCH**” (Matt 21:11; Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-18; Rev 19:10)
- 10/13 – *GUEST PREACHER (Message TBA)*
- 10/20 – #21: “Unveiled: The Visions of **JOHN** on Patmos” – Pt. 1 (Rev 1-11)
- 10/27 – #22: “Unveiled: The Visions of **JOHN** on Patmos” – Pt. 2 (Rev 12-22)

WEEK SIXTEEN (April 14 — 20)
PREACHING: “Divine Encounters – The Visions of ABRAHAM”
READ THE TEXT – Genesis 15:1-21; 17:1-23; 18:1-15

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why did Abraham intend to make his servant Eliezer his heir in Genesis 15? How is this similar to Sarah offering her maid Hagar to Abraham for the purpose of producing an heir in Genesis 16? Also consider the laughter of Abraham in Genesis 17 & of Sarah in Genesis 18 at God’s promise of their biological child Isaac. Given that all the actions above seem to indicate their *doubt* about God’s promise, how can we still see Abraham & Sarah as models of extraordinary faith in God?
2. Explain your understanding of the Royal Land Grant Treaty-type “contract” enacted between God & Abraham in Genesis 15. Why did it include the cutting of animals in two? Why were the birds of the sacrifice *not* cut like the other creatures were? What is the significance of the smoking firepot & blazing torch that signified God’s Presence passing between the pieces in verse 17? How do these archaic & potentially disturbing images relate to you & your relationship with God today?
3. Why do you think God choose this time to give Abraham the dreadful vision of his descendants bound in Egyptian slavery for 400 years (Gen 15:12-16)? How does God offset the dread of this fact with optimism & promise? Are there difficulties ahead of us revealed by God’s Word? How can we understand these dark visions in the light of God’s love and hope for the future?
4. Why did God change Abraham & Sarah’s names in Genesis 17 & how does this apply to you?
5. Why did God institute circumcision as the “sign of the covenant”? How should modern Christians understand the significance of this sign in light of the New Testament admonition that circumcision is not a requirement of Christian faith (see e.g. Acts 15; Rom 2, 4; Gal 5:6 & 6:15)?
6. What does it mean to you that God told Abraham & Sarah to name their son Isaac (“he laughs”)? Can you relate to Sarah’s fear of acknowledging her laughter at the Lord’s seemingly impossible promise of her bearing a child in Genesis 18:12-15? What does her fear tell you about her faith?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 4/15	Gen 12:1-20	What did Abraham give up in following God’s call upon him to leave his homeland in order to relocate to Canaan as God’s “Promised Land”? What is God calling you to give up for Him today?
Tue. 4/16	Gen 20:1-18	Why did God refer to Abraham as “a prophet” (v.7)? Does this change your idea of a Biblical prophet? Why would God punish Abimelek & his people when Abimelek didn’t even know Sarah was married due to Abraham’s deceit claiming she was merely his sister?
Wed. 4/17	Gen 21:1-7	What would you say to critics who claim it’s “unbelievable” or “impossible” that Abraham & Sarah could successfully conceive a child when he was 100 and she was over ninety? Has God ever asked <i>you</i> to believe for something seemingly impossible? Do you still believe Him for it?
Thu. 4/18	Gen 22:1-18	This is one of the most challenging passages in the Bible. Why would God test Abraham by asking him to sacrifice the child of promise? How would you answer someone who says this passage reveals God to be evil or cruel by condoning human sacrifice or traumatizing Isaac?
Fri. 4/19	Rom 4:1-25	Paul elaborates how Abraham’s faith precedes the sign & action of circumcision, rather than following it. How does Paul articulate Abraham’s faith? How can you follow in that same faith?
Sat. 4/20	John 8:31-59	What do you think Jesus meant when He said that Abraham “saw [My coming] & was glad” (v.56)? Shape your answer to reflect the other passages above that we’ve studied this week.

WEEK SEVENTEEN (April 21 — 27)
PREACHING: “The Call Through It All – JACOB’s Visions in the Night”
READ THE TEXT – Genesis 28:10-22; 32:22-32; 46:1-7

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In all likelihood, Abraham shared with his son Isaac & grandson Jacob his experiences of his divine encounters with God and the stories of the covenant promises God made to him. How do you think these stories would have impacted Jacob throughout his life? How would this knowledge have affected Jacob’s understanding of his vision of God & the angel stairway at Bethel in Genesis 28?

2. What does it tell you about Jacob that he established the anointed pillar at the place he renamed Bethel (“House of God”) and made promise of tithing to God at this site of his night vision in Genesis 28? How does this behavior relate to his later saying “I will not let You go unless You bless me” to the Divine figure he wrestled in Genesis 32:26 & his offering sacrifices to God as an old man at Beersheba in Genesis 46:1?

3. Why do you think God gave Jacob the new name of Israel in Genesis 32, and why did He choose the event of this nighttime wrestling match at such a crossroads in Jacob’s life in which to do it?

4. The journey Jacob made to Egypt with his entire extended family & all his accumulated wealth in Genesis 46, near the end of his life & likely weakened further by the effects of the ongoing famine, literally posed life-threatening challenges. The road was long & mostly exposed to the elements & wild predators as well as violent criminals. What does it tell you about Jacob’s faith, perseverance, and love for his family that Jacob makes the journey anyway? What fears & anxieties do you think Jacob may have felt along the way? How does God’s message to him help him with these? What is God’s “call through it all” to YOU in the present season of your life & as you look ahead?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 4/22	Gen 25:19-34	Though they were twins, Jacob & Esau had diametrically different personalities & attributes. (The nations of Israel & Edom came from these two.) Why didn’t Esau value more his birthright?
Tue. 4/23	Gen 27:1-46	The name Jacob means “heel grabber” as in “supplanter,” a name he fulfills in this passage. Yet God also shows him special favor. Why do you think God blessed Jacob despite his machinations?
Wed. 4/24	John 1:43-51	At the end of this passage, Jesus seems to identify Himself as “Jacob’s Ladder” as seen by the patriarch in his dream of Gen 28. Why do you think Jesus said this & what does it mean to you?
Thu. 4/25	Gen 29:1-30	Jacob’s ability to roll the stone away from the well on his own in v.10 shows his great strength that will also be on display in his wrestling match with God in Gen 32. How does his act of opening the well for Rachel reveal his kindness & character? How does Jacob’s uncle Laban treat Jacob to “a taste of his own medicine” in terms of his tricky dealings & manipulations?
Fri. 4/26	Gen 32:1-21	How does Jacob’s behavior in this passage reveal his fear that his brother Esau’s anger would be unabated & possibly life-threatening to Jacob? Given this real risk & the shame he also may have felt in facing his brother again, why wouldn’t Jacob simply relocate somewhere else?
Sat. 4/27	Gen 37:1-36	Describe Jacob’s emotions at hearing the false news that his beloved son Joseph had been killed. Jacob, who had sown deceit to his father in his youth & strife with his brother, reaps some of the same now in his elder years from his own children. Can you relate this to the verse of Galatians 6:7 (“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”)?

WEEK EIGHTEEN (April 28 — May 4)
PREACHING: “The Burning Bush – The Vision of MOSES”
READ THE TEXT – Exodus 3:1-22

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Prior to the events of Exodus chapter three in this week’s message, Moses had a killed an Egyptian & hid him in the sand (Exod 2:12) & he had to flee into the wilderness to escape a death sentence from Pharaoh for his crime (Exod 2:15). How does this information affect your feelings about Moses? How do you think it affected Moses having such a record & then being called by God to return to Egypt to confront the leadership there?

2. Why do you think God appeared to Moses in the manner of the Burning Bush? Why is it significant that this appearance of God is described as “the Angel (or Messenger) of the LORD”? What does Moses’ turning aside to attend to the Burning Bush tell us about his heart & character? How does God make Himself known to *you*? What are some ways in which you can turn your attention to God more fully today?

3. Why do you think God told Moses to remove his sandals when He described the ground at this site as holy in Exod 3:5?

4. Describe your understanding of the significance of God’s covenant Name of YHWH or I AM THAT I AM by which He presented Himself to Moses. Why do you think God says “This is My Name forever &...My memorial-name to all generations” (Exod 3:15)? What significance can we see in God’s Name being a verb?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 4/29	Exod 6:1-13, 28-30	In this passage, God reiterates to Moses much of what He already said from the Burning Bush. Why do you think He repeats it here & now? Why do you think the “discouragement & harsh labor” of the Israelites made it harder for them to believe God’s promises (v.9)?
Tue. 4/30	Exod 7:1-7	God tells Moses that his brother Aaron will be his prophet (v.1)—what does He mean by this & what does it tell us about the role of a prophet? Why & how do you think God hardened Pharaoh’s heart to resist God’s message (vv.3-4)? How can we recognize & <i>avoid</i> a “hard heart”?
Wed. 5/01	Exod 7:8-13	How do you think the Egyptian magicians were able “by their secret arts” to turn their staffs into snakes as God had done with Aaron’s staff (v.11)? What does it tell us that Aaron’s snake swallowed up their snakes? How does this scene give us more insight into Pharaoh’s heart?
Thu. 5/02	Deut 33:13-17	In his inspired blessing over the tribe of Joseph, Moses calls God “Him who dwelt in the Burning Bush” (v.16). Why might Moses have been prompted to reference the Burning Bush vision specifically in this context of blessings of abundance & fruitfulness from the land & divine favor?
Fri. 5/03	Gen 3:17-24	What linguistic & conceptual parallels can you see between the flaming sword turning in every direction by which God has guarded access to the Tree of Life in Genesis 3 & Moses turning aside to find God in the Burning Bush in Exodus 3? What might these connections teach us about <i>both</i> stories?
Sat. 5/04	Acts 7:17-53	In his trial by the religious leaders, Stephen (first martyr of the Church) gives a sermon summarizing the Hebrew scriptures, including this description of the life & ministry of Moses & how it relates to Jesus as the Messianic prophet like Moses raised up from the people (v. 37; cf. Dt 18:15). How are these religious leaders who persecute Stephen similar to Pharaoh in Exodus?

WEEK NINETEEN (May 5 — 11)
PREACHING: “The Commander of Heaven – The Vision of JOSHUA”
READ THE TEXT – Joshua 5:13-15

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Joshua was Moses’ lieutenant & protégé. Imagine what Moses may have shared personally & directly with Joshua about his encounter with the Angel of the LORD in the Burning Bush. How might Moses’ experience have impacted Joshua when the younger man himself met the Commander of the Armies of the LORD as described in today’s sermon?
2. The mysteriousness of the Angel Commander here in Joshua 5 seems reminiscent of the Man who wrestled with Jacob in Genesis 32 as seen in the sermon a couple of weeks ago. Pastor Court has preached on both of these events as probable Christophanies in which Jesus Christ was interacting with His people prior to His earthly Incarnation. How do the Man Jacob wrestled & the Commander Joshua met seem alike to you? In what ways are the interactions unique from each other?
3. What is the significance that the Angel’s sword is drawn (i.e. out & ready for battle use) when Joshua sees Him in verse 13? How does this relate to the many Bible descriptions of God’s word (& especially coming out of the Messiah’s mouth) as a sharpened sword (see e.g. Isaiah 49:2; Heb 4:12; Rev 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15)?
4. Why do you think the Angel of the Lord replies to Joshua by saying He is neither for Joshua & the Israelite army nor for the armies of their enemies but rather, “As the Commander of the Army of the LORD I have now come” (v. 14). What does Joshua falling to his knees before the Angel at this point tell you about who the Angel is and how Joshua feels about Him?
5. The LORD tells both Moses (in Exodus 3, as we saw last week) & Joshua (here in Joshua 5) to remove their sandals because they are on holy ground. How can you reflect your awareness of God’s Presence & holiness in your life in a practical way today that could impact the way you walk through this world of ours, i.e. that would impact your day-to-day living?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 5/06	Joshua 5:1-9	Why do you think the Israelites of the Exodus generation neglected to circumcise their sons in sign of the Covenant (v.5)? What does that tell us about their hearts & the sincerity of their faith?
Tue. 5/07	Joshua 5:10-12	How do the national observations of mass circumcision & subsequent celebration of the Passover relate to Joshua’s encounter with the Angel of God at the end of Joshua chapter 5?
Wed. 5/08	Revelation 1:1-20	What are some of the similarities you see between Joshua’s vision of the Angel Commander in Joshua 5 & John’s vision of the glorified Christ here in Revelation 1? How do these scenes relate?
Thu. 5/09	Isaiah 49:1-7	This text is known as one of the “Songs of the Suffering Servant,” prophetic Messianic passages in Isaiah. Can you relate what’s described here with the events in Joshua 5:13-15 & Revelation 1?
Fri. 5/10	Hebrews 4:1-13	Hebrews 4 not only describes God’s word as a sharp two-edged sword, it also comments on how the Israelites of the Exodus generation failed to enter the Promised Land. Why might the author of Hebrews have been thinking of Joshua 5 when writing this chapter in the Hebrews letter?
Sat. 5/11	Revelation 19:1-21	Compare the events & details of Joshua 5 when the Israelites were preparing to take fortified Jericho with the end times events of Revelation 19. How do these chapters help us face our own times & the events of our lives as believers in our world today?

WEEK TWENTY (May 12 — 18)
PREACHING: “By the Word of the Lord – The Vision of SAMUEL”
READ THE TEXT – 1 Samuel 3:1-21

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL CONTEMPLATION and/or GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Samuel was still just a little boy when he heard & saw the Lord while serving in the Tabernacle as described in 1 Samuel 3, as studied in today’s sermon. What does this tell us about God’s approach to people & particularly toward the Spirit of prophecy at work in His people? Do you think God could use a young child to prophecy today? Would you be available to hearing a Word of the Lord from a child like Samuel, used by God as His servant messenger? How would you know if God were speaking through a child to *you* in this way?

2. In the sermon, we examined how the passage of this chapter that first addresses Eli focuses on elements of darkness (vv. 2-3), blindness (v. 2), and a benighted spiritual sensibility across the land (v. 1). How do you see these aspects symbolically & literally comparable to our cultural conditions in our world today? How could you invite God to reveal & dispel any spiritual darkness & spiritual blindness in your life & walk today?

3. We also examined how Samuel is presented here in this chapter in contrast to Eli & his sons. Whereas Eli is laying down in darkness, increasing blindness, & a context of apparent complacency, Samuel is alert & attentive in the very heart of the sanctuary, symbolic of a soul readied to worship God through the act of obedience in listening for & responding to His call. How can you literalize the statement “Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening” in your life today? In other words, what are some ways you can position yourself to hear from God better & to obey Him more immediately & effectively in your own present circumstances? Be as specific as you can.

4. What do you think God means when He says to us through the prophet Isaiah, “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it” (Isaiah 30:21, NIV)? How is this reflected in Samuel’s story—not only here in 1 Sam 3 but also throughout his life & ministry to Israel? How does Isa 30:21 relate to *your* life & service to God?

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:

DAYS	READ	REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Mon. 5/13	1 Samuel 1:1-28	Verse 6 specifically states the LORD had closed Hannah’s womb. While we might take this simply as a colloquial synonym for barrenness, why might God have arranged this condition for a time?
Tue. 5/14	1 Samuel 2:1-11	This chapter opens with Hannah’s Song of Thanksgiving, an influential passage which later influences Ps 113 & Mary’s Magnificat in Luke 1. What points in this text indicate that Hannah is speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? What does this prophetic inspiration teach us?
Wed. 5/15	Psalms 113:1-9	This Psalm reflects the influence of Hannah’s song from 1 Sam 2. How & WHY does this Psalm compare God’s elevation of the humble with God granting children to barren women?
Thu. 5/16	Luke 1:46-55	Here, the Virgin Mary’s Magnificat in the New Testament also parallels Hannah’s song in 1 Sam 2. What connections do we find between the conditions of Samuel’s & Jesus’ conceptions/births?
Fri. 5/17	1 Samuel 2:12-26	How are the priestly sons of Eli & Hannah’s son Samuel compared & contrasted in this passage? What does that tell us about the nature of true & righteous worship in God’s eyes?
Sat. 5/18	1 Samuel 2:27-36	Here an unnamed “man of God” prophesizes to Eli about God’s coming judgment. How & WHY does this feed into Samuel later vision of the LORD as studied in this week’s sermon? What relevance does God’s prophecy of judgment upon the house of Eli have for us as believers today?