

# Challenge 2014:

## Read the Bible in a Year



### ***So, Why Bother?***

The simple answer to that question is because the Bible is a very special book, not just written by men over the years, but written by God through his servants the prophets and apostles. It contains Truth, Wisdom, Beauty, and guidance for living life well, but most importantly, it shows us Christ. Here in the Bible we find the story of the rebellion of man against God and God's grace in coming to man, sending his Son, and his Son's choice to die for our sins so that we might be brought back into fellowship with God himself through God's Son, Jesus.

If we are Christians, we are part of that story and the Bible reminds us of that part — it helps keep us focused in this often crazy-busy world in which we live. Often the things we face distract us from the reality that we belong to God — and knowing *whose* we are is just as important as knowing *who* we are. The Bible helps us keep both in focus and in perspective.

### ***But Do I Need to Read the Whole Thing?***

Yes and no. No, you don't need to read the whole thing every year to remain focused. Some years I choose to read through the whole thing, other years I choose to take a more concentrated look at a specific area. At the same time, as a Christian, you ought to have read through the whole thing at least once in your lifetime if not more often than that. There is an often-quoted phrase that says the Bible will never get old no matter how often you read it. It is true, but don't just take my word for it, test that yourself.

There was a woman in the church I grew up in that lived to be 104 years old. I remember sitting with her one day when I was a young man in my early 20s and she pointed to her Bible beside her and said: "I have been reading this book every day as long as I am able to remember and I have read it through more times than I can count — but every time I pick it up, God always shows me new insights and reveals his character to me in new ways." Loved ones, if God can do that with a book, can you imagine what he will reveal in person?

### ***But I Read Slowly...***

And... is that supposed to be an excuse? We make time for the things we make a priority, plus there are lots of Bible reading helps, plus translations that are aimed at various levels of reading ability. There are also audio-versions of the Bible that you can listen to in the car or are engaged in doing something else. And hey, the slower you read something, the more you tend to get out of it — so don't see your reading slowly as a burden, but see it as God's unique design for you to show you his revealed word in an intentionally deliberate way.

### ***So, How Much Do I Need to Read?***

There are lots of different reading plans to help you read the Bible in a Year. The one included does not jump around like some do, but have you reading through the Bible from cover to cover with one little twist. This reading plan follows the Hebrew Bible order of the Old Testament, not the English Bible ordering.

In essence, this plan has you reading about 4 chapters a day, six days a week. There are some sections that contain a little less than 4 chapters to help you stay caught up. The seventh day is a day of rest, so there is no assigned readings on Sundays. In addition, that builds in Sunday for you to:

- Catch up in last week's reading if you got behind
- Go back and re-read some passages that caught your attention
- Read another portion of the Bible that you are studying with a Bible Study

- Read the passage that I will be preaching on that Sunday
- Read ahead if the week to come looks like it will be really busy

### ***Why the Hebrew Order of the Old Testament?***

The Hebrews approach their Bible a little differently than we approach the Old Testament. While we are used to having things grouped more or less chronologically, they group things thematically, thus one book leads into the next because it shares common themes, not because it chronologically follows. For example, Proverbs ends with a song about a woman of great virtue and poses the question as to who can find such a woman. In the Hebrew ordering of the Bible, the book that follows Proverbs is Ruth. Ruth is that woman of character and Boaz found her. Another example is that Daniel and Esther are found back to back — both books answer the question, how does one live as a faithful Jew while in the king's palace in a foreign and pagan land. Here in these two books we have illustrations of a young man and a young woman respectively doing just that.

There is another reason to at least be exposed to the Hebrew ordering of the Bible. And that is because it was the ordering that Jesus used. After his resurrection, he speaks to the Apostles about all of the things written in "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms" about him. This is the traditional Jewish, three-fold, structure of the Old Testament. The Law consisted of Genesis through Deuteronomy, the books authored by Moses. The Prophets contained the historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings as well as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the 12 Minor Prophets. And the Writings, also known as the "Psalms" begins with the book of Psalms and includes the various other Old Testament books, closing with the books of Chronicles. This is the order in which Jesus would have read these books, so it seemed appropriate to read them in this order as well.

### ***A Plan for Help Along the Way***

New Year's Resolutions tend to come and go, especially if they are just a kind of abstract desire that you hang before yourself with no real plan to accomplish that which you desire to accomplish. My aim, then, is to help you along the way where possible. Here are some tools that you may find useful in this journey.

1. In the Weekly Prayer Journal section of your bulletin, by each day, you will find the scheduled readings listed to aid you as a reminder when you pray. It is the hope that these daily breakdowns will help the whole of the project seem less daunting.
2. For those of you interested, each week there will be a "Helps" sheet to accompany that week's reading (placed on the table in the Sunday School Building). This sheet will contain:
  - a. A summary of the coming week's reading. It is hoped that this summary will help keep you focused on the reading to come, but also, if there are weeks when you just cannot read, keep you "in the loop" with what has taken place so that you can keep reading with others in the church without falling behind.
  - b. "Chromatic Notes": In music, "chromatic notes" are those notes that are not essential to the melody, but add color. This will contain a bulleted list of interesting facts and observations that are meant to help you better see the redemptive-historical context and theological themes that run through the text. It is hoped, too, that some of these themes will catch your curiosity and imagination and might spur some Bible studies of your own.
  - c. The back of each page will contain a crossword puzzle based on the reading that you will do in the week to come. The questions are meant to highlight major themes as well as to call attention to interesting tidbits. For those of you with time to do crossword puzzles, it is hoped that this will both reinforce your reading and help you to dig deeper.
3. In monthly church newsletters, I will give a brief summary of the reading over the previous month.
4. Wherever possible, I will try and draw an application from the text within my sermon.

A Word of Encouragement and an Added Thought:

The beauty of the Bible is it is there and even if you don't make it through in a year, just a commitment to reading daily will serve you well, no matter how long it takes to read through. Also, to get more out of your reading, try keeping a journal handy to jot down notes and thoughts to look back on.

**So, the challenge is out,  
the only thing  
left to ask is,  
will you take it?**

***Testimonies:***

"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible"

- George Washington

"I have always said that a studious perusal of the Sacred Volume will make you better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands."

- Thomas Jefferson

"The first and almost only book deserving of universal attention is the Bible. I speak as a man of the world. So great is my veneration for the Bible, that the earlier my children begin to read it, the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year."

- John Quincy Adams

"The Bible is the Magna Carta of the poor and oppressed. The human race is not in a position to dispense with it."

-Thomas Huxley

"Science itself does not address the question of whether we should use the power at our disposal for good or for evil. The guidelines of what we ought to do are furnished in the moral law of God. It is no longer enough that we pray that God may be with us on our side. We must learn again to pray that we may be on God's side."

-Werner Von Braun  
(*the "father" of the US Space flight program*)

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 1: Genesis 1-16 (January 1-4)

### Summary:

Genesis is a book of beginnings. Not only do we have the beginning of all things being spoken of, but we have the beginning of marriage, the beginning of sin, the beginning of redemption, the beginning of strife between the children of Satan and the children of God, the new beginning after Noah, and the beginning of God's Covenantal call upon Abram. These chapters are quite essential if one is going to understand one's own place in the world as well as one's relationship with God.

Genesis 1 and 2 contain two creation accounts that harmonize, but are told from two different perspectives. The first creation account gives us a divine perspective, demonstrating how God, in his power, brought creation into being and filled it with life. Genesis 2 begins with the command to rest on the Sabbath Day and then tells the story of creation with a focus on mankind, zooming in on day 6 and giving us a more relational account of this event.

While we do not know how much time elapsed between the end of Genesis 2 and the beginning of Genesis 3, we move from the joy of creation to the grief of sin in the fall of man and their exile from the garden. We should note Genesis 3:15 though, for here God gives to Adam and Eve a promise that he will send a redeemer to crush the head of the serpent and destroy his works.

Genesis 4 begins a time of separation between those who will be spiritual descendants of Eve (children of God) and those who will be spiritual descendants of the Serpent (children of the Devil). Cain, a child of the Serpent, slays his brother, Abel (a child of God), and this ushers in two separate lines of people and strife between them. Genesis 6 begins with the culmination of that strife where everyone in the world had embraced wickedness largely as a result of the children of God not remaining separate from the children of the Serpent. God redeems Noah and the Ark would be built and through the Ark, a people would be redeemed for God while wrath was poured out on his enemies. Do not think of the flood waters as something gentle, caused by 40 days of persistent rain. Instead, recognize that not only did rain come down, but the waters of the deep (geysers) were also released, creating huge tectonic shifts, earth quakes, tornados, and volcanic activity. It would have been a very scary place to be.

After the floods subside, Noah and his family set out to repopulate the new world though Ham would take with him the line of wickedness and by Genesis 11 we find people deliberately disobeying the command of God to fill the earth as they stop and build a city to their own glory.

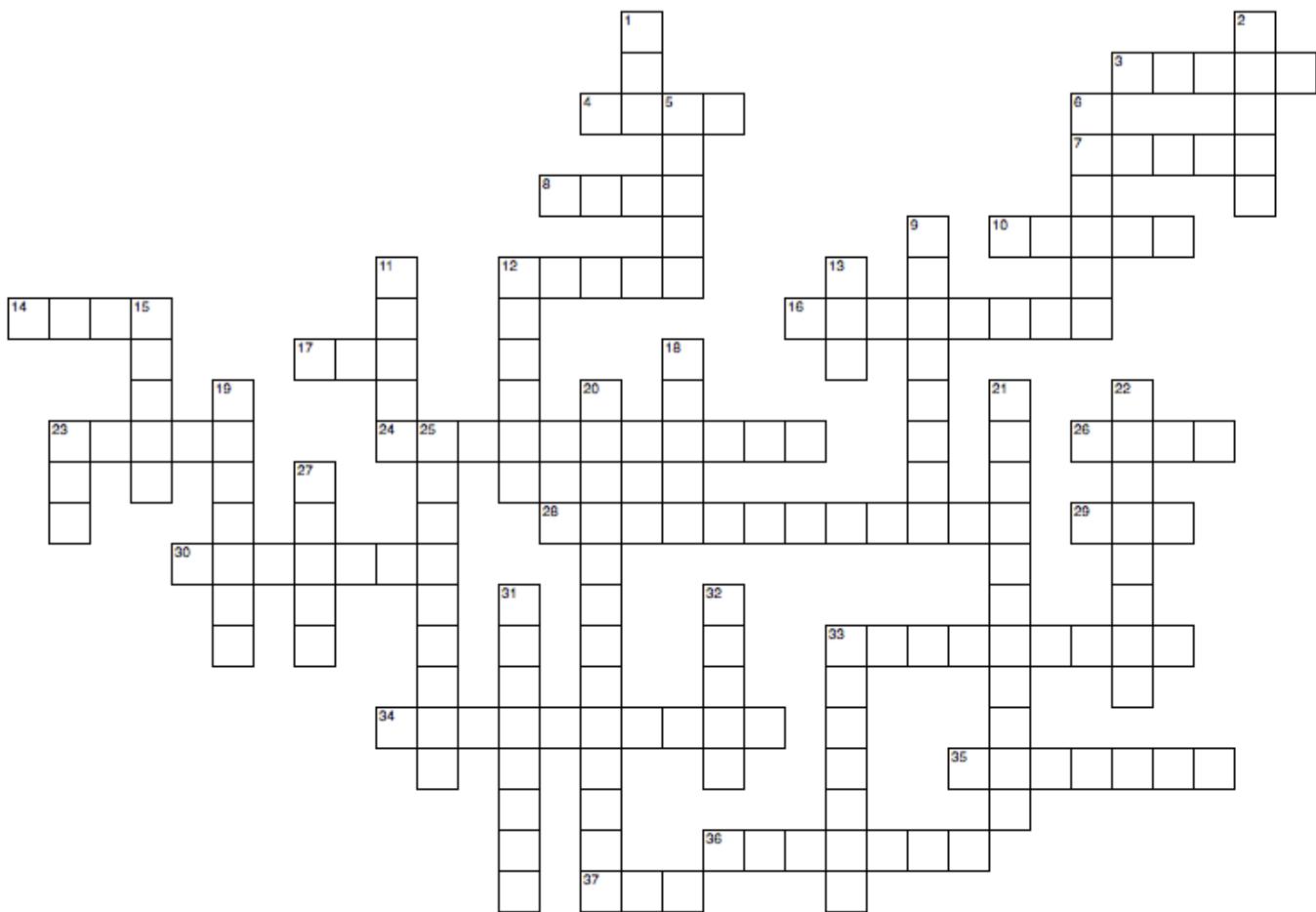
Thus God confuses the language and forces them to follow his command.

And finally, as we move into Genesis 12-16, we find God's call upon Abraham (then still Abram) to leave his native country and travel to Canaan. In Genesis 15 we find a wonderful picture of Covenant as God portrays it to Abram by stepping through the line of dismembered animals while Abram is placed in a deep sleep. God is essentially saying to Abram, "If your people fail in keeping my covenant, may I die in your place. That, of course, was fulfilled in Jesus' going to the cross.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Genesis 1 begins with God creating "ex-nihilo" or out of nothing. In other words, prior to Genesis 1, nothing but God existed. God did not create out of existing substance, but created substance out of nothing.
- In Genesis 1:2, we find the creation spoken as being without form and empty. Days 1-3 we will find God giving form to that which was originally without form and in Days 4-6 we will find God filling that which he has formed. There is tremendous symmetry and parallelism here that ought not be missed.
- God made mankind to bear his image. In other words, we are like him in the sense that we create, we communicate, we think and reason, and that we love and come into relationships with others. We are not made to be alone, but to be in relationship. In addition, the diversity of our appearances is a reminder of the infinity of God. This creation in God's image (*Imago Dei*, in Latin) also stands as a reminder to us that mankind has dignity no matter how frail, old, young, feeble, or outcast that person may be.
- Note that work is introduced pre-fall, it is the sweat and toil that comes from frustrated work that is a mark of the Fall. And Adam and Eve's original work was to be that of farmers, tending and expanding God's cultivated garden to the world.
- The heartache of the Fall is not just in Adam and Eve's sin, but essentially in their choosing to listen to the voice of the Serpent rather than the voice of God. Yet, in our own sin, do we not do the same thing?
- It should be noted that Adam not only blamed Eve for his eating of the fruit, but even God — "It was the woman that *you* gave me..."
- Note that Noah and his family were on the Ark for about a year, not just 40 days.
- We don't know what Ham did in the presence of his drunken father, but the language used normally is used of sexual immorality.
- Melchizedek (Genesis 16) is the king of Salem (which means "Peace") and his name means "King of Righteousness." He is a foreshadow of the true King of Righteousness, Jesus Christ, who will come. In fact, the writer of Hebrews will point out that Jesus' priesthood is a greater priesthood than Aaron's because Jesus comes from the Priestly line of Melchizedek, not Aaron.

# January 1-4: Genesis 1-16



## ACROSS

3. It is here that God confused the languages.
4. God planted a garden here.
7. God created man and woman in his \_\_\_\_\_.
8. God rested on the seventh day and pronounced it \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The father of Abraham
12. God said, "Let there be" this on day 1.
14. Abel's replacement.
16. This is what Noah planted after the Ark settled.
17. Who created the heavens and the earth?
23. God asked Abraham to number these and then promised Abraham that his children would match that number.
24. The king of Salem whose priesthood Jesus' is modeled after.
26. God created the stars, the sun, and the moon on this day.
28. This king conquered Sodom, taking Lot as a prisoner.
29. This would happen to Adam and Eve were they to eat of the fruit of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
30. We use this word to refer to the day of rest.
33. This is who Adam blamed when God confronted him after eating the fruit.
34. His name means "He sends death" (hint: he was really old and died in the year the flood came)
35. Who was more crafty than any other animal?
36. God placed this in the heavens as a sign to creation that he would never again destroy the world with water.
37. God created man and woman on this day.

## DOWN

1. This is where Cain settled after he was cast out.
2. How many pairs of clean animals were brought onto the Ark?
5. This is the first place that Abraham gets in trouble for telling people that Sarah is his sister.
6. The grandson of Ham and a mighty hunter.
9. After Adam and Eve were exiled from Eden, these creatures were placed at the entrance to ensure Adam and Eve could not return.
11. Abraham's nephew, Lot, decided he would settle near this city.
12. The polygamous son of Methusael.
13. From this part of Adam, God fashioned Eve.
15. Sarah's midwife.
18. This is where Cain slew Abel
19. The name of Abraham's son by Sarah's Midwife.
20. Abraham believed and it was counted to him as this.
21. God foretells that Abraham's children would remain in Egypt for how many years?
22. Man and woman were to have this over the earth.
23. The number of days that God created before he rested.
25. One of the four rivers that split off of the river that flowed out of Eden.
27. The unit of measurement by which the Ark was constructed.
31. These were on the earth in the days of Noah — what they were is unclear but their name means "those who fall on others"
32. It is from here that Abraham and his family traveled to go to Canaan.
33. This along with morning bounds the days.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 2: GENESIS 17-40 (JANUARY 5-11)

### Summary:

Our reading this week begins with God giving Abram the covenantal sign of circumcision — a sign that will be replaced in the New Testament by covenantal baptism. In this same context, God also changes Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah. The covenant is renewed and God promises once again a son through whom the covenant shall be fulfilled.

Chapters 18 and 19 combine to tell the story of God's covenantal blessing and cursing. To Abraham and Sarah will come a child (Isaac) but to the wicked people of Sodom, judgment will befall them. God sends The Angel of Yahweh to bring Lot and his family out of the city and call them to flee to the hills for God is going to not only destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but also the whole valley around them — a valley today known as "The Dead Sea." Lot is afraid to run to the mountains so God permits him and his family to stop in Zoar though the people of that town resent Lot and he and his daughters end up hiding out in the hills where the girls ultimately get their father drunk and commit incest with him, giving birth to Moab and Ben-ammi, the fathers of the Moabites and the Ammonites.

As we move into chapter 20, for a second time Abraham fears the people of the land and tells folks that Sarah is his sister. And once again God delivers Sarah from a wicked king. And later at the age of 90, Sarah gives birth to Isaac. In chapter 22, when Isaac is a boy (probably a pre-teen or young teenager), God commands Abraham to do the unthinkable, to sacrifice his son — something God would ultimately do himself. But Isaac serves as a foreshadow of what God would do with Jesus.

Sarah passes away in chapter 23 and in the following chapter, Abraham sends his trusted servant to find a wife from his homeland for his son, Isaac. Isaac would end up marrying Rebekah, his cousin and Abraham would remarry and this time have several children with his new wife, though none of those children would inherit God's covenantal promises.

As we move from the account of Abraham, we find ourselves with Isaac and Rebekah's children, Esau and Jacob. Jacob, the favorite of Rebekah, successfully steals the birthright from his brother and flees to his uncle Laban's home where he meets Rachel. Desiring to marry Rachel, he labors for 7 years to earn that privilege only to be duped by his future father-in-law and ended up marrying Leah, her older sister. Jacob works an additional 7 years for the right to marry Rachel as well. There seems to be a baby birthing contest and Jacob ends up with 12 sons and a daughter.

Jacob's eventual flight from Laban would leave him crossing paths with his brother, Esau again, though Esau has forgiven him. Yet, in the midst of all of this, there is a wrestling

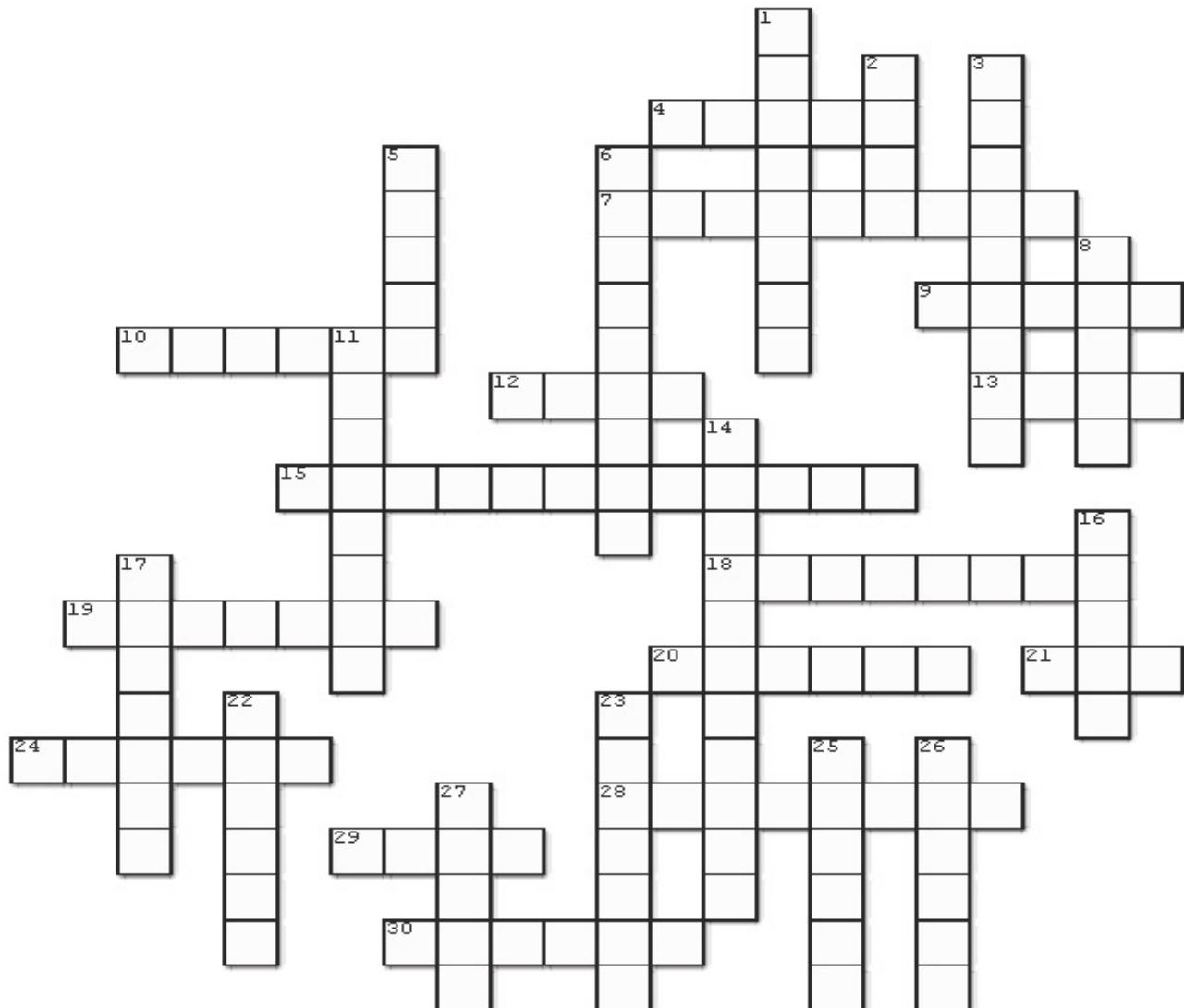
match with The Angel of the Yahweh that leaves Jacob with a limp and a new name: Israel (the one who strove with God).

Soon we will see a new major figure introduced, that of Jacob's son, Joseph, the dreamer. Earning the enmity of his brothers, he ends up being sold to the Ishmaelites and taken to Egypt as a slave. Originally, Joseph begins as the house manager for Potiphar until Potiphar's wife takes an interest in Joseph, landing him in prison, though the scriptures are clear that God never abandons him. Our readings end with Joseph interpreting the dreams of a Baker and a Cupbearer for Pharaoh.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Note that in Galatians 3:16, Paul points out that the "seed" promised to Abraham is ultimately Christ, making believers in Christ children of Abraham.
- Three "men" approach Abraham while he is resting in the midday (Genesis 18). If you look closely at the things these angels do and how they are referred to, it is considered by many people that these are the angels Michael and Gabriel along with the pre-incarnate Christ.
- Abraham cannot successfully intercede for Sodom as he is not a Sodomite and has no authority to be their mediator.
- We often lose track of time for the Biblical account does not always give us information as to how much time transpires between chapters, but Isaac is 37 years old at the death of his mother and 65 years old when his father, Abraham passes away.
- As Jacob leaves his homeland to find a bride, he retraces his grandfather, Abraham's steps, essentially entering into Abraham's story of promise and God renews his covenant with Jacob at Beersheba, a significant place in Abraham's journeying.
- The dream that Jacob had of the ladder to heaven is mentioned again in John 1:51 and Jesus is referred to as the ladder.
- In Jacob's interaction with Laban, both men are tricksters, but Jacob is God's trickster, making all of the difference.
- Joseph is 28 years old at the beginning of chapter 40. Notice also, the Baker states to Joseph, "I had a dream." When it comes time for Joseph to interpret Pharaoh's dream, Pharaoh states, "I was in my dream," making it more personal, ominous, and urgent.

## Week 2: Genesis 17-40



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

4. Abraham lived by the 'oaks of' this place.
7. Abraham makes a covenant with Abimelech over wells at this place.
9. Isaac's brother-in-law and Jacob's father-in-law.
10. The name of Rachel's first son (hint: he was a dreamer).
12. Lot's wife turned into a pillar of this.
13. Jacob's twin brother.
15. This was the sign of the covenant placed on young boys.
18. One of the tribes that would descend from Lot's incestuous relationship with his daughters.
19. Isaac's wife.
20. The name of Jacob's firstborn.
21. This was the substitute for Isaac when Abraham was to sacrifice him.
24. This is the land that contains the mountain on which Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac.
28. Abraham bought a burial plot for Sarah from these people.
29. The city to which Lot originally fled.
30. Jacob renamed Beersheba this because of a dream.

### Down

1. One of two major cities that God destroyed by fire.
2. Jacob's first wife.
3. Joseph interprets the dream of this prisoner favorably.
5. Jacob's only daughter.
6. For a second time in his life, Lot was afraid and told this man that Sarah was his sister.
8. The ill-fated wife of Er who would be the mother of Perez.
11. Joseph's first master in Egypt.
14. These people bought Joseph and took him to Egypt.
16. The child of Abraham through which the covenant would be given.
17. The wife of Abraham after Sarah's death.
22. Jacob's second wife.
23. God hears the voice of this boy crying in the wilderness and promises to make a great nation from him.
25. The mother of Dan and Naphtali.
26. The place where Jacob had his famous wrestling match.
27. This prisoner's dream proved a foreshadow of death.

# **Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year**

## **Week 3: Genesis 41 - Exodus 14 (January 12-18)**

### **Summary:**

More so than anything, the final chapters of Genesis are an illustration of God's providence. It is here that God raises Joseph up to the role of Pharaoh's Vice-Chancellor over all of Egypt and in doing so, God used Joseph to prepare a place for his family to come and to become a nation. These are not random acts of chance, but the design of God as he works out his plan of redemption.

After two years of waiting, the Chief Cupbearer remembers Joseph and speaks of him to Pharaoh, who has been having perplexing dreams. Joseph is clear that just as the dreams are coming from God, so too are the interpretations. In interpreting the dreams, Joseph reveals that Egypt is going to have seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine and guides the Pharaoh in setting up a plan to prepare the people of the nation to be able to weather the famine to come (and it would be this famine that would bring Jacob and his family to Egypt as well).

When Joseph's brothers arrive in Egypt, Joseph plays a bit with them. This action is not so much a matter of malice as it is a way of finding out about his father and the rest of the family. Perhaps it is also a reminder of his sense of the dramatic that we saw earlier in Joseph's life. It is not long, though, before Joseph ceases to be able to hold back his tears of joy at this providential reunion and grace flows and the family will be situated in Goshen, the richest plot of pastureland by the Nile River.

Joseph does an interesting thing when it came to guiding Egypt through the famine. In history, prior to this event, Egypt was largely ruled by powerful princes in a confederation with the Pharaoh. Yet, during the seven years of plenty, Joseph imposes a tax to fill the grain houses and then during the seven years of famine, Joseph sold the people's food back to them, breaking the power of the rich land owners and consolidating Pharaoh's supreme authority. Again, God was setting Egypt up not only to provide a safe haven for Jacob but also to crush them in one fell swoop during the Exodus.

Genesis wraps up with Jacob giving blessings to his sons then his death and subsequently Joseph's death as well. Joseph's brothers are a bit fearful at their father's death thinking that Joseph would now get even with them, but Joseph's response was to say that though they meant evil in what they did; God intended their action to bring about Good.

Exodus begins about 400 years after the death of Joseph when there arose a king that did not remember Joseph. The Israelites had grown into a nation under the protection of Egypt and now it was the time for God to bring his people out, yet Egypt would not let go. Moses is born and at 40 years old he has to flee Egypt because he took matters into his own hands and slew an Egyptian. He ends up in the wilderness of Midian tending the sheep of his father-in-law for an additional 40 years, then, in Exodus 3, God calls Moses to return. There are excuses and God sends Aaron. There is resistance from the Pharaoh, and God sends plagues on Egypt. Eventually, the tenth plague takes place and God institutes the most significant feast in the Jewish

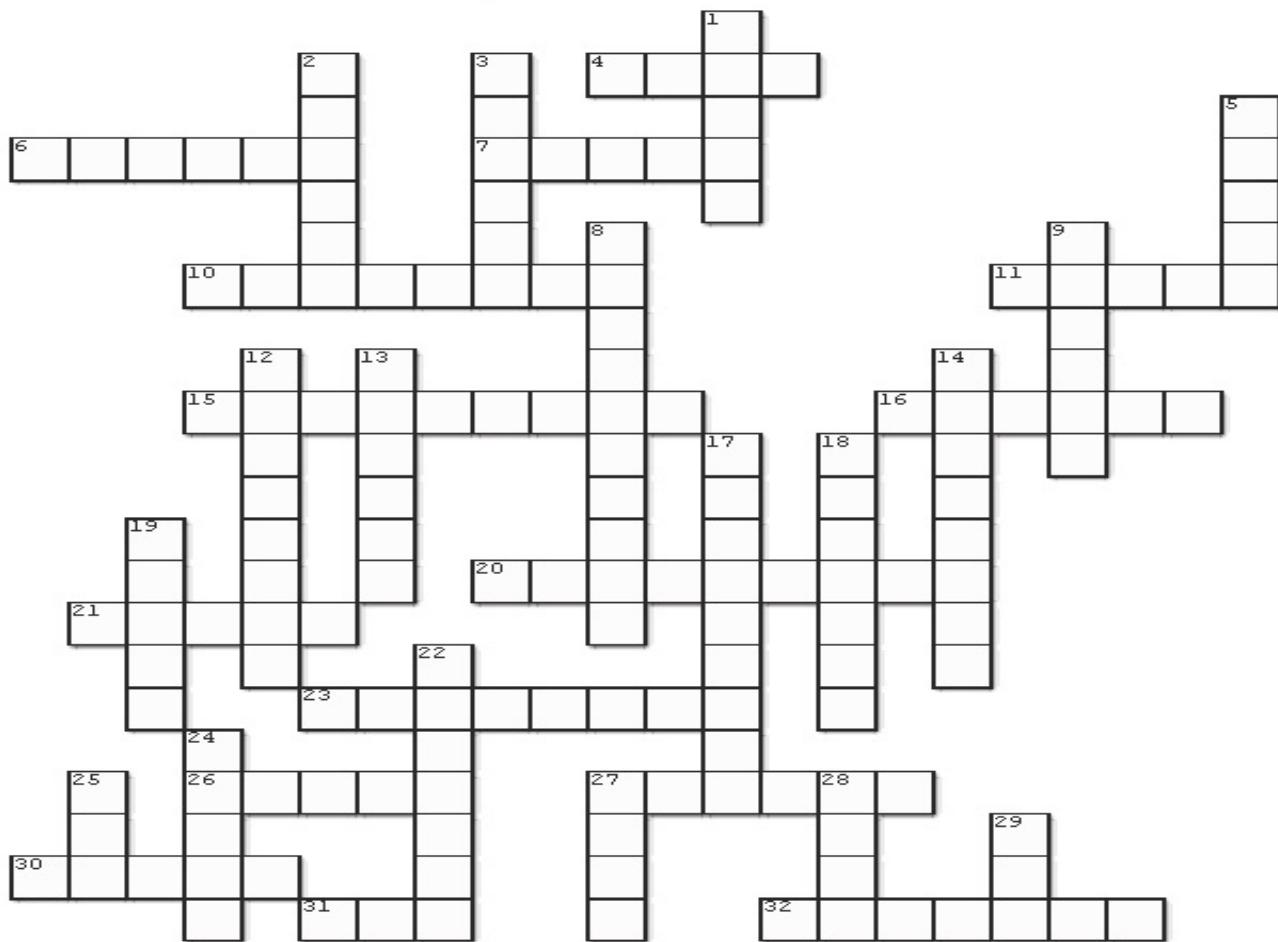
calendar: Passover, and Pharaoh lets the people go. Regrets it, and our passage comes to a close with the crossing of the Red Sea.

### **Chromatic Notes:**

- Note the emphasis on "remembering" that you find in these chapters...the cupbearer remembering Joseph, God not forgetting Joseph, the Egyptians not remembering Joseph, etc... This is a major Biblical theme: memory helps keep us faithful; forgetfulness leads us into idolatry.
- Joseph was 17 years old when he was sent to Egypt and 30 when he went into the service of the Pharaoh. That is a long time to wait for God's hand to move — we can learn much about God's timing in our own lives from this simple reality.
- In Genesis 48, Jacob takes Joseph's son's, Manasseh and Ephraim as his own. This gave these children of Joseph each an inheritance in the land along with their uncles.
- Pay attention to the "blessings" of Jacob on his sons, for some of them, it is anything but a blessing...but the language is prophetic.
- Note too that when Joseph died his body was embalmed by the Egyptians, not simply buried like the Hebrews practiced.
- The last words of Genesis are "In Egypt" and are meant as a foreboding reminder that this is not the land promised to them.
- Note that the Midwives that did not destroy the Hebrew babies are commended and blessed by God not for their lie to Pharaoh, but because they feared God rather than men.
- The Hebrew word for the basket Moses' mother placed him in is the same word in Hebrew that is used of Noah's Ark.
- Moses' name means: "Son of" in Egyptian, but the object — son of whom — is left off.
- Moses' life can be divided into 3 groups of 40 years: 40 years in Egypt in Pharaoh's house, 40 years in the wilderness in Jethro's house, and 40 years in the wilderness in God's house.
- The name "I AM" that God offers is the source of the word "Yahweh" in modern documents and "Jehovah" in older ones. This name of God reflects his eternity and covenantal presence.
- While we often focus on the plagues on Egypt, we must remember that they are all focused on things that the Egyptians worshiped. The most important was the final plague of the death of the firstborn and the celebration of Passover. It is this celebration that Jesus transforms into the Lord's Supper.
- Notice that when the Red Sea event takes place, the waters take all night to recede and they begin on the other side...a reminder to the Israelites to trust God's timing. The event is reminiscent of Genesis 1 where God separates the sea from the dry land and in addition, the Apostle Paul connects this crossing with the sacrament of Christian baptism.

# Week 3: Genesis 41-Exodus 14

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

Week 3: Genesis 41-Exodus 14

1/11/14, 4:51 PM

## Across

4. God used this from the east to part the Red Sea.
6. This is the region in Egypt where Jacob and his sons settle.
7. Moses' mother hid him this many months before she put him in the basket.
10. This was Jacob's youngest son that he did not send to Egypt (initially).
11. This was the portion that the people of Egypt were taxed on their harvest by Pharaoh (even during the lean years).
15. Jacob is buried in a cave in a field in this place, east of Mamre.
16. In the first encounter between Joseph and his brothers, this brother was bound by Joseph and left behind.
20. The brother's of Joseph were instructed to tell Pharaoh that they were of this occupation. (plural)
21. What mountain was Moses on when he saw the burning bush?
23. Moses married this daughter of the Priest of Midian (her name means 'bird').
26. This son will receive the richest farmland in Canaan once they settle there.
27. God used Pharaoh's dreams to warn them of seven years of this.
30. In the seventh plague, God rained down thunder and hail and fire, reminding us of the destruction of this city from Genesis.
31. By this name the generations are to know God. (2 words)
32. The Egyptians wept for Jacob for this many days after his death.

## Down

1. Led the people out of Egypt with a pillar of cloud and fire as well as with this 'messenger.'
2. Jacob was living in this land when the famine struck.
3. This was one of the store cities the Hebrews built for Pharaoh
5. In Jacob's prophesy, the scepter (representing kingship) would never pass from this son and his descendants.
8. The bread used at Passover had this characteristic.
9. A cup made of this metal was put in the mouth of Benjamin's sack on their return trip.
12. The tenth plague brought death to those who did not paint the blood of the lamb on their doorposts and instituted an annual remembrance feast entitled:
13. This was how old Joseph was when he came into Pharaoh's service.
14. How many people belonging to Jacob, not including Jacob's son's wives. (2 words)
17. Rachel is buried on the way to the city of Ephrath, better known to us as \_\_\_\_\_.
18. As a sign that God was the one speaking to him, Moses was asked to put his hand in his cloak and it came out with this disease.
19. The second plague did not make the people very hoppy.
22. The name of Joseph's second son.
24. Moses' brother who was sent to be his mouthpiece.
25. The Chief Cupbearer forgot about Joseph for this many years.
27. How many changes of clothes did Joseph give to his brother Benjamin.
28. The fat and skinny cows in Pharaoh's dream were by this river.
29. This son of Jacob is described as being a viper and a serpent in the path.

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 4: Exodus 15-38 (January 20-26)

### Summary:

We begin this week's reading with Moses' song of God's redemption, praising God for his deliverance through the Red Sea. Following Moses' song is Miriam's song, significantly shorter than Moses' song, but probably prepared as a refrain sung during rests in Moses' song. Humans, though, tend to be fickle and immediately after the song of Moses we find the people facing hardship and beginning to complain. The water at Marah was bitter, probably meaning stagnant and undrinkable, and the people were thirsty. Here God worked a miracle — one of a great many in the wilderness, making the water "sweet" — able to be drunk.

Shortly after, the people began complaining about food and God sent Mana from heaven to feed his own — and not just mana, though that would have been enough, but quail also. The final gift of food brought to the people was that of water coming from a rock and it is this water that would follow the Israelites through their wanderings.

As the Israelites approached Mount Horeb, better known to us as Sinai, Amalek and his people, the first of the nations outside of Egypt would rise up against them. This is where we are told the well-known account of Moses raising his hands while the Israelites battled and needing with them prevailing while his hands were raised and falling back when hands were lowered.

The people moved closer and set up camp around Mount Sinai and were joined by Moses' father-in-law, Jethro (also known as Reuel, the Priest of Midian). It is here that Jethro encourages Moses to have Elders elected from the people to try cases and handle disputes, only bringing the most significant problems to Moses.

One of the most significant events in the history of God's people takes place at Mount Sinai, God presents his people with what we know as the Ten Commandments. Here God codifies a set of standards for the life of God's people. From these ten commands, all of the civil laws will also be derived. These are not new commands as warrant for all is found within the pages of Genesis, but it is here that all of these laws and moral expectations are brought together and written on stone by the finger of God.

What follows is a series of civil guidelines, drawn from the 10 Commandments, and that are applied to the people. It is in this section that the well-known principle "an eye-for-an-eye and a-tooth-for-a-tooth" can be found. Sometimes this language sounds harsh to us, but understand first that it is far more equitable than most ancient cultures of the day, it asserts a principle that the punishment must fit the crime but not exceed the crime, and it ultimately seeks justice done in the life of the community.

Other principles can be found as well — that if there is theft, typically one-and-a-half or double restitution is to be made. In some cases, where a man's livelihood is put in jeopardy by the theft (like that of an ox), four or five times restitution is required. It is here that the death penalty is expressed where there is a death of an unborn child — a reminder that God views the unborn as fully human.

In this section, we are also introduced to the plans God has for the building of the Tabernacle, a tent of worship that will contain the sign of his presence in confirmation of the covenant that God gives. Though sometimes the detail can be wearying, it is a sign to us as to how seriously God takes our worship. Chapter after chapter is spent giving these details.

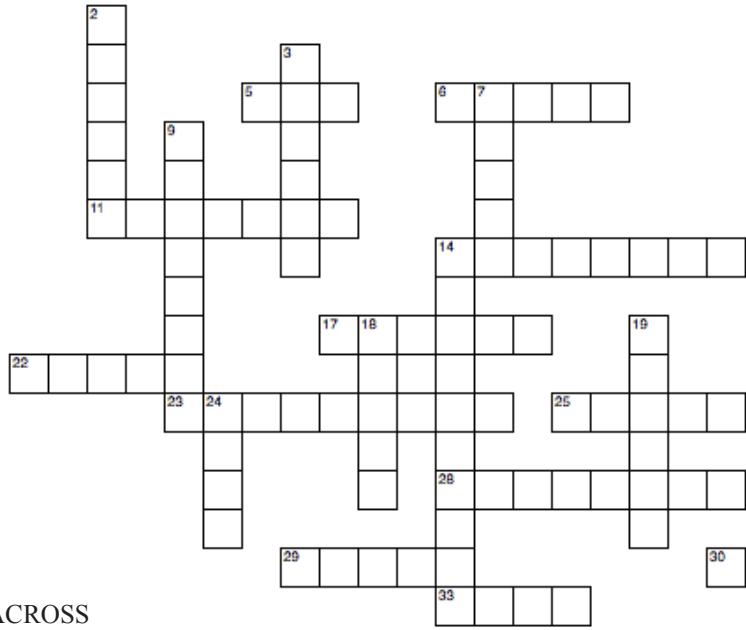
Moses has spent 40 days on the mountain with God and that causes the people to become restless. They talk Aaron into making a golden calf to worship in the absence of Moses' leadership. Aaron gives in and they do so. Moses, of course, stumbles on their activity and in rage smashes the Ten Commandments to the ground as a visual sign to

the people that they had already broken every single one. Even in his anger, Moses intercedes for God's people and God's wrath is withdrawn (a picture of Christ's intercession for us). The people repent, the covenant will be renewed, and then they will get to work on the making of the Tabernacle. Our reading closes, then as the people make that which God had commanded to the precise design of the Lord.

### Chromatic Notes:

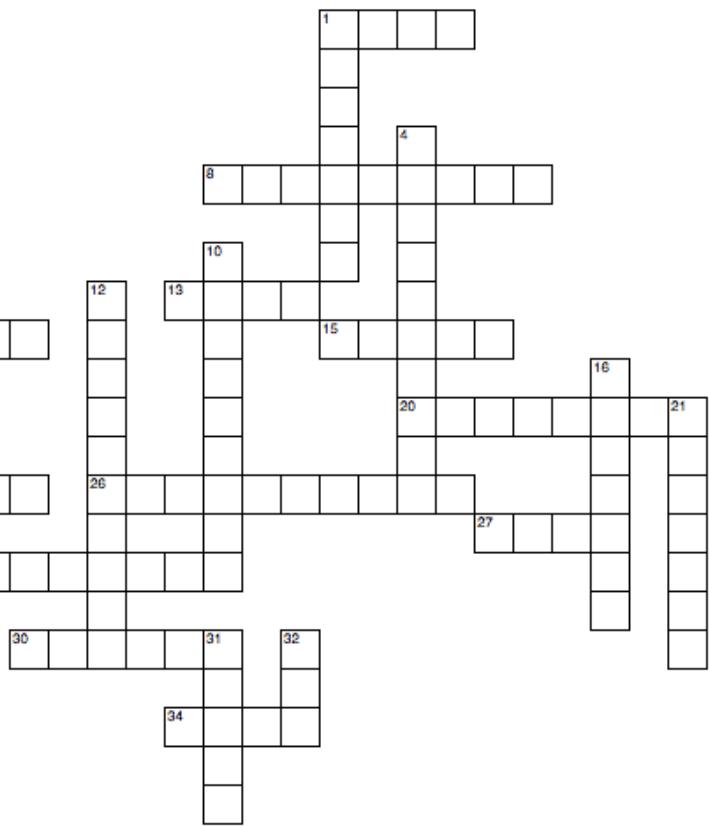
- Many scholars think that the Songs of Moses and Miriam were actually sung essentially together with the men singing a few verses of Moses' song and the women echoing with Miriam's refrain. Regardless of how the song was sung, though, there were well over a million people singing together in the desert on that day; I can only begin to imagine the power of hearing all of those voices lifted up in song together.
- Mana means, "What is it?" reflecting the confusion the Israelites had. They would eat Mana through the 40 years of wilderness wanderings and for the first year they entered into Canaan — until the first harvest was brought in.
- 1 Corinthians 10:4 points out that the rock in the wilderness that brought forth water anticipates Christ who gives us living water.
- Amalek is a descendant of Esau (Genesis 36:12), again we see this rivalry between the children of Jacob and Esau rising up.
- Jethro's priestly name, Reuel, means "Friend of God" and fits as a likely title given to this priest of Midian.
- The Election of Elders found in Exodus 18 provides the basis for the Christian understanding of Eldership in the church — men elected by the people who will serve as overseers to maintain the peace and purity of the people of God.
- The Ten Commandments go by many names in the history of God's people. Sometimes they are called the "Moral Law of God" and sometimes they are called the "Decalogue."
- It is this moral law of God that Jesus says will never pass away until the heavens and the earth will pass away (Matthew 5:18); in addition, this law not only gives us a basis for civil government, but it also serves to drive us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). Also, as God expresses his perfect character in his perfect law, it can be used as a tool by Christians in our sanctification, as we strive to live a life honoring to God.
- Ohielab and Bezalel are introduced to us as expert craftsmen who oversee the work being done on the making of the furnishings for the temple. Note that they are first filled by the Spirit to be able to craft as they do (a reminder that craftsmanship is a gift of God) and though our Bibles don't always translate it as so, they are described as "wise" in their craft, a reminder that wisdom covers not just choices but actions and activities as well.
- There is an amazing self-testimony of God found in the context of Moses' intercession for the people as a result of the Golden Calf. In Exodus 34:6-7, God passes by Moses (who is kept safe in the cleft of the rock!) and declares his character — he is merciful and gracious, abounding in steadfast love, but at the same time a just God who judges the wicked even to the third or fourth generation.

# Week 4: Exodus 15-38



## ACROSS

1. This young animal was not to be boiled in its mother's milk.
5. How many years are you permitted to sow the land before you give it rest?
6. Four of these were required in restitution if you were caught thieving them.
8. God promises Israel that if they will be obedient, he will give them the land from the Sea of the Philistines (Mediterranean) to this Middle-Eastern river.
11. One of the "wise" craftsmen of the Tabernacle furnishings.
13. The vessels and utensils for the Table of Testimony were made from this material.
14. On the fifteenth day of the second month after they were away from Egypt, the people of God did this.
15. Another name for Horeb.
17. The first battle that Israel has in the wilderness is with \_\_\_\_\_, the descendant of Esau.
20. Moses wrote down the words of God on the mountain and then read it to the people; this was called the Book of the \_\_\_\_\_.
22. This was crafted on the four corners of the Altar.
23. Another word for a traveler or an alien.
25. This is the penalty if you were to strike a man so that he died.
26. Passover is also called the Feast of this kind of bread.
27. The bread God supplied to the people in the wilderness.
28. Moses had to command the people to stop bringing these because they had ample materials to build the Tabernacle and sanctuary.
29. God also provided this in the wilderness for meat.
30. This kind of angel was crafted on top of the Ark of the Covenant.
33. This part of Moses shone brightly after speaking with God.
34. You shall not pervert justice to this group or class of people.



## DOWN

1. The name of one of Moses' sons.
2. A father-in-law with good advice for Moses.
3. She led the women in singing after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea.
4. This was the name given to the sanctuary in the wilderness.
7. You are to show this to your father and mother.
9. God promised to pass all of this before Moses on the mountain.
10. You shall not permit one of these to live.
12. This instrument was used by the women as they celebrated the Red Sea crossing.
14. Aaron and the People made this when they feared Moses might have died on the mountain. (2 words)
16. We are to remember this day and keep it holy.
18. This place means "bitter."
19. The Ark of the Covenant was made from this kind of wood.
21. The High Priest also had two stones on his breastplate that were to help him discern the will of God (hint: not Urim).
24. The names of the sons of Israel (12 Tribes) were carved on this kind of stone.
31. In renewing the covenant, Moses took this from the sacrifice and threw it on the people.
32. One of the men who helped hold up Moses' arms during the battle.

## CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

### WEEK 5: EXODUS 39 — LEVITICUS 18 (JANUARY 26 — FEBRUARY 1)

#### **Summary:**

Exodus comes to a close with the making and consecrating of the priestly garments and then the official raising of the Tabernacle. All are washed and presented at the court of the Tabernacle and God's Glory Cloud descended into the Tabernacle. This cloud not only led the people through the wilderness, more importantly, it was a symbol that the presence of God, though veiled because of man's sin, was with them. When John will introduce his Gospel, he will intentionally use similar language to point out that Jesus is the greater Tabernacle and the Greater Temple — no longer a symbol of God's presence with us, but God in the flesh in our presence (John 1:14).

In Genesis 2 we found God dwelling with man in perfect fellowship before Man sinned, separating ourselves from God. In the Tabernacle, we find God's veiled presence coming and dwelling in temporary tents with men. In the Temple, we again find a veiled God coming and dwelling with men, but in a more permanent structure (though not eternal as the Babylonians and the Romans both proved). In Christ, we see God taking on flesh to dwell with men and as a result of Christ's atoning sacrifice, God then in His Spirit, dwelling in men (in believers). Yet, we still await a new creation where there will no longer be any separation nor any temporary state, for in the New Creation God will once again dwell perfectly with men and men with God — without any temple because that which the temple symbolized will be realized in full.

#### **Leviticus:**

The Hebrew name for the Book of Leviticus is "And He Called," representing the first words in the text. The name Leviticus comes from the Greek Translation of the Old Testament and the word "Leviticon" meaning, "Of the Levite." And that is how we typically understand this book — as a book of rules pertaining to the Levites. Yet, this could not be further from the truth. While much of the book does deal with Levitical matters, it deals first and most prominently with the matter of sin and its seriousness before the eyes of God. Blood from animals flowed not because the animals had done anything wrong, but because we have done wrong. And as you read of these horrific sacrifices and blood being sprinkled over everyone, remember, this is because of our sin and all of this prefigures the sacrifice of Christ, for it is his blood sprinkled over us that makes us clean before God (Revelation 7:14).

As you read chapters 1-7 you will notice what seems like a repetition of the sacrificial commands: burnt offerings, grain offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings, and then repeated a second time. Yet, if you look closely you will recognize that the first set of offerings is for the people and the second time through it is dealing with the offerings that the priest needed to make for their own sins. There is never any sense that the priesthood is a special group of people exempt from sin; we are fallen people ministering to fallen people.

Chapters 8-10 contain the first of the interludes. Initially this begins with the ordination ritual for Aaron and his sons, consecrating them for service. Sacrifices are made, blood is splattered on their priestly garments and then they are not allowed to change those garments for the entire seven-day ritual — again, something that was meant to demonstrate how God looked upon our sin. Chapter 10 contains the portion of the interlude that is usually found most interesting. When seeking to light the coals of the altar of incense, they did not bring fire from the altar and God brought swift and permanent judgment upon them, burning them alive and then

forbidding Aaron to grieve the loss of his two sons. Once again, a reminder of the weight God places on his proper worship.

Chapters 11-15 enter into a series of cleanliness codes: what to eat, what to wear, etc... It is here that the Kosher laws come from and it is from here that we will learn more about leprosy, nocturnal discharges, and female cleansing after childbirth than any of us probably wants to know. Yet, these were part of the life of the people of Israel (as they are still today) and God saw fit to address them.

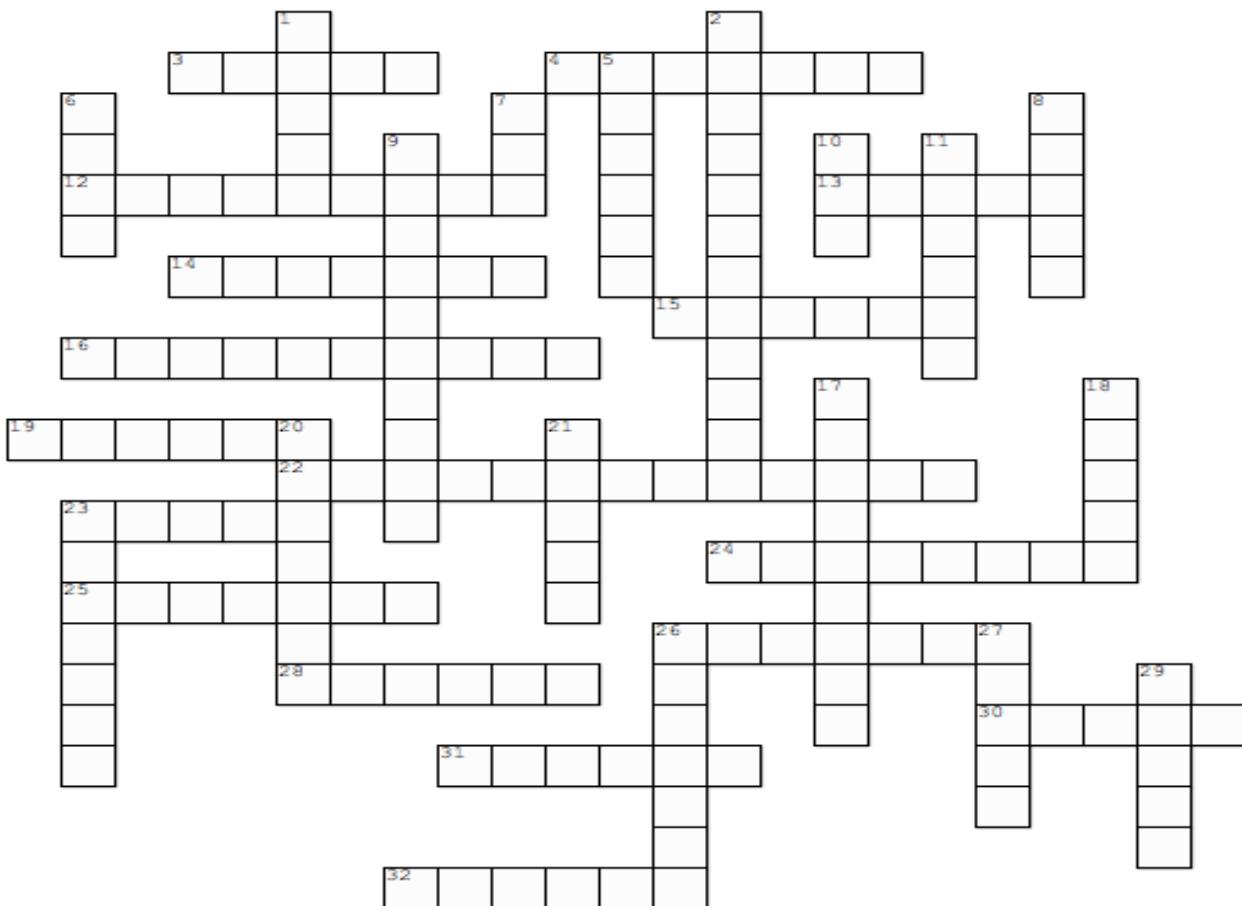
Chapter 16 deals with the Day of Atonement in detail and chapters 17-18 begin the Holiness Code, what it means (ethically) to be set apart from the nations. Chapter 18 is particularly pertinent in today's culture of promiscuity, for God reminds us that we are not to behave sexually like the pagans who live in the land around us...

#### **Chromatic Notes:**

- Notice the comment that the Tabernacle is erected and consecrated on the first day of the month. This is creational language — or a kind of re-creation event, where God is setting aside his people for worship and descending into their midst.
- Sometimes this Glory Cloud is referred to as "God's Shekinah Glory." Shekinah is simply the Hebrew word for dwelling place or tabernacle. Thus the "Shekinah Glory" of God is his dwelling with us.
- In the Hebrew culture that Jesus grew up in, the first 7 chapters of Leviticus formed the first primer from which children would read.
- In its 27 chapters, this book records the phrase, "And Yahweh spoke..." 37 times, more so than any other Old Testament book.
- Leviticus can be broken into six manuals of worship and holiness broken up with two interludes: Chapters 1-7 being a manual of sacrifice for all Israel; Chapters 11-15 as a manual of cleanliness; Chapter 16 as a manual for the Day of Atonement; Chapters 17-24 as a Manual of the Holiness Code; Chapters 25-26 as a Manual for the Practice of Redemption; and Chapter 27 as a manual for Devoting things to the Lord. Chapters 8-10 form the first interlude and a testimony of how seriously God takes the holiness of his people, especially the priests. The final interlude is contained in chapter 24 with the stoning of a blasphemous son.
- We are not told where Nadab and Abihu got the coals to light the altar of incense, we just know that they did not come from the altar as God had commanded. The Hebrew term that is used of these coals is that they were "alien" (not as in little green men, but as in outsiders). Wherever they came from, they came from outside of the Tabernacle area and thus did not belong (much as God rejects our sacrifices if not made with a sincere and repentant heart trusting in Christ).
- Note that while Nadab and Abihu are incinerated, their priestly garments remain untouched by the fire of God.
- Note that it is sometimes suggested that the reason for the food laws was because certain animals carried diseases and parasites. Yet, that idea is rather silly when you think about it; they knew how to cook food and all of the pagan nations around them did not seem to be infested with such problems. It also does not offer an explanation for the rules on clothing and how to trim your beard. A better answer is that these rules were simply meant to set God's people apart from the people of the nations — to make them distinct in daily practice as well as in worship.
- In the laws dealing with the Day of Atonement, do not miss the language of the scapegoat — the second goat who bore the sins of the people out into the wilderness. This is a foreshadowing of Christ, as Christ is driven by the Spirit into the wilderness after his baptism (see Mark 1:12) where he symbolically entered into our sin in a baptism of repentance (2 Corinthians 5:21).

## **Week 5: Exodus 39 - Leviticus 18**

Complete the crossword below



Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

## Across

3. If you eat any of this, you are to be cut off from the people.  
4. A skin disease that causes sores and eating away of the flesh.  
12. This was placed on the south side of the tent of meeting opposite of the table. (hint: a menorah is one of these)  
13. Moses' brother, the High Priest.  
14. Based on Leviticus 11:24-28, are dogs clean or unclean.  
15. Fish with fins and these were considered clean animals to eat.  
16. Aaron confesses the sins of the people on the head of one of the Goats on the Day of Atonement and it is driven into the \_\_\_\_\_.  
19. This winged insect was considered clean and acceptable for eating.  
22. This was written on the High Priest's Headdress or crown.  
(4 words)  
23. One of Aaron's sons who was executed for 'alien' fire.  
24. The name given for the glory of God when he dwells with his people.  
25. One of Aaron's sons that was not executed by God.  
26. A portion of most offerings were eaten by whom?  
28. This is the pagan god to whom the Canaanites sacrificed their children.  
30. The Egyptians and the Canaanites practiced immoral sexual practices and God threatened Israel that if they followed said practices, the land would \_\_\_\_\_ them out.  
31. The son's of this man carried Nadab and Abihu's remains off (hint: Aaron's Uncle).  
32. Rules for leprosy were included not only for people and garments but also for these:

## Down

1. To whom does God speak at the beginning of Leviticus?
  2. This was added to the flour of grain offerings (a foreshadowing of an offering made to baby Jesus).
  5. These representatives of the congregation were to lay their hands on the head of the bull when its throat was cut during a sin offering.
  6. 'You shall therefore be \_\_\_\_\_, for I am holy.'
  7. Clean animals chew this.
  8. When birds were offered on the alter, they were to be torn open by their \_\_\_\_\_.
  9. The name for the Tent of Meeting
  10. The people were not allowed to eat either the blood or the \_\_\_\_\_ of the burnt offerings.
  11. It was this person who was responsible for inspecting people to see if they had boils or other skin diseases.
  17. Blood is not for eating, but it is for making \_\_\_\_\_. (Hint: this is the Old Testament root behind Hebrews 9:22).
  18. If a man stole (or borrowed without intention of returning), he was forced to repay what he took plus a \_\_\_\_\_ on the day he recognizes his guilt.
  20. This, along with the Urim, was placed in the breastpiece of the High Priest.
  21. Two of these were taken from the people for a sin offering on the Day of Atonement.
  23. The final set of sexual prohibitions forbids laying with these.
  26. Two turtledoves or two of these were typically the sacrifice made by the poor.
  27. How many days was a woman considered ritually unclean after giving birth to a male child?
  29. Which day of the first month was the Tabernacle erected?

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 6: Leviticus 19 — Numbers 15 (February 2 — 8)

### Summary:

Leviticus 19 begins with some of the most well-known language of the book. These laws and rules form the backbone of what we would call the social welfare system in ancient Israel: gleaning rights, provision for travelers and the poor in the land, and legal rights for servants and employees. And in verse 18, we find the statement that sums it all up: "love your neighbor as yourself," a statement Jesus quoted when he was summarizing the last six of the ten commandments.

The section that follows chapter 19 deals closely with the question of holiness — ways in which God has set his people apart from the pagan nations. The principle can be summarized in chapter 19, verses 22-26: God has called his people to himself and thus we are to be holy as he is holy.

Chapters 23 through 25 introduce us to the Jewish calendar at least in the context of main events and celebrations. Instructions are given for the Sabbath, Passover, Firstfruits, Weeks (also known as Pentecost), Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), and Booths (also known as Tabernacles).

Sandwiched in chapter 24 is a short narrative about a blasphemous young man who is stoned for his blasphemy. Chapter 25, though contains the language of the Sabbatical Year (seventh year) and the Year of Jubilee (the 50th year). Pay close attention to how the debts were absolved, the slaves were given their freedom (being sent out with money in his pocket), and even the land was given a rest. Repeatedly, God says that he will provide for the needs during this year if the people will observe it...yet never once do we have record of a Jubilee year being celebrated as it is commanded. Oh, the blessings we often deny ourselves because we don't trust God. Leviticus closes with a discussion of vows and items being dedicated for the Lord's use in the Temple, a law that the people often abused.

### Numbers:

The Hebrew name for the book of Numbers is "In the Wilderness" and I can't think of a more appropriate name. This book covers the 40 years of wanderings between Mt. Sinai to the edge of the River Jordan. Often the book seems daunting because it begins with a seemingly endless list of people and their offerings given to the Tabernacle. Yet, the presence of these names and gifts is a reminder to us of the interest God takes in making sure that the witness of the saints is not forgotten. These are faithful people as part of the corporate whole of Israel; their service is long forgotten, but their names are still eternally part of the Lamb's Book of Life and the scriptures testify to that reality as well.

Chapter 3 contains the transfer of the Priestly responsibility from the firstborn to the tribe of Levi, marking off the structure of the Levitical Priesthood for generations to come. In addition, the role of Nazarite, a kind of spiritual holy man amongst the people, was also instituted. The end of Numbers 6 contains the most well known Benediction likely in all of scripture. This is called the Aaronic Benediction in honor of Aaron, the High Priest who was to pronounce this over his people.

Chapter 9 is helpful in that it offers us a temporal record that it was in the second year after they left Egypt, they celebrated Passover again. Soon they would be moving across the wilderness. Sadly, one of the most pronounced themes of the book shows itself as the people leave Sinai (chapter 11): they complain about the food. Like spoiled children who do not appreciate the gift they are given, the people whine and complain about the Manna. In judgment, God sends quail to

the people that was tainted and those who craved that other than which God provided found it to bring death. In light of all of the miracles of God that he had wrought in the previous two years, the people still rejected the goodness he offered and paid with their lives for it.

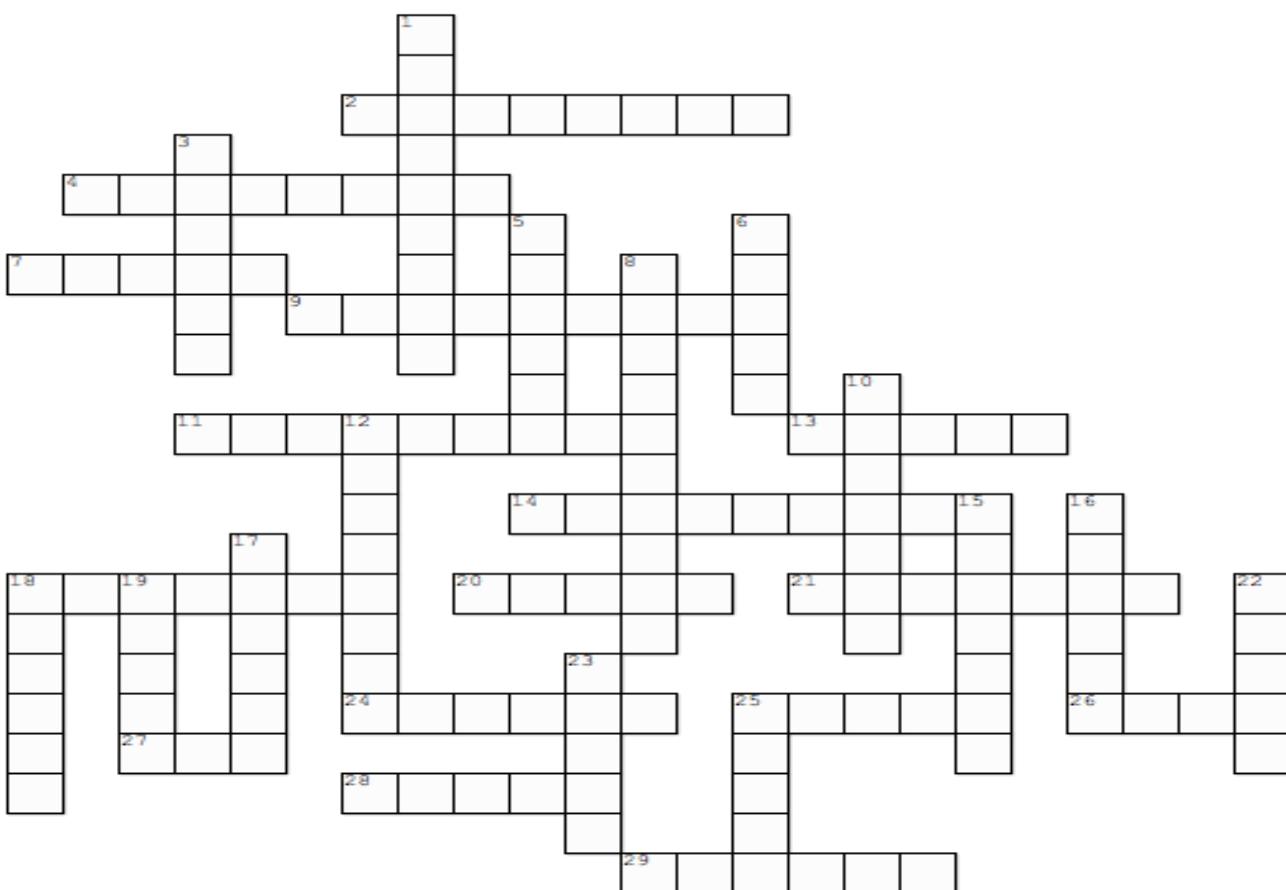
Similarly, we find Miriam, Moses' sister complaining that she is not given the authority of Moses over the people. In Miriam's case, God gave her leprosy to teach her her lesson. The spies sent into Canaan to scout the place out came back complaining about the size of the inhabitants there (all but Caleb and Joshua) and as a result of the complaining and cowardice, Israel lost their first battle, this time to the Amalekites and the Canaanites. Chapter 15 closes with some seemingly random laws regarding sacrifices, sabbath breaking and tassels on garments, but again, these are meant as a mark of God's ownership on his people, making them look and act differently than the rest of the world.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Christians often struggle with the question of which of these rules and laws still applies to us today and which have been done away with. In principle, the ancient Israelite laws can be broken into three categories: sacramental, civil, and moral. The moral laws, codified in the Ten Commandments are the foundation for all of the other laws and it is these moral laws that Jesus says will never pass away until the heavens and earth pass away. The sacramental laws, which include the various sacrifices and holy days have been fulfilled by Christ and are thus no longer binding upon us. The third group are the civil laws. This was meant as the law of ancient Israel, a nation whose religion and government were closely intertwined. As we live in America, not ancient Israel, some of the things in the civil laws do not apply to us (we no longer stone Sabbath breakers to death — though it would boost church attendance, lol!). That does not mean that this section of the law is useless, these laws provide us with some principles that can be applied in every culture and every era in a profitable way as the principle of the law is adapted to the culture. These holiness laws really fall into this third category — as Christians we are called to be holy as God is holy and we are set apart from the world (the principle), but the application is different as the food and clothing ways no longer apply to us.
- Rosh Hashanah is the seventh month in the Jewish calendar yet begins the new year. This is because they believe that God began the work of creation in the month of Tishri (7th month) and thus the seventh month of the year marked the new year though Nisan (the month they were released from slavery in Egypt) was the first month of the calendar.
- The boy who was stoned for blasphemy was from the tribe of Dan. Pay attention to this tribe because often we see them spurning the promises of God for worldly wealth and later, in the book of Revelation, they are not even included in the listing of tribes (Revelation 7:5-8).
- The dedication of animals to the service of the Lord plays a significant role in the Triumphal entry where Jesus rides the colt of a donkey into the city — a colt that had never been ridden or used for work.
- While most Nazirites took their vow as adults and then practiced the vow for a certain period of time before returning to "normal" living, there are three very famous Nazirites that were dedicated at birth and had life-long Nazirite vows: Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist.

## Week 6: Leviticus 19 - Numbers 15

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

2. These people took a vow not to cut their hair for a season of time.
4. You shall have just or fair \_\_\_\_\_ in commerce.
7. One of the spies that was not afraid of those dwelling in the Promised Land.
9. This feast is called the Feast of Weeks but is better known to us as \_\_\_\_\_.
11. On the Tenth Day of the Seventh Month is this day of sacrifice.
13. God sent this meat to punish the people for their complaint.
14. The mother of the boy who was stoned for blasphemy.
18. Six days you shall work and the seventh is a \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord.
20. Levites were required to retire at this age.
21. God gave Miriam this disease for her questioning of Moses' authority.
24. One of the tribes that was assigned to camp to the south of the Tabernacle
25. This of a hired servant shall not remain with you overnight.
26. This tribe was exempted from the Census that was taken before leaving Sinai.
27. The boy who was stoned for blasphemy was from this tribe.
28. If a Nazirite fails his vow, he needs to \_\_\_\_\_ his body and start the vow over.
29. When the Amalekites defeated Israel, they chased Israel as far as this place.

### Down

1. Nazirites were not permitted to eat food made from this.
3. Seventy of these men are appointed to be anointed to assist Moses.
5. How many loaves of bread were baked for the table in the Tabernacle?
6. This was a dedication from the produce of the land and flock that belonged to the Lord.
8. On this day of the month of Nisan, the Passover was celebrated (hint: this is a number: third, fourth, etc...)
10. Every fiftieth year was the Year of \_\_\_\_\_.
12. You shall love your \_\_\_\_\_ as yourself.
15. After you do this, you are not to gather your gleanings.
16. This was to be placed on each corner of the Israelites' Clothing.
17. One famous Nazirite that was dedicated as such from birth.
18. Moses had horns made from this material to call the tribes to attention.
19. You are called not to eat the flesh of an animal with this still in the animal.
22. You shall do all that God commands or the land will \_\_\_\_\_ you out.
23. The feast of weeks is how many weeks after the Sabbath that the sheaf offering is brought.
25. To cleanse the Levites from amongst the people, this was sprinkled on them in addition to making offerings.

## Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

### Week 7: Numbers 16 — Deuteronomy 3 (February 9 — 15)

#### Summary:

Korah's rebellion is one that is cited again in the New Testament in Jude 11 as an example of people from within the congregation of the faithful who were following their own passions and not submitting to the command of God. It is a devastating judgment. Here, God consumes those seeking to overthrow Moses with fire and then opens the earth up and swallows their families. Even after the destruction of these wicked people, God sends a plague that kills over 14,000 people who grumbled at Moses and Aaron for the way God judged the people.

Even so, there is given to us a wonderful glimmer of hope, for we are reminded in Numbers 26:11 that the sons of Korah did not die. God would preserve these men in spite of the sin of their father. These sons would then be responsible for writing 11 Psalms — Moses only wrote one!

Chapter 17 includes a challenge to Aaron's leadership bringing about the budding of his staff -- something that will eventually be stored inside of the Ark of the Covenant along with an urn of Manna and the Ten Commandments (Hebrews 9:4). Chapter 18 changes gears and inserts in this context some guidelines for the priests and their purification. It is here, for example, where instructions are given for the priests (who live off of the tithes of the people) to also tithe to the High Priest to support his work.

In chapter 20 we probably have the most significant portion in the book of Numbers — Moses' sin. At the waters of Meribah, instead of commanding the rock to pour forth water, he doubted and struck it with his staff. It is for this doubt that Moses is not permitted to enter the Promised Land, though God will give him a glimpse. It is here that Miriam and Aaron would both pass away.

The Bronze serpent is also in this week's reading, an event that Jesus will look back to in John 3:14-15 and apply to himself. Chapters 22-24 contain my favorite encounter of Numbers — the account of Balaam and his talking donkey. Balaam was hired to curse the people, something that God will never allow to happen, but while chapter 24 ends with Balaam and Balak parting, but Numbers 31:16 and Revelation 2:14 point out that it was Balaam that taught Balak how to cause the men of Israel to stumble...the women...and that is what we find in chapter 25, bringing even more death upon the idolatrous people of Israel.

The final chapters of numbers may feel like a bunch of odds and ends thrown together, though one must remember that the tribes are on the move, though not directly. Joshua is chosen to succeed Moses, offerings specified for various festivals and celebrations, and a much suffered revenge on Midian, who had earlier seduced the young men into idolatry with their young women. Chapter 33 is a summary of 40 years of travel and 34 sets the boundaries for Israel — boundaries that are significantly larger than that which Israel actually would inhabit. In the end, the people end up on the plains of Moab, ready to enter the promised land.

#### Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy, or "the second law," which is what its name means in Greek, is just that, a retelling of the law of God to the people. The second giving sets it apart only in that here we find more description and explanation of practical situations where these laws are to be applied. Many scholars argue that Deuteronomy forms a Constitution for the nation of Israel once it will be formed. It certainly contains the kind of covenantal structure that will shape later constitutions.

In principle, this book is structured around a series of sermons that Moses preaches to the people on the ten commandments. He begins, though, with a recap of the trip that God has led them on. This may seem a bit redundant as we have just read the story within the last week and have covered the whole account over just a few weeks, but remember, these people were just about all born in the wilderness and did not experience all of these events. Also, these events cover 40 years of history...that is a long time...and God calls us regularly to remember.

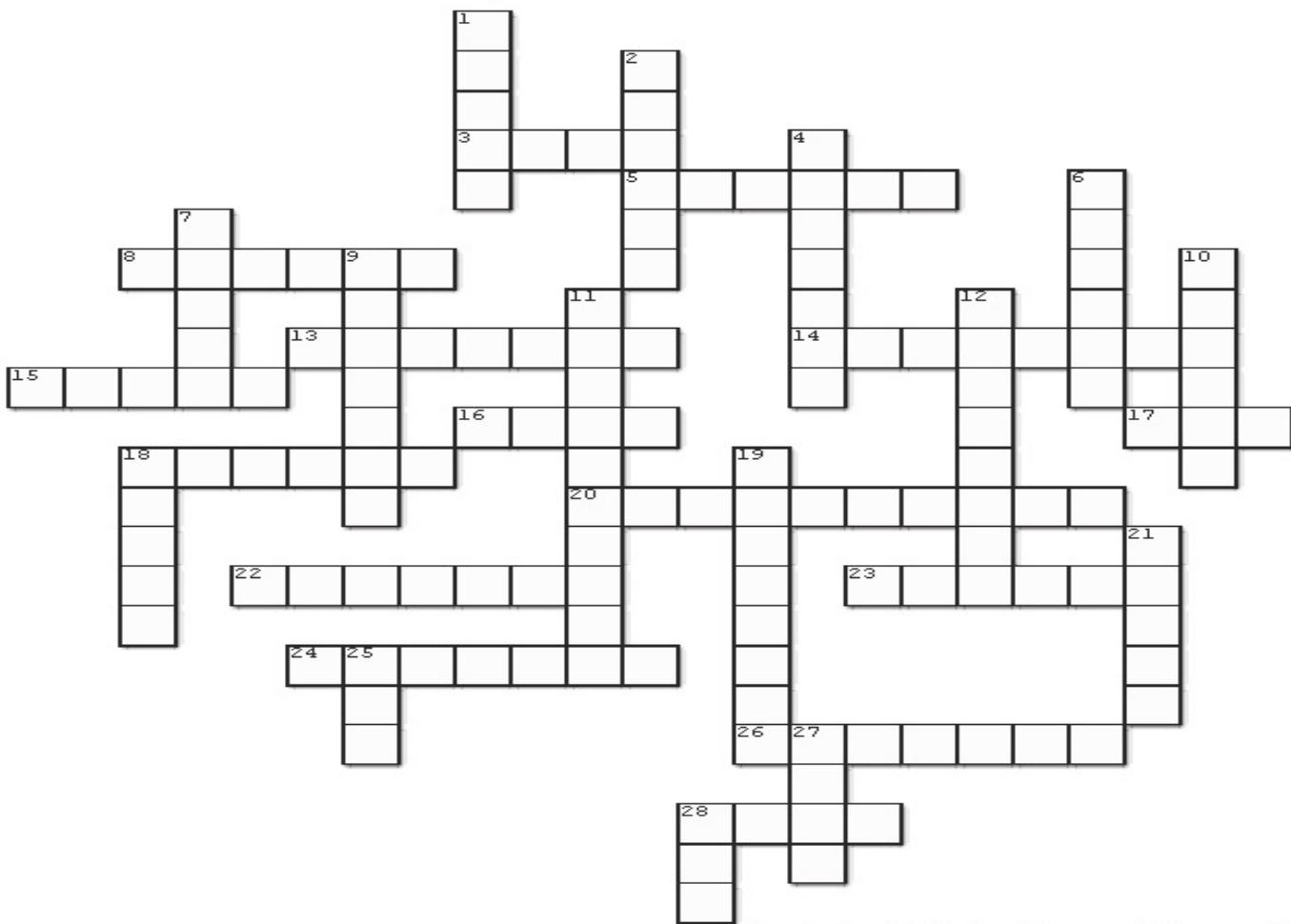
Deuteronomy 3 ends with Moses' reminder to the people of his own punishment for disobedience, a theme that will play out heavily in the sermons that Moses will preach here on the east banks of the Jordan. There is a promise though, that anticipates his death at the end of the book, and that is that God will allow him to view the promised land from the top of Mount Pisgah.

#### Chromatic Notes:

- In chapter 19 we have the cleansing instructions. Note, though, how the cleansing is done: hyssop is dipped in water and then sprinkled on the people needing to be cleansed. This is the basis of the reference in Psalm 51:7 as well as the purification ritual that would become Baptism in the New Testament.
- Remember, Edom is the nation that descended from Esau...making them all the more guilty for not letting the Israelites pass through.
- When I studied Hebrew in seminary, my professor used to point back to the account of Balaam and say: "If God can make a donkey speak Hebrew, you can learn to read it..."
- In Numbers 27 we are introduced to the Daughters of Zelophad, a man who died in the wilderness during Korah's rebellion. Notice that his daughters gain an inheritance in the land, something very unusual in the Hebrew culture.
- Numbers 35 addresses the Cities of Refuge where a manslayer can escape the Avenger of Blood by fleeing to. He had to stay until the death of the High Priest, whereupon he would be declared free. This is one more piece of symbolism that points to Jesus' death — the death of the High Priest so that we could be set free from our guilt.
- If you want to summarize Deuteronomy, you can do so with the theme of obedience to God in all things...sadly, much easier said than done.

# Week 7: Numbers 16-Deuteronomy 3

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

## Across

3. God warns the Israelites that if they don't drive out the inhabitants of Canaan, they will be as barbs to their \_\_\_\_\_.
5. This was the first place where the people began to settle, still to the east of the river Jordan.
8. This was Balaam's talking mount.
13. This tribe was the only tribe allowed in the Tabernacle
14. This was the territory that the spies had spied out and the people feared to enter.
15. This went to the Levites to support them.
16. Mount Hor is on the edge of this territory.
17. The people of Ammon are descended from this nephew of Abraham.
18. On this person's advice, Balak tempted the people of Israel into immorality.
20. A murderer shall dwell in the city of refuge until the death of this individual (a title: 2 words).
22. The Israelites camped here after they set out from the Wilderness of Sin.
23. Moses' successor
24. This nutty fruit came from the staff of the High Priest.
26. When Israel complained in the wilderness, God sent them this fiery animal to bite at them...
28. This shall come out of Jacob, a prophesy of the Messiah.

## Down

1. This honorable leader was the head of the tribe of Judah.
2. On this mountain Moses would overlook the promised land.
4. This was where Moses struck the rock.
6. Because of the people's sin, no person who came out of Egypt at this age or older was allowed to enter the promised land.
7. This person led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron causing him and his compatriots to be consumed by fire and others to be swallowed by the ground.
9. Who became High Priest upon Aaron's death?
10. This was used to sprinkle water during purification rituals.
11. He died but his daughters gained his inheritance.
12. On the first day of the seventh month these were to be blown as part of a holy convocation.
18. This man summoned Balaam to curse the Israelites.
19. This quick-thinking Levite ran through a wicked Israelite and Midianite woman with one spear thrust.
21. This person's staff budded.
25. Finish the quote: 'God is not a man that he should \_\_\_\_\_.'
27. Edom descended from this hairy person.
28. How many cities of Refuge were to be located in Israel?

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 8: Deuteronomy 4 — 27 (February 16 — 22)

### **Summary:**

As I mentioned last week in these notes, Deuteronomy is structured much like a constitution for Ancient Israel and its layout is not that different than many of the contemporary near-eastern constitutional documents. Thus, as we move from a retelling of how they arrived there in the valley opposite of Beth-Peor, we now enter into a what seems like a series of random laws, yet if you look closely, the laws are grouped by themes.

Chapter 4 focuses on God's call to closely obey his word -- "you shall not add to it or take away from it" (Deut. 4:2), God says. God commands that the testimonies of Scripture be taught to the generations who will follow. In addition, we find God also reminding the Israelites that he is a "jealous God" and a "consuming fire." These are both blessings of those who will cling to God and a judgment upon those who seek to walk their own path. Both Law and Grace is presented before the people...a blessing and a warning. And following that in Chapter 5 is the reading of the Ten Commandments for the second time in scripture.

Chapter 6 begins to change gears a bit and deal with the covenant itself. In principle, Chapters 6-11 is Moses' explanation of the First Commandment not to have any Gods other than him. Deuteronomy 6:4 is considered to be one of the most significant passages in all of the Old Testament and it is still used today by Orthodox Jews as part of their prayer life. This verse is called "The Shema," which means, "to hear." In summary, if we love God with all our heart, soul and strength then indeed we are obeying the first commandment. Included in this section are repeated commands to teach the mighty works of God to your children so that all remember and do not forget.

Chapter 12 has at the forefront the second commandment with instructions about sacrifice to the Lord and not to idols with once again a command not to add to or take from the Word of God. Chapters 13 and 14 focus then on the third commandment about not taking God's name in vain — not using His name for personal gain. Thus it includes language about false prophets, people who lead others from God, not being a holy witness by eating unholly food, and even a passage about those who might be tempted to keep the tithe for themselves.

Chapters 15 and 16 focus on the Sabbath and other holy days of worship (4th Commandment) as well closing with a reference to forbidden worship. Chapters 17-18 deal with the hierarchy of society (commandment 5), including the legal decisions made by the Levites and laws concerning the Kings of Israel. Similarly it speaks of those, like sorcerers, who have no standing in the people of Israel and closes with the promise that the Messiah will also have a prophetic office greater than that of Moses.

Chapters 19-21 deal with murder as well as how to

handle war and capital punishment, chapter 22-23 deals with theft, chapter 23-24 deal with adultery and lying and chapter 24-26 deals with covetousness. Note that in most other ancient societies, covetousness is not condemned...amongst God's people.

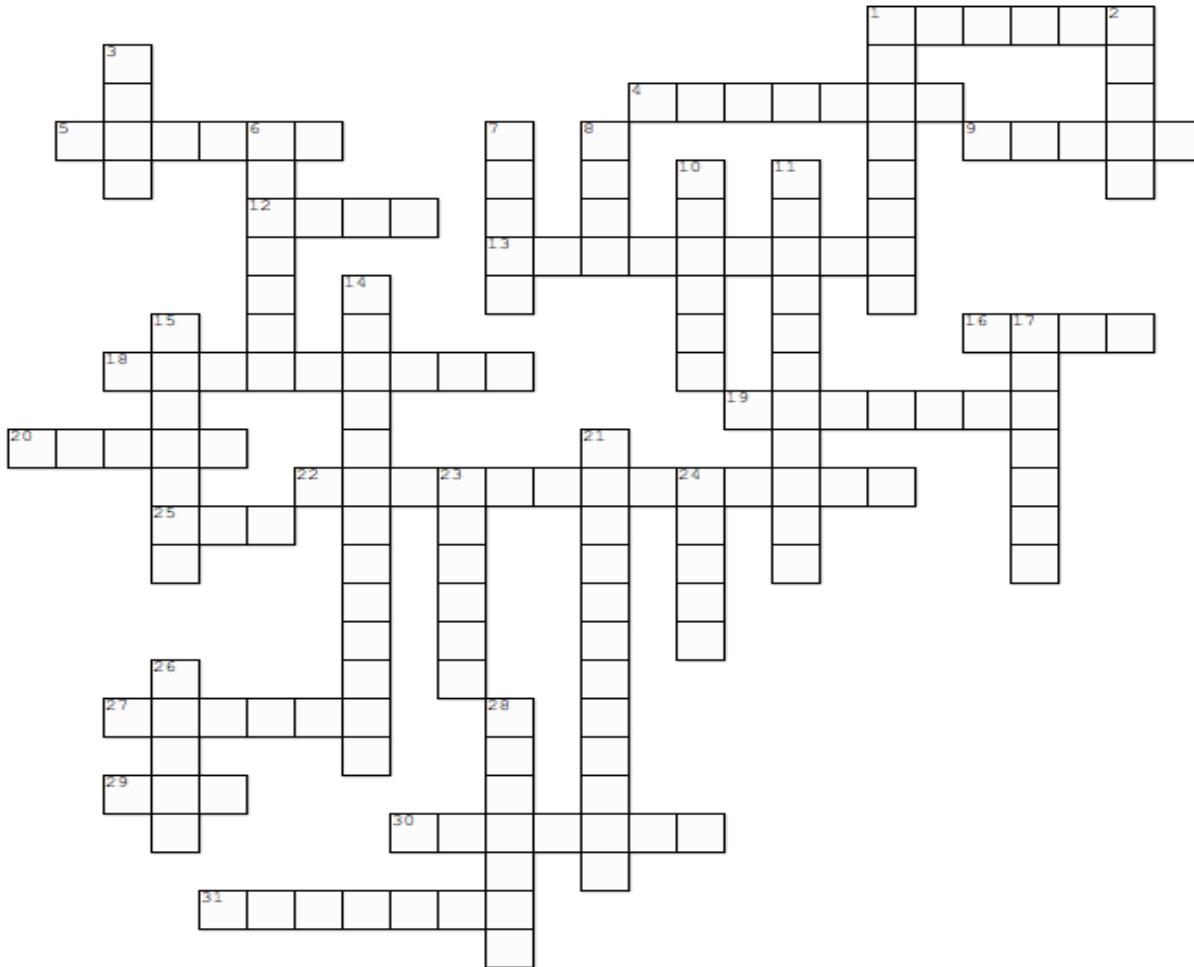
Chapter 27 enters into a series of blessings and cursings for obedience and disobedience respectively. In particular, Chapter 27 begins with the cursings...and cursings they are indeed. The final probably being the most profound for us today: "Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them." Action must accompany belief.

### **Chromatic Notes:**

- Note the similar language of not adding to or taking away from God's word not only here but in Revelation 22:18-19 ... another covenantally structured book.
- In the Hebrew text of the Shema, the last letter of the first and last word are written larger than any of the other letters. This is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where such a thing is done, too, which causes it to stand out all the more. If you take those two letters and put them together, it spells the Hebrew word "witness." The Shema is the witness of the Hebrew people.
- The third portion of Deuteronomy 6:5 is notoriously confusing for translators. Literally, the term that is used there is the adverb, "very." You shall love the lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your "veryness." Translators render this in a variety of ways, but the closest idea to what is being expressed is our abundance."
- It should be noted that when Jesus quotes this passage, he says "Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, your soul, your mind, and your strength." He surely doesn't make a mistake, he is simply clarifying that both mind and passions are included in the way we are to love God.
- Notice that the Ten Commandments are described as God writing with his finger on stone; can you recall a point in the New Testament where Jesus is described as bending down and writing with his finger? (check out John 8)
- Notice in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, God gives Israel instructions on how kings are to behave. Sometimes people suggest that God never wanted Kings over Israel and that Samuel's anointing of Saul was purely God giving in to his sinful people. This is also the passage here that tells us of the King being instructed to make a hand-written copy of the Law for his own reference as soon as he takes office.
- Leviticus 22:1-4 contains an example of what we would today call "Good Samaritan" Laws.

## Week 8: Deuteronomy 4-27

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

1. A man who is hanged on a tree is considered \_\_\_\_\_.
4. From upon this mountain, the tribes were commanded to pronounce blessings on the people for obedience.
5. This is one of the spots where the Israelites provoked God to wrath.
9. An Ammonite or Moabite is not allowed to enter the Assembly of the Lord until this generation.
12. In this month, Passover is to be kept (another name for the month of Nisan).
13. You shall not take this from a person in pledge if you have loaned them money.
16. A person's excrement must be buried outside of this.
18. The Law shall be bound as this between your eyes.
19. This is the name given to the day of rest.
20. Every \_\_\_\_\_ years the people were to forgive all debts and release one another from financial obligation — even slavery.
22. For the Lord your God is a \_\_\_\_\_, a jealous God. (2 words)
25. This minimum number of witnesses is required to convict someone of a capital crime.
27. What part of anatomy is it said that God used to write on the tablets of stone?
29. Who is the great warrior of Israel who brings victory.
30. Egypt is referred to as the 'House of \_\_\_\_\_.'
31. A woman guilty of a crime that is not adultery but damages the marriage bed is to be given a certificate of \_\_\_\_\_ that protects her from being accused of adultery.

### Down

1. To whom are the Israelites instructed to teach the Law.
2. This is the penalty for the visionary or dreamer who leads people away from the Lord.
3. 'And what does the Lord your God require of you, but to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord your God...'
6. 'A wandering \_\_\_\_\_ was my father.'
7. This is the Hebrew name given to Deuteronomy 6:4.
8. From upon this mountain, the Tribes were commanded to pronounce curses on the people for disobedience.
10. In Deuteronomy 4, Moses instructs the people that keeping and doing the Law of God will be \_\_\_\_\_ and understanding.
11. Sacrificing your children, fortune telling, sorcery, and necromancy are considered an \_\_\_\_\_ in the eyes of God.
14. You are a people \_\_\_\_\_ (4 words).
15. When a king takes his throne, he is to transcribe a copy of the Law to be approved by whom.
17. When the Israelites come into the land, they are to burn these pagan idols.
21. Canaan is a land flowing with this.
23. If a brother will not provide for his brother's wife, she shall take this off his foot and spit in his face.
24. This is the name of the city of Refuge located in Bashan.
26. If you forget a sheaf in the field when harvesting you are not allowed to go back and get it — the sheaf is for the traveler, the orphan, and the \_\_\_\_\_.
28. If you build a house with a flat roof, you must build one of these on the roof to prevent falling.

## Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

### Week 9: Deuteronomy 28 — Joshua 17 (February 23 — March 1)

#### **Summary:**

As we move into this final section of Deuteronomy, we find that God will set the mountains as places of testimony to his people. Once they cross over the Jordan, one side will be Mount Gerizim and on the other will be Mount Ebal. From Ebal the curses of disobedience are to be pronounced; from Gerizim blessings will be pronounced. The blessings are for preservation and abundance, the curses for want and destruction. How sad it is that we often choose destruction over blessing because of our fallen disobedience.

What follows the blessings and cursings is essentially a reminder of the covenant, that which speaks of God's deliverance and of the obligation of obedience to God by his people and their generations after them. In fact, Moses goes as far as to say that this covenant is not only for those present, but also for those not (yet) present...in other words for all the generations that will follow them (Deuteronomy 29:15). At the end of this covenant renewal, Joshua is officially commissioned to lead Israel after Moses.

Deuteronomy 32 begins with a psalm of Moses and then moves into a final set of discourses before he will travel up Mount Pisgah to view the promised land. The language of these pieces again focuses on that of obedience to a faithful God and that we as God's people need to be attentive to his Word, for his Word is our very life. In principle, the whole of the Pentateuch is being summarized here.

Sometimes people struggle with Moses' not being able to lead the people into the promised land, but two things should be noticed. The first is that Moses is not meant to be a total redeemer but is a type or foreshadow of Christ who will be the full package. Thus, neither the law nor a human mediator is sufficient to bring us to heaven (the true promised land). We need the God-Man and the grace he brings. The second thing to notice here is that God took Moses off on his own to bury him. Often this is rationalized as a way to guarantee the Israelites will not turn his body into a memorial totem or idol. And that may be true, but I think that it also speaks of the intimacy of the friendship between these two — Moses and God.

#### **Joshua:**

Joshua begins the books known as the "Former Prophets" in the Hebrew Bible. While we know them as history books, from the Hebrew perspective, these books illustrate the faithfulness of God in light of the faithlessness of God's people. They stand as historical narratives but also as case evidence against the people which the Latter Prophets will use to illustrate God's case in a covenant lawsuit.

Joshua begins with a commissioning by God and instructions that the book of the Law should never leave his sight day or night. Such is the way with those God would have lead his people. Joshua 2 introduces us to the story of Rahab the prostitute who hides the Israelite spies in Jericho prior to their attack. Rahab's faith and willingness to choose the God if Israel over the gods of her people earn her and her family deliverance from the destruction of the city.

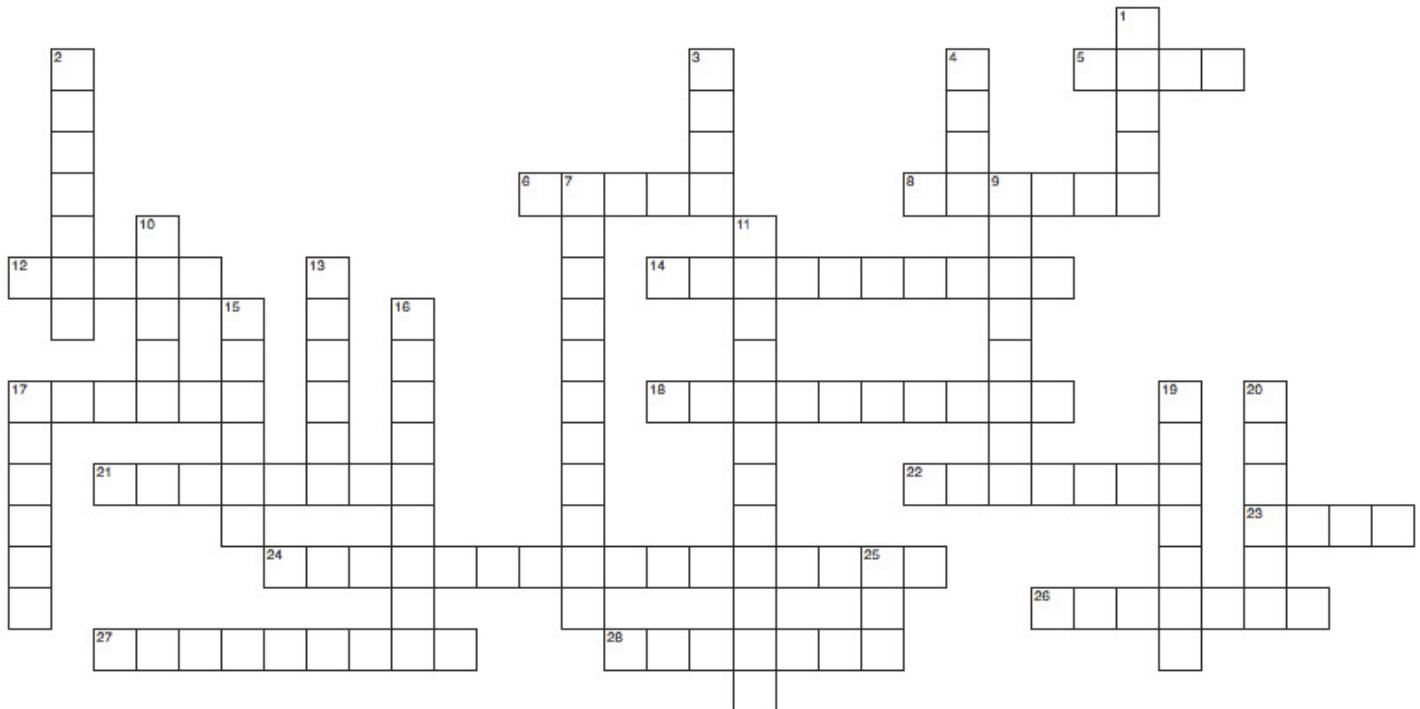
After the spies return, plans are made to cross the river Jordan, God separating the waters as he did with the Red Sea and the people passing through. The men are circumcised and then (once they healed) it was off to Jericho. Notice, though, that before the attack on Jericho, they celebrate the Passover. This not only helps us to mark the chronology of the Conquest of Canaan, but also it serves as a reminder of the preeminence of worship in the believer's life.

Jericho will fall on the seventh day by God's hand, which then leads them to the city of Ai, the fateful place where Achan takes wealth rather than destroying it and is ultimately stoned along with his whole family. And one after one, the tribes of the region are defeated leading us into a place where the people can rally and the inheritances in the land. Some of the land is still yet to be conquered and some of the pagans are still present; that will come to a head in the book of Judges. For now, this is the initial conquest.

#### **Chromatic Notes:**

- In John 4, Jesus meets a woman at a well in Samaria who speaks of worshipping on a mountain. The mountain of which she speaks is Gerizim. When the Samaritans were not permitted by the Jews to worship in Jerusalem, they built their own temple on Gerizim for worship — a temple that the Jewish armies would tear back down.
- When Moses warns the people of the price of disobedience, he speaks of a yoke of iron around their necks (Deuteronomy 28:48); notice how Jesus contrasts that by speaking of his own yoke as being easy (Matthew 11:30).
- Covenants in the Bible, we find, are not just made with individuals, but also with all of the generations that will follow. God is eternal, so we should expect that these covenant promises eternally apply to our households from generation to generation — one reason that we baptize infants into the covenant.
- There is an old Rabbinic parable that teaches of a young Rabbi who wants to study Greek Philosophy. He is soon pointed back to Joshua 1:8 and told to "find the hour that is neither day nor night and in that hour you may study Greek Philosophy."
- If you read the genealogies, you will find that Rahab is the mother of Boaz from the book of Ruth fame.
- In Joshua 5 we are introduced to "The Commander of the Lord's Army." Some have argued that this person is the pre-incarnate Christ as he speaks with the authority of God and even accepts worship, something no angel can do.
- With the fall of Jericho, it should be observed that despite the unusual approach to besieging the city, Joshua was not afraid to look foolish in the eyes of his enemies; how often we fear that God's ways will make us look foolish in the eyes of the enemies of God.

## Week 9 (Deuteronomy 28-Joshua 17)



## ACROSS

5. The leaders of Israel placed their feet on this body part of the five Amorite kings as a sign of victory.
  6. The Israelites are defeated at Ai because of the sin of this man.
  8. This region was given to Caleb as an inheritance.
  12. She hides spies in Jericho.
  14. Rahab's profession.
  17. Joshua is tricked into allowing the people of this city (and its neighbors) to live.
  18. This was the king of Jerusalem during Joshua's day.
  21. God renewed the words of this on the plains of Moab.
  22. "The secret things belong to God but that which has been revealed belong to us and our children \_\_\_\_\_.
  23. "Therefore, choose \_\_\_\_\_ that you and your offspring may live."
  24. When crossing the Jordan, the people were to stay 2,000 cubits from this.
  26. This tribe had no inheritance in the Land.
  27. In all, Joshua conquered this many kings (2 words)
  28. While the sun stood still for Joshua at Gibeon, this is where the moon stood still.

## **DOWN**

1. On the seventh day, how many times did Israel march around Jericho?
  2. You shall grope about as if in darkness, but it is only this time if you are disobedient.
  3. For disobedience, the sky will be as bronze and the earth as \_\_\_\_\_.
  4. This made out of iron will be placed on the neck of the disobedient.
  7. Before attacking Jericho, the men had to be \_\_\_\_\_.
  9. It is in the valley opposite of this place where God buries Moses.
  10. The Holy Spirit is described as like this bird, hovering over its young.
  11. This shall never depart from your eyes, day or night (4 words).
  13. He succeeds Moses.
  15. This pack animal shall be seized before your eyes as punishment for disobedience.
  16. At the loss of one's \_\_\_\_\_ the foundation of Jericho will be restored.
  17. It is while the Israelites are encamped here that the first Passover in the Promised Land is celebrated.
  19. On this mountain the Levites read blessings of the Covenant.
  20. This many memorial stones were placed in the Jordan.
  25. Joshua's father's name.

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 10: Joshua 18 — Judges 17 (March 2 — 8)

### Summary:

Sometimes the allotment of the land can seem somewhat tedious to read through, especially if you don't have a good map of the geography of where all of these dividing lines are being made. At the same time, remember that on these lines territorial boundaries are being made that will stand for generations. In addition, recognizing that the inheritance in the land is God's gift to the people and the generations that follow, it should not surprise us to see so much language dedicated to speaking of this event. So, as you begin with Joshua 18, don't be discouraged, press on, this is of value.

After the final allotment of land was portioned out and Joshua too was given an allotment, the cities of refuge were established and commanded to the people. These cities, of course, were meant as a place of sanctuary to which a murderer may flee from the avenger of blood. The presence of these cities is a reminder that even in the midst of law (and punishment) there is grace. While not given a territory of their own, the priests are allotted cities within each of the tribal territories, giving them a place to stay and fields to use to provide for their families. At the end of Chapter 21 we have the summary as to why all of this information about allotments is important: God is being faithful to fulfill his promises.

We move from that to a misunderstanding that very nearly created a civil war. Those tribes that settled to the east of the River Jordan feared that they might be forgotten in the worship of God in the generations that followed. Thus they built a copy of the altar of God on the east of the Jordan as a testimony to their union with the people of God. Yet those who lived to the west of the Jordan took this as an act of pagan worship and a rejection of the one and only true God. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was the emissary that sorted this confusion out, keeping the people united.

The Bible often skips over long periods of time that do not have any specific significance in redemptive history and that is exactly what we find taking place as we arrive in Joshua 23. Scholars debate the length of this "long time" but noting that Joshua was 110 at his death, it is estimated that about 20 years likely has passed since the land was divided to the point where Joshua calls the people together to remind them of the covenant.

The "choose this day whom you will serve" speech of Joshua is one we are all likely familiar with, but remember, this is a covenant renewal ceremony. Joshua is basically saying, "will you be in the covenant or out of it?" There was no option to remain in the land and still worship idols. If you were going to serve any other than the God of Israel, you were considered an enemy to God and would be put out of the land or killed. The blessings of this land belonged to God's own and God's own do not serve idols — or at least are not supposed to.

### Judges:

What we find when we move to the book of Judges is that there is a little bit of overlap between the two books as both books records the death of Joshua. Judges begins with a brief summary of the conquest, largely focused on the failures of the Israelites to drive the Canaanites out of the land...something that sets the stage for the era of Judges to follow. Thus, we begin with the failures of Benjamin, Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulon, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan... a rough start, indeed....

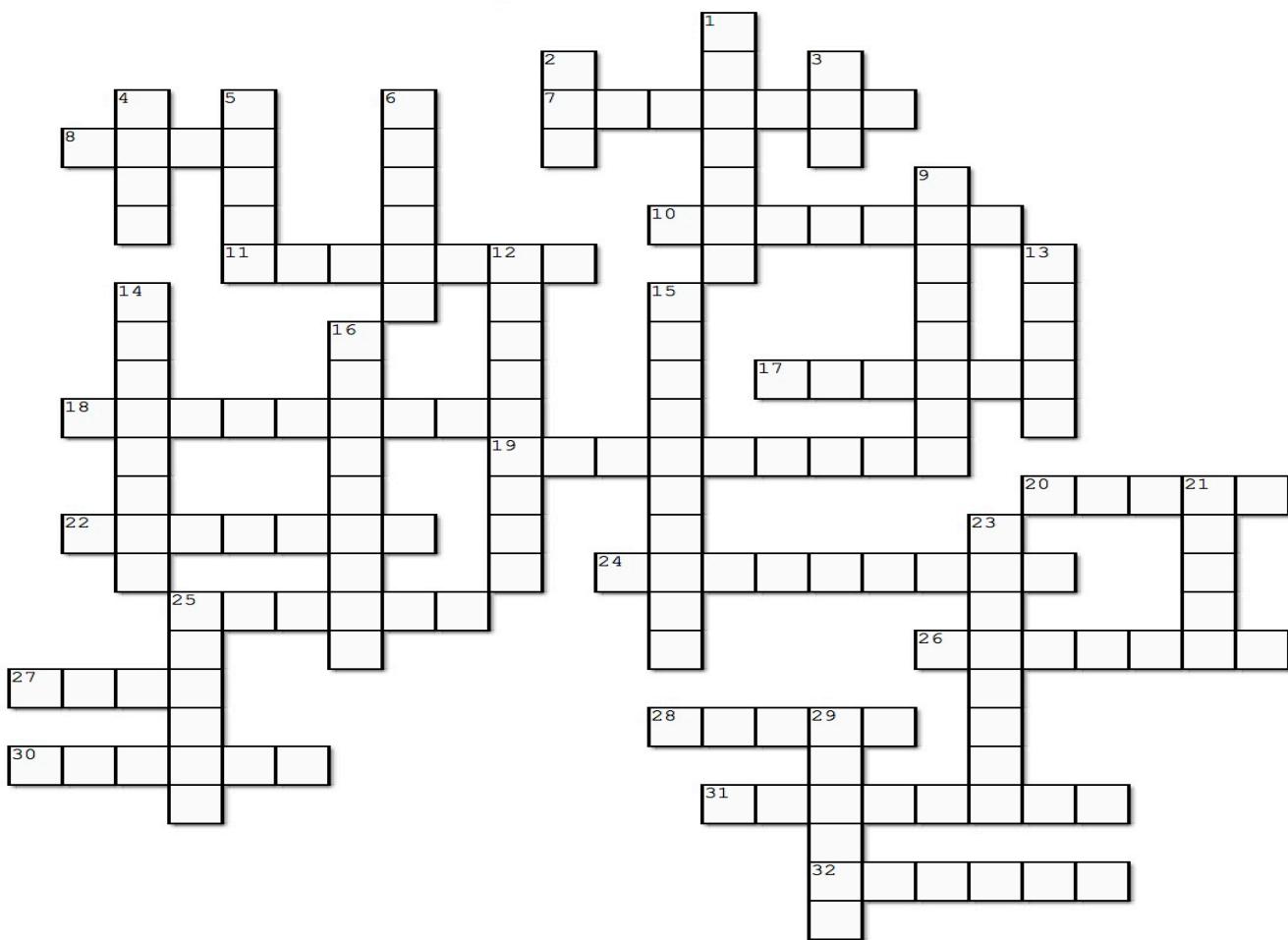
Prior to the death of Joshua, they are confronted by The Angel of Yahweh. He charges them with failure and points out that as a result, the Canaanites will be as thorns to them on every side. This is added to the language of Judges 3 that speaks of the Lord allowing these Canaanites to remain to teach the generations the art of war. This is not an inconsistency, simply a reminder that God is sovereign even in using our disobedience to His glory.

In the first seventeen chapters of Judges, you see all twelve Judges that God raises up, from Othniel, the paradigm of what it meant to be a judge, to Samson, the first man recorded in the Bible to have a life-long Nazirite oath, though he broke every vow of the Nazirite in his lifetime. Deborah is the only female judge, and is presented as an exception to the rule, not as an argument for female leadership in the church of God. There are too many stories to summarize here, apart from simply noting that Judges exist as a type of redeemer that point us to Christ — in fact, their flaws remind us that we need one is is not just human, but one who is also God to deliver us from the chains of our sins.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Note in Joshua 18 how there is an emphasis of the northern and southern devision of the land. This anticipates the eventual north-south hostility and split that would take place after Solomon's time.
- Notice again that the priests are not given an inheritance in the land; instead, God is their inheritance and they are scattered about all of the lands as God's ambassadors to the people. Peter reminds us that all Christians are royal priests (1 Peter 2:9) and thus we too do not find our inheritance in the land, but it is being reserved for us in heaven — this world is not our home.
- I have noted before that many theologians through history have recognized The Angel of Yahweh as the pre-incarnate Christ, noting here, for example, that in Judges 2 he claims to have led the people out of Egypt, a work attributed to Jesus in Jude 5.
- As you move into judges you will notice a series of cycles: the people sin, God brings an enemy to rule over them, they repent, he sends a judge to deliver them, and the land has rest for "x" years. Notice that many of these cycles begin with "the people did what was evil..." In Hebrew, this literally reads, "the people did *the evil*." This reference to "the evil" is typically a reference to idolatry in the Bible, though it is also used of several other practices that God pronounces to be wicked. This is no light judgment, the people are acting like the pagans they drove from the land.
- It is oftentimes asked, "Did Jephthah really kill his daughter and if so, why did God allow that?" My answer is that yes, he did kill her and God permitted that to take place as a demonstration of just how sinful his people had become. Remember, the wickedness of the leader reflects the wickedness of the people.
- Sometimes people say, "Sampson" instead of "Samson," is that wrong? Yes and no. Yes, it is wrong in that "Sampson" is not the common English transliteration that Bible translations use. It is also wrong in that the Hebrew spelling is "Shimshon," so for that matter, Samson isn't really accurate. The Greek transliteration of his name uses the letter psi instead of pi to begin the last syllable of his name, transliterating it "Sampson." Of course, where the "p" or "ps" came from in the first place is open for debate.

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

**Down**

1. This is where Joseph's bones are buried.
2. God allowed Canaanites to remain in the land to teach the people \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Samson was of this tribe.
4. Samson removed the city gates from this Philistine city.
5. The cities of refuge were safe places from the Avenger of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. This is where the Angel of the Lord met with the people.
9. Known for sacrificing his daughter, this judge didn't even grow up amongst the Israelites.
12. This son of Gideon would cause his family great strife.
13. This man stole money from his mom, gave it back, and she was so happy she made an idol out of it.
14. Samson was to be consecrated this at birth.
15. This person has to die before someone is able to return home from a city of refuge (2 words).
16. The Judge Ibzan was buried in this city.
21. This fat king was slain in his bathroom.
23. This tribe, along with Gad and Reuben, received their inheritance partly on the east side of the Jordan river.
25. God showed a little of his sense of humor when he called this man to be a judge — referring to him as a 'mighty man of valor' while he was hiding from the Midianites.
29. It was here that people cast lots and sought the Lord.

**Across**

7. Gideon's first task was to tear down one of these.
8. One of two women described in the Bible as 'Blessed amongst women...' (Hint, see Judges 5)
10. Cities but no inheritance in the land was awarded to this group \_\_\_\_\_.
11. She was the downfall of Samson.
17. He received his inheritance last.
18. This landed on Abimelech's head causing a fatal wound.
19. Deborah is introduced as the wife of this man.
20. Samson got 300 of these, tied their tails together and torches to their tales and set them loose across Philistine land.
22. This was the first of the Judges.
24. Gideon's nickname, meaning 'Let Baal contend against him.'
25. This is where Eleazar was buried.
26. Samson slew 1,000 men with a 'fresh' one of these.
27. The left-handed judge.
28. 'As for me and my \_\_\_\_\_, we will serve the Lord.'
30. Samson's father.
31. This son of the High Priest proved a mediator when Manasseh acted foolishly.
32. Shamgar slew 600 Philistines with this tool.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 11: JUDGES 18 – 1 SAMUEL 20 (MARCH 9 – 15)

### **Summary:**

It wasn't bad enough that you had this man named Micah stealing from his mother, making an idol from the stolen property and then hiring himself a levite to be his personal priest (instead of worshipping at the Tent of Meeting in Shiloh), but now we also have the tribe of Dan, no longer content in their inheritance in the land, abandoning that inheritance to find a land of their own. They steal not only the idols of Micah, but also his priest and go on their way.

The final account in the book of Judges is a testimony to the depravity of the people as well as to the theme that echoes through these chapters that there was no king in Israel so people did what was right in their own eyes. This is one of the more graphic accounts recorded in scripture. There is a Levite from Ephraim who had a concubine. She proved to be unfaithful and fled to her father's house. The Levite forgives her and mends relationships at her father's house. They head home, but on their way they spend the night in the city of Gibeah in the tribal region of Benjamin. We have a scene akin to that of Sodom with the angel warning Lot, but this time the man's concubine gets tossed outside the door to be gang raped until morning and left for dead. The Levite goes out the next morning, puts her dying body on his mule and travels the rest of the way home with her dying on the way. He then divides her body in 12 parts and sends them to all parts of the people of Israel.

The people get angry and go to war with this city, amongst other things, killing all of the women who had lived in the city. This raised a up a difficulty because without women, there would be no next generation or continuation of the covenant people. So, they stole wives from the neighboring cultures and things just get worse from there. Judges closes with the refrain once more that there is no king in Israel, setting us up for the first judge and the first king.

### *1 Samuel:*

We skip over reading the book of Ruth this week as we are following the Jewish order of the Old Testament, an order which places Ruth as part of "The Writings" and not part of the "Former Prophets." Like Moses, Samuel is a form of covenant mediator for the people and is a pointer toward Christ, who is the greater Samuel. Thus we begin with the birth narrative and how his then barren mother comes to the Shiloh to pray that God will give her a son, promising in turn to dedicate him from birth as a Nazirite and to the service of God.

Samuel will grow up and replace the Priest Eli for Eli's sons were wicked. Samuel is established as a Judge of the people in Shiloh. Shortly before the death of Eli and his sons, there is an interesting account where the Israelites were in battle with the Philistines. The Israelites called for the Ark of the Covenant to be with them in the hopes that if it were there, God would bring them victory. Yet, in their hearts they were treating the Ark as an idol and God had not commanded such an action. In judgment, the Israelites were defeated and the Ark was captured and the sons of Eli died in the battle. Hearing the news of the Ark's capture, Eli collapsed, breaking his neck against a gate when he fell.

Yet, ultimately God can care for his Ark and there is a wonderful account of the persecution that God brought on the Philistines prior to their returning the Ark to the Israelites. The Ark was returned and put under the care of Eleazar in the house Abinadab. And here is will remain until David will bring it to Jerusalem.

1 Samuel 7 records a covenant renewal ceremony, much as we see with Moses at the end of Deuteronomy and with Joshua at the end of the book of Joshua. This sums the highlight of Samuel's Judgeship.

While chapter 8 follows right after chapter 7, there is a period of a number of years that takes place as by the time chapter 8 hits, Samuel is an old man. As he ages, the people decide they no longer want leadership

by a Judge and a Divine King, but by a human king. Saul, a king after the heart of man is chosen to lead the people. Saul proves himself a good leader in battle but hardly the godly man that is to rule over the people of God.

Saul's error was to offer the burnt offering to God instead of waiting for Samuel, now functioning as Prophet and Priest, to do so. He had overstepped his bounds as king and did that which only the rightful Priest should do. Saul never repents of this action, and in fact, only expresses remorse after Samuel tells him that God has rejected Saul's kingship — a sign of remorse over consequences, not the sin itself. And Samuel is sent to anoint David, the youngest son of Jesse, to be king after Saul. What is very interesting is that shortly after this anointing takes place, David is placed in Saul's service as a harp player to ease the evil spirits that plague Saul.

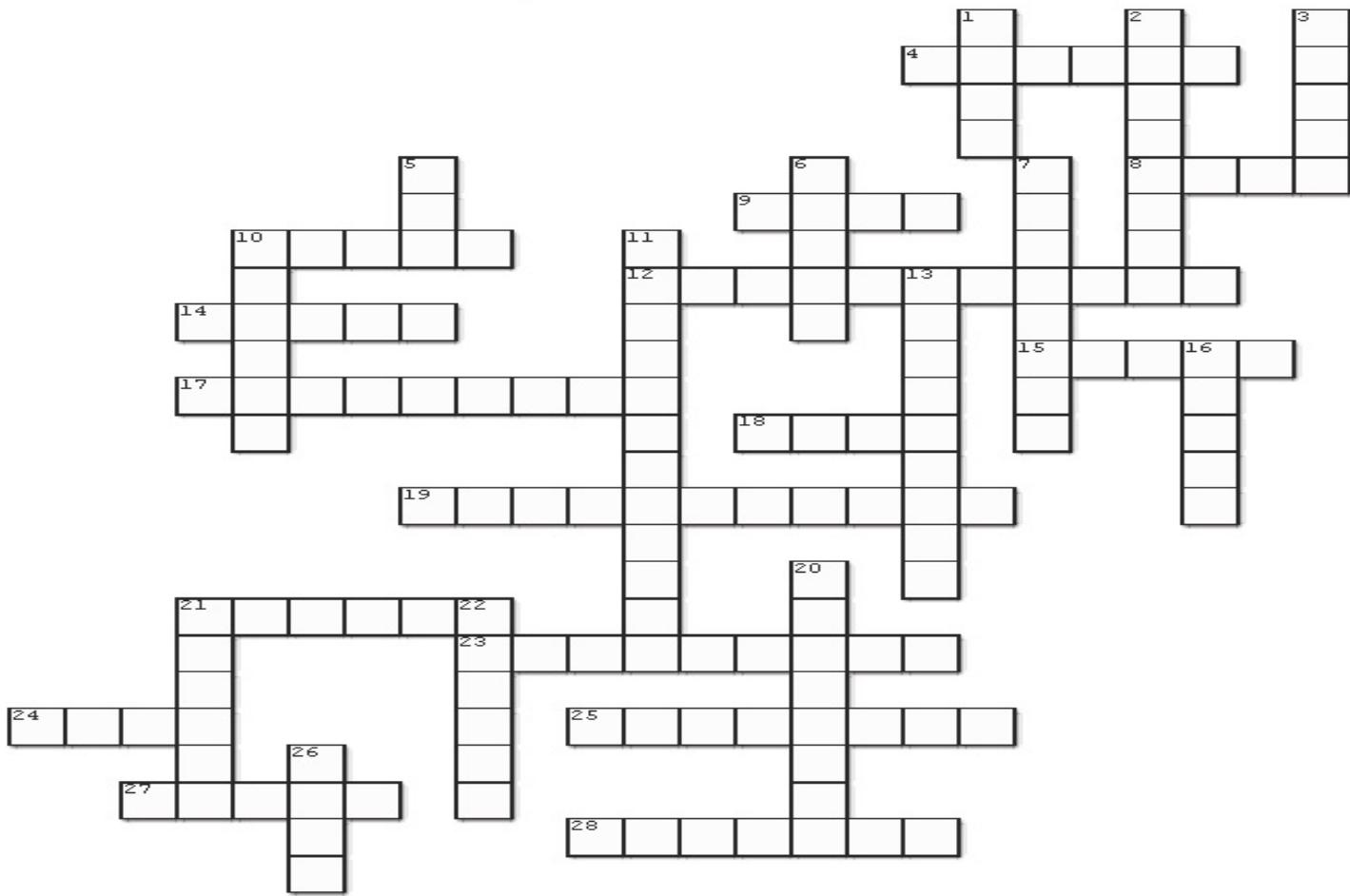
No reflection on 1 Samuel is complete without a discussion of David and Goliath. It should be remembered that at this point in David's life, he has already been anointed as king and he has already served as Saul's armor-bearer. Goliath has been mocking God himself as well as the people and David fulfills his Kingly duty to lead the troops in battle against their enemies by slaying Goliath and leading the charge against the Philistines. This event begins a life-long friendship with Saul's son, Jonathan, and will also earn David his first wife, the very "charming" Michal. Shortly after, Saul will begin trying to kill David off wanting to make sure that Jonathan will follow him as king. It takes the help of Michal, Jonathan, and David's loyal Mighty Men to escape the wrath of this angry king.

### **Chromatic Notes:**

- Note that the tribe of Dan is the only tribe in Revelation 7 that is not mentioned. There is a Jewish tradition upon which some of the early Christian writers built, that said it would be from the tribe of Dan that the Antichrist would come. This is built upon the language of Genesis 49:17 that speaks of Dan as a serpent in the way. It is my opinion that the source of their absence in Revelation 7 is because they abandoned their inheritance as is recorded here in Judges 18.
- As gruesome as the cutting up of the Concubine's body is in Judges 19, her dismemberment was a reminder to the people of Israel that they had broken the covenant and that this is what they deserved. The message does not bring real repentance, but it does bring action.
- In the Hebrew tradition, 1&2 Samuel are a single book. The same is true for Kings and Chronicles.
- Note the song of Hannah; there are important similarities to the song that Mary will sing when she becomes pregnant with Jesus.
- It has been suggested that the Ark's capture by the Philistines is a mini exodus event complete with plagues prior to releasing the Ark from bondage and a season in the wilderness, kept by God until it is the right time to bring the Ark into Jerusalem.
- The tumors mentioned are a matter of some debate amongst scholars. Some have argued that the tumors were likely hemorrhoids that God had inflicted on the people.
- The people's request for a king is sometimes interpreted as something that was not meant to happen. Yet, in Deuteronomy 17 we have rules regarding the role of kings found within the Jewish law. Thus, the matter is not one of if the Israelites are to have a human king but a matter of *when* that is to take place. Like most humans, patience is not a strong suit of Israel.
- Notice that Saul is from the tribe of Benjamin, not Judah. This is significant for several reasons, most importantly, though, is that God gave the right to kingship to the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10). In addition, we read at the end of the book of Judges that the wives gotten for the tribe of Benjamin were largely pagan girls, thus the line of Benjamin had been corrupted with pagan people and ideas leading to a king that does not well understand God's sovereign command over him.
- Notice Saul's actions recorded in 1 Samuel 11 with his dividing the oxen in half -- like the dismembering by the Levite, once again we find a Covenant making ceremony of sorts.

**Week 11: Judges 18-1 Samuel 20**

Complete the crossword below



## Across

4. It is in this city of Benjamin that the Levite's concubine was killed.
  8. Jonathan gave this to David as a sign of his covenantal friendship.
  9. Goliath was from this city.
  10. There were 700 chosen warriors from Benjamin who were particularly skillful with this ranged weapon.
  12. David's first official job title in Saul's household (2 words).
  14. The name of the man who stole money from his mother and in the end made idols out of it.
  15. Jonathan ate this not knowing of his father's vow to curse the one who ate anything until he had defeated his enemies.
  17. David brought two hundred of these from the Philistines to Saul to be the bride-price of Michal.
  18. When Nahash the Ammonite attacked Jabesh-Gilead, he wanted to gouge out this body part of the city's elders.
  19. These enemies of Israel captured the Ark.
  21. This is a place where Israel often was brought together to discuss important matters (hint: see 1 Samuel 7).
  23. God desires this over burnt sacrifices (hint: see 1 Samuel 15).
  24. Saul's father's name.
  25. When the Ark was returned, it was brought to this household.
  27. In the battle at Michmash, the people sinned against God by eating food with this in it.
  28. Hannah's husband.

Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Make

## Down

1. 'In those days there was no \_\_\_\_\_ in Israel.'
  2. Samuel is dedicated as this from birth.
  3. The Father of David
  5. This tribe was not satisfied with their inheritance so moved north.
  6. The Philistine idol that 'bowed' before the Ark of the Covenant.
  7. This is the name of the Levite who became priest to the Danites; also the name of Saul's son.
  10. The place where the worship of God took place in Samuel's day.
  11. From this region, 400 virgin women were captured to be wives of the Benjaminites (hyphenated name).
  13. Everywhere from Dan to \_\_\_\_\_ knew that Samuel was anointed as a prophet of the Lord.
  16. The eldest brother of David.
  20. Saul is from this tribe.
  21. David's first wife and daughter of Saul.
  22. One of Eli's wicked sons.
  26. Michal made a pillow of this animal's hair to give the impression that David was asleep in bed.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 12: 1 SAMUEL 21 – 2 SAMUEL 13 (MARCH 16 – 22)

### Summary:

Chapter 21 begins with an interesting story of David and his faithful 'Mighty Men' on the lam and they find themselves hungry. David comes to Nob which is where the Tabernacle sacrifices are being performed. The only bread available was that Bread of the Presence that was kept for a week on the table in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle as a representation of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Only the priests were permitted to eat of the bread, yet David, as God's anointed King, was given the right to eat of this bread. What makes it even more interesting is that Jesus applies this instance to himself when his disciples are eating grain from the fields on the Sabbath Day. The answer is the same, God's anointed and those who follow him are to be provided for even if the technical rule of the Sabbath (or Priesthood) might forbid it (see Mark 2:23-28).

Of course, in addition to bread, David picks up Goliath's sword which had been stored there. He travels through Gath, has a strange occasion to behave like a crazy person so the natives will not see him as a threat, and then hides out in the Cave of Adullam.

What we have next is a series of cat and mouse actions between Saul and his men and David and his. In each case, Saul is typically a day late and a dollar short. As he closes in, David is escaping. What is interesting is that on two occasions, David has the opportunity to kill Saul yet chooses not to. The phrase, "who can strike down God's Anointed and remain sinless" (1 Samuel 26:9) must indeed echo in our heads, especially when we think of the Great Anointed one, Jesus, who was struck down for our sins. In the first of these cases, David encounters Saul in a cave and cuts off the corner of Saul's robe, only to grieve his action afterwards. In the second case, they catch Saul and his troops in camp and asleep without a posted guard, so steal Saul's spear and water jug, moving them outside of the camp to ensure that all knew what had taken place.

In these latter chapters, one could have a field day with Saul if one were into psycho-analysis. He is homicidal, paranoid, lying, twisting the truth, and pledging one thing and doing something entirely different. Sometimes people see this and read this as if these were just random stories put together in an awkward way to portray this king. I think that these accounts illustrate just how much damage to one's psyche it is when we try and hold on to something that does not belong to us. The more desperately we cling, the more foolish our actions become.

Saul goes as far as to visit a witch to summon the spirit of Samuel from the grave to give him counsel. There is some debate as to whether this is really the soul of Samuel being brought or some kind of evil spirit impersonating Samuel, but it seems to be that the vision is genuinely of Samuel and that the Witch was pretty fearful that her incantation had actually worked (no mirrors, lights, or camera tricks!).

Saul and Jonathan's deaths are recorded in chapter 31; the tragic part being Jonathan's death, faithful to his father.

### 2 Samuel

The second book of Samuel focuses on David's kingship, though begins with the funeral for Jonathan and Saul. Notice the respect with which David speaks of Saul in his eulogy. The bottom line is that no matter whether Saul were wicked or not, David considered it proper to offer honor where honor was due and demonstrate respect for the Anointed of God.

Notice, though, that David's consolidation of power did not come all at once. First, he had to subdue those loyal to the house of Saul and then second, he had to secure the allegiance of the northern tribes as well. And once all of that is done, and David establishes Jerusalem as the capitol city, David calls for the Ark of the Covenant to be brought down.

And it is in the bringing of the Ark that troubles really begin. Initially they did everything all wrong. They put it on an ox cart and showed it to all. It is clear in the spilling of the cart that God wished no part of this behavior and when Uzzah stuck his hand out to catch the Ark, God struck him dead. This sent the Ark right back to the house from which it came for three more months. Then, when David and his men chose to do things correctly, keeping the Ark covered for no one to see, carrying it with poles and by the priests, and then anointing the pathway to Jerusalem with sacrifices and praise. Then God blesses the actions, though David's first wife, Michal is not too pleased with the indignity of seeing her husband dancing before the Lord in nothing but a linen ephod that clearly did not cover much (her rebuke in 2 Samuel 6:20).

One of the most important promises of the Messiah comes in this section of the text, and that is God's promise to raise up a king who will remain on the throne forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16). This looks forward to Jesus for its fulfillment. David will centralize his power, but as things become established, he commits the unthinkable — he lusts after the wife of one of his Mighty Men who is out in battle. And David not only commits adultery with his friend's wife but also has his friend murdered on the battlefield in an attempt to cover up his sin.

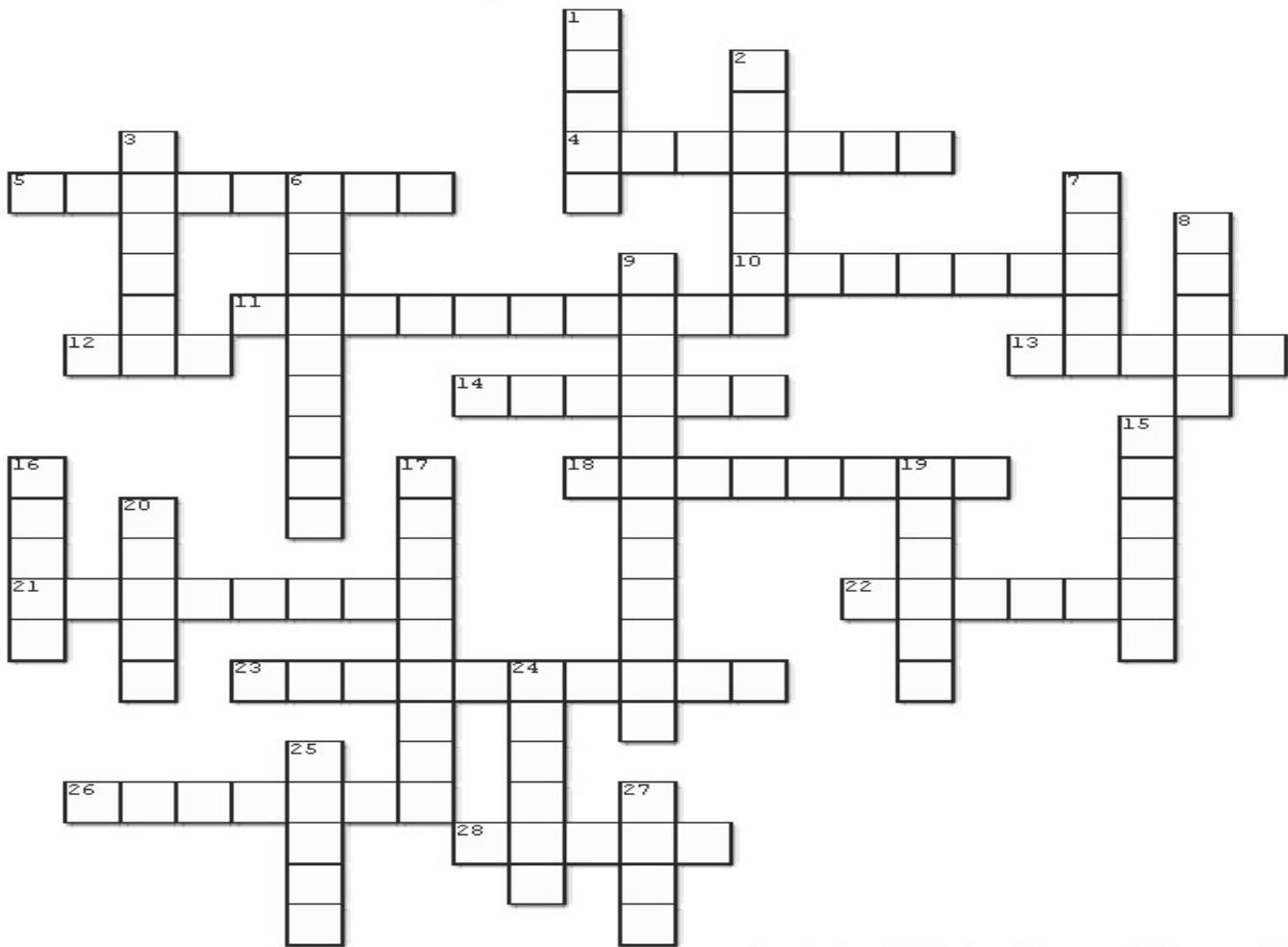
Yet, what is done away from the eyes of men is not done away from the eyes of God who sees and knows all things. Thus, God sends Nathan to rebuke his king. Notice that both crimes are deserving of the death penalty, yet God forgives a repentant heart. Psalm 51 is the psalm that David wrote to express his own heart after he is confronted in his sin. Our reading for the week ends with the rise in influence of David's son, Absalom ("Father of Peace"). And he will bring anything but peace to the empire.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Note that the 12 loaves of the Bread of the Presence represented the 12 Tribes of Israel in the Presence of Yahweh. David's consumption of these 12 loaves is a reminder of his rightful rulership over these 12 tribes as the anointed king.
- Psalm 34 is written about this instance in David's life when he acts crazy in Gath. Some people get confused as in 1 Samuel the King's name is listed as Achish and in Psalm 34 it is listed as Abimelech. When you recognize, though, that Abimelech means, "Father of the King," you realize that while some have genuinely carried this name, it is also a title, and can be understood that way here, not to conflict with Achish's given name.
- Nabal's name means "foolish" (see 1 Samuel 15 for this account)
- A piece of trivia, Harry Houdini spent much of his spare time debunking the various spiritualists and other charlatans who preyed on desperate people who hoped to speak to their lost loved ones once again. Houdini was enraged that these "mediums" would use slight of hand and tricks to get people's money and would even disguise himself and play tricks on the "mediums."
- Often people struggle with God striking Uzzah dead. For the way the Ark was being treated, it is a wonder that God did not strike all of the people dead. For which is more defiling to the things of God...the earth God created or the hands of sinful men?
- Notice the prophecy of the king to follow David in 2 Samuel 7:14. God says, "when he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rods of men, with the stripes of the sons of men..." Though Jesus committed no iniquity, God laid upon him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21). And indeed, this was fulfilled with the rods of men...the Roman Empire.

# Week 12: 1 Samuel 21-2 Samuel 13

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

## Across

4. The name of the son of David who will cause so many problems for him later on.
5. Saul's son, friend of David, killed in battle.
10. After the death of their firstborn, David and Bathsheba conceive a second time giving birth to this boy.
11. He was originally made King of Israel before David achieved the support of the northern tribes.
12. How many steps were in between offerings when bringing the Ark to Jerusalem.
13. The name of Bathsheba's husband.
14. The prophet God sent to rebuke David.
18. This son of the priest of Nod escaped and reported Saul's murder of his father to David. **21.** The household where the Ark was stored.
22. Saul and Jonathan were slain fighting on this mount.
23. This nation of people kidnapped two of David's wives amongst others.
26. David acquired the sword of this giant foe in Nod.
28. David runs into this impudent man who ends up being struck dead. (hint: his wife's name was Abigail)

## Down

1. He was struck dead for touching the Ark.
2. Nabal's name means this.
3. David was in a cave in the wilderness of this region when he cut off a corner of Saul's cape.
6. David did this to all the chariot horses of Hadadezer.
7. The leader of Saul's army.
8. The woman that Amnon raped with Absolom's help.
9. The lame son of Jonathan.
15. David's wife who did not appreciate him debasing self.
16. Samuel went to a Witch who lived here (if you are a Star Wars buff, this name should sound familiar).
17. The priest in Nod who gave David the Bread of the Presence.
19. David fled to this unlikely foe for a season — the name of the king who trusted David as his Bodyguard).
20. David stole this from Saul while he was sleeping.
24. David delivers this town from the Philistines only to find out afterwards that they will turn him in to Saul if he did not escape.
25. This is where Samuel is buried.
27. David acts like an insane person when he arrives at this city

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 13: 2 SAMUEL 14 – 1 KINGS 13 (MARCH 23-29)

### **Summary:**

Absalom's return to Jerusalem begins a time of trial for David — even to the point where David will have to flee from his son's usurping influence. After a bit of subterfuge with an old woman presenting a parable about two sons, Absalom is given permission to return to Jerusalem after the murder of his brother, Amnon.

Shortly after Absalom's return, he decides that he would do a better job ruling the land than his father did before him, so he begins the process of seeking to usurp his father's authority, eventually causing David to flee Jerusalem for the wilderness as far as the Jordan River. Absalom, on the other hand, enters into Jerusalem and takes his father's concubines as his own, assuming his father's authority.

Eventually, David rallies soldiers to himself and defeats those who had become loyal to Absalom. Though David had given strict commands that Absalom not be injured in retaliation, Absalom fled, got his hair caught in a thicket and was run through by Joab, one of David's generals. Eventually, though, David is re-established (at least for a season).

What follows are a series of turmoils for David. There is an attempted rebellion by a man named Sheba, a three year famine, and a war with the Philistines. David's song of deliverance that follows and will be the foundation of what we also know as Psalm 18. We have David's final oracle and then a description of the mighty deeds of David's mighty men before the final chapter of 2 Samuel is wrapped up.

Toward the end of David's life, Israel kindled God's wrath against them and God raised up David to command a census, not something that David was supposed to do as king. In punishment, God brought wrath on the land. David took this to heart and ultimately was given a choice of several punishments. David wisely threw himself on the mercy of God and thus the Angel bringing destruction stopped at the threshing floor of Araunah, a place which David would purchase and turn into a place of worship.

### *1 Kings:*

The book of Kings really begins the transition from the reign of a single, powerful king in Israel to separate kings of a divided nation. It begins with the plans of David to anoint Solomon as king after him in the midst of a number of people seeking the throne of the elderly king. There again are some plans by Nathan and Bathsheba to ensure that David's will regarding Solomon takes place. The final wisdom that David offers to Solomon is wisdom fit for all of us: "Be strong, show yourself to be the man you have been called to be, follow God's ways and keep the rules given in the law of Moses so that the Lord establishes your ways — and teach these things as well to your own sons." Can anything more be said?

What follows is a well known passage of scripture where God asks Solomon what gift that should be given to him and Solomon asks for the ability to have an understanding mind so that he may discern between good and evil. Because of this wise

choice, God offers him wealth and victory over his enemies as well and establishes Solomon not only amongst his people, but as a world leader, attracting visitors to his court from as far as Sheba, which was in northeast Africa.

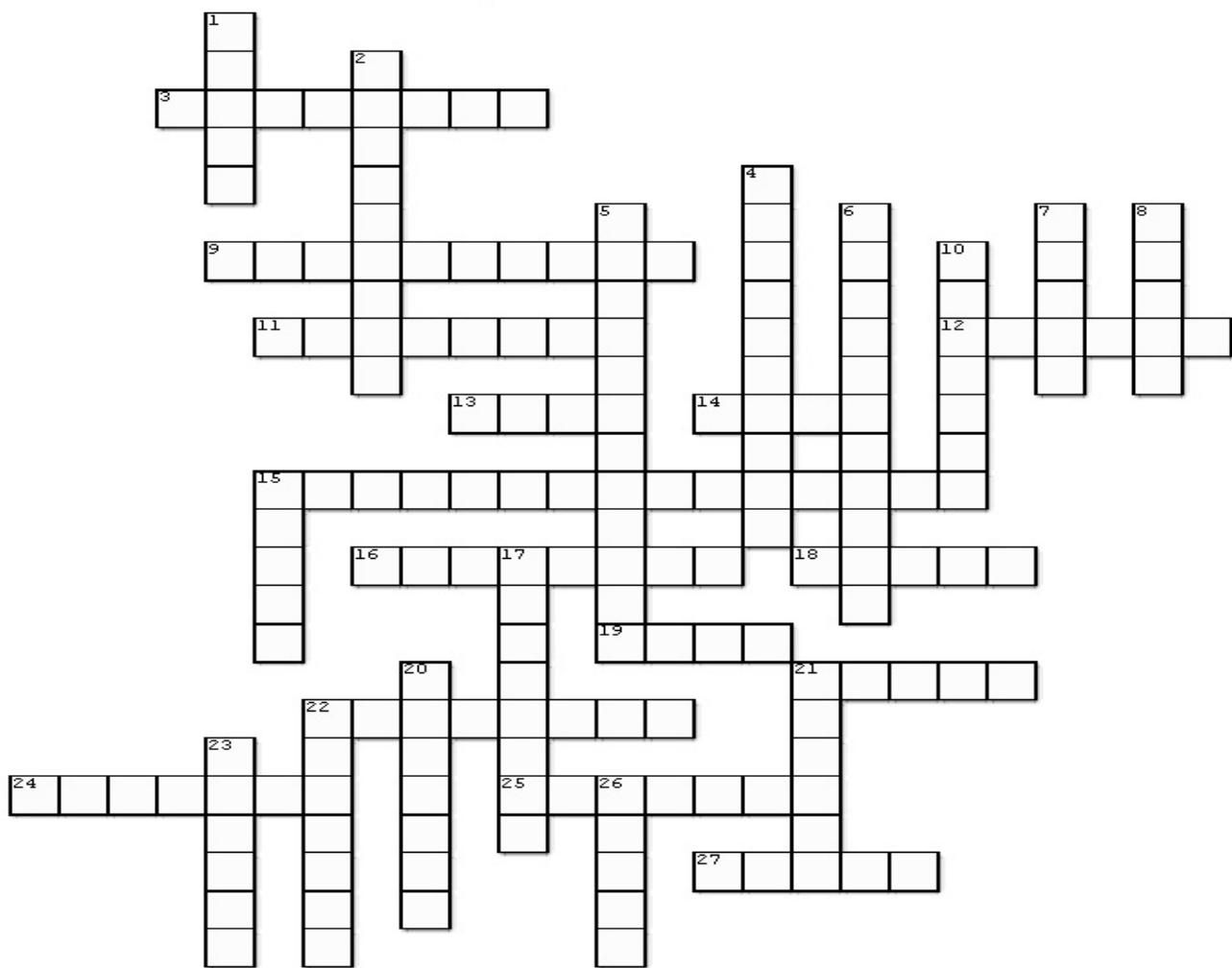
Wealth and opulence also becomes synonymous with Solomon's reign and Solomon made an agreement with the King of Tyre to help supply skilled craftsmen and materials for the building of the Temple. Upon the completion of the Temple, the Ark of the Covenant is brought into it and the Temple and a service of sacrifice is offered in praise to God for its completion. Yet, as a world power, Solomon followed the ways of the world and began marrying women from different nations and places, largely as a way of maintaining peace between nations. And these women brought their idols, enticing Solomon to enter into idol worship alongside of them. This both raised enemies for Solomon, but also prepared the way for Solomon's fall and the eventual division between the northern and southern kingdoms under Solomon's son, Rehoboam. The nations are divided, Jeroboam becoming king in the north and establishing pagan idol worship as the norm, raising golden calves for worship in Bethel and Dan, not unlike what Aaron had allowed the Israelites to do in the wilderness.

### **Chromatic Notes:**

- You will notice (2 Samuel 16) that as David is exiting Jerusalem there is an account where he stops at the Mount of Olives weeping; something that anticipates the very difficult evening our Lord spent in the Garden of Gethsemane, which is located on the Mount of Olives.
- Sometimes people get hung up (pardon the pun) with Joab's killing of Absalom when Joab knew full well that David did not want Absalom killed. From Joab's perspective, so long as Absalom was left alive, there was a chance for another usurping of power.
- We are told that the three year famine in Israel was brought on by Saul's attack on the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites had been granted covenantal protection in Israel by Joshua (though again through intrigue); a reminder that while we often forget the promises and covenants made, God does not.
- 2 Samuel 23:2 — "The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me; his word is on my tongue." is a reminder again of the divine inspiration of Scripture. These are God's words spoken through and recorded by men, not simply human words.
- The deeds of David's "Mighty Men" are a fascinating little study, but it should be noted that the last of the mighty men to be listed is Uriah the Hittite, the man from whom David stole Bathsheba.
- When Solomon is anointed as king, he is presented riding his father, David's, mule. Note that Jesus, during his triumphal entry, rode a donkey that had never been ridden but instead had been consecrated for the Lord's use. Thus we have Jesus also riding in on a mount belonging to his Father.
- Note that while Solomon is known for building the Temple of God, taking 7 years to do so, he also spent 13 years building his own palace.

## Week 13: 2 Samuel 14-1 Kings 13

Complete the crossword below



Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

### Across

3. Solomon did what was evil in the sight of God — he participated in \_\_\_\_\_.
9. 'May the counsel of this conspirator turn into foolishness.'
11. This son of Haggith seeks to make himself king in David's old age.
12. This prophet helps David and Bathsheba secure Solomon's role of King after David.
13. This man is responsible for Absolom's death.
14. This animal met and killed a disobedient prophet from Bethel.
15. This was the leader of 'The Three', the most renown of the Mighty Men.
16. This is how many years Solomon spent building his palace.
18. Solomon had seven-hundred of these.
19. Absolom would weigh this out every year and it would get as long and heavy as twohundred shekels.
21. The queen of this African nation came and won Solomon's favor.
22. This man established idolatry in the northern kingdom.
24. One of the types of Timber that Hiram provided to Solomon.
25. The name of David's treacherous son.
27. This Hittite was the last of the Mighty Men to be mentioned.

### Down

1. When David fled Jerusalem, this priest tried to bring the Ark of the Covenant with him, but was sent back by David.
2. 'The Lord is... the horn of my \_\_\_\_\_.'
4. Saul's attack on these people brought a famine upon the land.
5. The lame son of Jonathan served by the lying Ziba.
6. This is the product of wisdom — to discern between (3 words)
7. How many men did Absolom have running before his chariot, announcing his coming?
8. The King of Tyre who helped Solomon.
10. This Mighty Man killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day.
15. This tribe alone followed the house of David after the north-south split.
17. The name of Solomon's foolish son.
20. The Angel of death stopped at this man's threshing floor.
21. This wicked man curses David.
22. The wisdom of God was in Solomon to do this \_\_\_\_\_. (Hint, it is something that God commands of you, 'O Man.')
23. The anger of God was kindled, causing David to take this of the people.
26. This is how many years it took to build the Temple.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 14: 1 KINGS 14 – 2 KINGS 15 (MARCH 30 – APRIL 5)

### Summary:

1 Kings 14 begins with the sickness of Abijah, the son of Jeroboam (recalling from last week that Jeroboam led the northern 10 tribes while the southern tribe of Judah fell to Rehoboam. The prophet Ahijah arrives and speaks of the pending death of Jeroboam's son — a judgment upon him and his household due to their idolatry in the land of Canaan.

What follows is a series of reigns, mostly by wicked kings, competing in the northern and in the southern kingdoms. In the northern kingdom, we have Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab. And without exception, none of these kings did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. In the southern kingdom of Judah, we have Rehoboam, Abijam, and Asa. Of the three, Asa was the only one who did what was "right" in the eyes of the Lord by removing the idols his father and grandfather had made and ridding the land of cult prostitutes. This period of time takes place over 77 years (930 BC with the death of Solomon to 853 BC with the death of Ahab); in that time, Israel has seen seven kings and Judah has seen three and only one of the ten has been righteous. What a sad testimony of the state of God's people.

There is a bit of an interlude in the succession of bad kings, though, when we arrive at chapter 17 and we enter into the narrative that focuses less on the kings themselves and more on the lives and ministries of Elijah and Elisha. This interlude continues all of the way through chapter 9 of 2 Kings.

In the height of Ahab's reign, God sends the prophet Elijah to warn of a coming drought that is being sent by God because of the people's idolatry. Ahab, the king of the northern region, is married to Jezebel, a Phoenician woman from the port city of Sidon. She was known for her wickedness and for her importation of Phoenician worship into the king's palace. As a result of the drought, Elijah leaves the covenant land and resides with a widow in Zerephath where the miracle of the flour and oil not running out was worked.

Finally God sends Elijah back to Israel to confront Ahab and to demand a showdown between himself and the prophets of Baal and Asheroth. In this well-loved account, Elijah finds himself facing 450 prophets of Baal in a duel to see which God will burn the offering to ashes. Of course, a Baal cannot move or walk or ignite an offering but the God of the universe can do so — even if it is drenched in water as this one was. The false prophets are executed and an enraged Jezebel issues Elijah's death warrant (but not before God sends rain and Elijah outruns Ahab's chariot).

Entire volumes are written about Elijah's flight from Jezebel into the wilderness and then the call of Elisha; the most important thing is that God establishes clearly to Elijah that God himself is sovereign even in preserving a group of faithful people for himself -- he never leaves himself without a witness...a lesson that Paul picks up on in Romans 11 when he teaches on election.

Elijah returns and taps Elisha to be his disciple and then later successor and then we jump right into a war that the northern kingdom is having with Ben-hadad of Syria. God would give the Syrian into the hand of Ahab but Ahab ended up releasing this captured king. There is a curious encounter with a prophet and a lion, but ultimately God causes the kingdom to be taken from Ahab's family.

Then there is faithful Naboth, Jezebel's intrigue that gets Naboth killed by ruffians and also gets a curse placed on Jezebel that the dogs would eat Jezebel's body in the walls of Jezreel. After three years, Israel was back at war with Syria. He brings in aide from his neighbors in Judah, who agree to help (despite an odd encounter with Micaiah the prophet. Needless to say, Ahab is killed in battle and his son, Ahaziah reigned in his place. And thus 1 Kings closes...with Ahaziah in

the northern kingdom and Jehoshephat in the southern kingdom passing away to be followed by his son, Joram. Jehoshaphat distinguished himself as a faithful king.

### 2 Kings:

We begin with the continuation of the account of Elijah and Elisha, much of which is very familiar — the showdown with Ahaziah, the chariots of fire that carried Elijah into heaven, the story of the she-bears attacking the kids who taunted Elisha, the oil pots of the widow, the feeding of the 100, the healing of Naaman, the floating axe-head, and the legions of God's angels that descended to protect the people of Israel from their Syrian enemy. Entire volumes can be written on the ministry of Elisha, though we often pay more attention to his predecessor, Elijah.

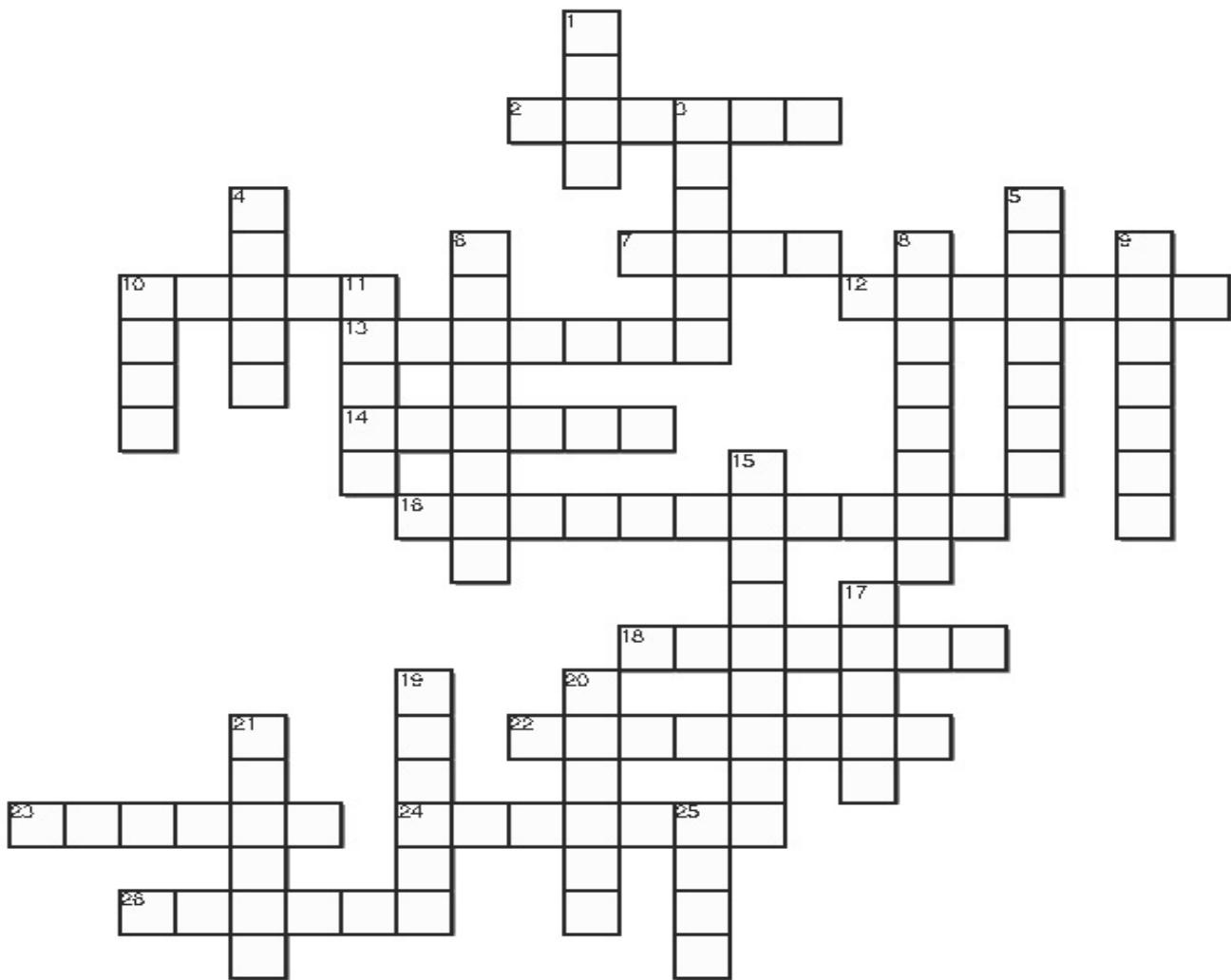
The reading continues again with a succession of kings and the work that they do. We pick up in the southern kingdom with Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, and Jotham. And in the northern kingdom, with Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeoboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, and Pekah. This covers a span of about 120 years...and in that time, we find 3 "good" kings in Judah. Sad the state of human affairs as sin bogs us down.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Zarephath is located outside of the promised land. Elijah's choice to stay there was a foretaste of the exile to come while at the same time, a reminder that God will provide for his faithful even if they are outside of the land.
- Note the phrase that Elijah uses when he speaks of the people "limping between two options" God or Baal (1 Kings 18:21). The same word is used in verse 26 as well of the false prophets, bleeding and limping around the altar. In the flailing about of the false prophets, Elijah is showing the Israelites how foolish and pathetic they look in God's eyes when they don't choose to follow him. In the end, he slaughters the priests: a foretaste of the eternal destruction.
- The cave that Elijah stops at and has his confrontation with God is referred to as "the cave" in the Hebrew text of 1 Kings 19:9, not "a cave." This is an indication that this cave was a familiar one in covenant history...the cave in which Moses saw the glory of God pass by (Exodus 34). It is at least part of the answer as to why it is Moses and Elijah that meet with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, witnessing the glory of God again, in Christ.
- People often say, "Why didn't Naboth just sell his vineyard to Ahab? Didn't he know that the king would take it if not sold (kind of like in Eminent Domain today)? The king was offering a fair price. Yet, one's inheritance in the land was provided by God himself, we are stewards of our inheritance and it does not belong specifically to us. It was not Naboth's to give.
- Elijah is one of two people who bodily ascended into Heaven in the Old Testament; Enoch (Genesis 5) is the second.
- Next to Moses, Elisha works more miracles than any other Old Testament prophet, thus as Elijah precedes Elisha, John the Baptist is referred to as the Elijah that will come who precedes the great worker of miracles, Jesus. You will also find that many of Elisha's miracles sound similar to miracles that Jesus will work, just that Jesus' are worked on a much larger scale.
- To raise the Shunammite's son, Elijah places his mouth to the child's mouth and breathes into him. This is said to be the inspiration behind what we today know as CPR.

Week 14: 1 Kings 14-2 Kings 15

Complete the crossword below.



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword

Across

2. Elisha raises a woman's son who lived in this town. 7. Azariah was known as a \_\_\_\_\_ king.

10. Along with Elijah, this Old Testament figure also ascended bodily into heaven.

12. The wicked wife of Ahaz

13. The man who hides 100 prophets from Ahaz to protect them.

14. The man who will follow Elijah's ministry.

16. This king of Judah went to war alongside of Ahab when Ahab was killed in battle.

18. The punishment for Elisha's greedy servant was this disease.

22. This Syrian king regularly plagued the people of Israel.

23. This man murders Ben-hadad and becomes an even more wicked king of Syria.

24. This prophet was disliked by Ahab because he never told Ahab what he wanted to hear.

26. Children of this town learned a hard lesson about taunting the Prophet of God.

Down

1. This man executes Jezebel.
  3. This man was murdered to have his vineyard stolen. 4. Elisha adds this to a stew that was poisoned to make it safe.
  5. Elisha makes this item float so it won't be lost (2 words).
  6. The Israelites were struggling against this group when Elisha died.
  8. This false prophet made a horn of iron to make his point.
  9. This good king of Judah begins his reign at seven years old.
  10. Nabad is described as a king who did \_\_\_\_\_ in the sight of the Lord.
  11. The mountain that Elijah flees to after Jezebel threatens his life.
  15. Elijah lives with this widow and provides that her oil and flour do not run out.
  17. This son of Amitai, a prophet, lived during the reign of Jeroboam II.
  19. The mountain on which Elijah has his famous showdown with the prophets of Baal.
  20. The name of Elisha's greedy servant.
  21. Elisha feeds 100 men with this many small loaves of barley bread.
  25. Elijah spends much of his ministry contending with this Israelite king.

## CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

### WEEK 15: 2 KINGS 16 – 25; ISAIAH 1 – 14 (APRIL 6 – 11)

#### **Summary:**

As we continue through 2 Kings, we see much of the same pattern...mostly men raised up into the reign of kingship who "did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord." In fact, in all of the years of the divided kingdom, none of the northern kings are spoken of as being righteous and only about 9 of the southern kings are spoken of as doing what was "right in the eyes of the Lord."

Thus we begin with Ahaz in the south and Pekah in the north. Not only is Ahaz spoken of as evil and making sacrifices to idols, but Ahaz goes as far as to burn his own son as an offering to the pagan god, Molech, in the Valley of the Sons of Hinom (later known as Gehenna). What is most significant, though, is that it is during the reign of Ahaz in the southern kingdom that the northern kingdom falls (then under the northern king of Hoshea) — at this point, we are at about the year 722 B.C.

The author of the book of Kings gives us a detailed explanation as to why the northern kingdom was destroyed so as to leave us with no confusion that this was God's judgment for sin and not some random military act with no divine influence behind it. God, ultimately, is sovereign over all primary and secondary causes and events. 2 Kings 17:15 sums up the judgement most concisely when it records that Israel "went after false idols and became false and they followed the nations that were around them." God is clear that his people are to be separate from the world, not part of it. Yet, we are also left with a warning to Judah...for they too had been disobedient.

In the southern kingdom, Hezekiah would succeed Ahaz, and he was a good king. When Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, moved to conquer the southern kingdom, God chose to deliver them from the wrath of the Assyrians. Sennacherib made his advance as far as the city of Jerusalem. Yet, God allows Sennacherib to hear a rumor that his territories back home were being attacked and he turned his troops in that direction. And when the Assyrians were encamped, the Angel of Yahweh walked through the camp and slew 185,000 soldiers in one night, routing the army.

Manasseh would follow Hezekiah and all the good that Hezekiah did, Manasseh reversed and then magnified the idolatry and evil of the people. Altars were built on high places, idols were even erected inside of the Temple, and like Ahaz, he even burned his own son as an offering to the pagan gods. After, wicked Manasseh, his wicked son Amon reigned in his place. His reign only lasted two years before his servants betrayed and murdered him.

The son of Manasseh was the last of the good kings that would rise up in Judah. Josiah began his reign at 8 years old, repaired the damage to the temple, rediscovered the law of Moses, and led the people in genuine reform. He also reestablished the practice of the Passover festival, something that had not done regularly since the days of the Judges. Tragically, Josiah was killed in battle by Neco, the Pharaoh of Egypt.

After the death of Josiah, his son, Jehoahaz reigned in his place, returning to the wickedness of his forebears. Yet, after three months, Pharaoh Neco took him in chains to Egypt and placed his brother, Jehoiakim on the throne. Jehoiakim's reign was troubled by attacks from enemies on every side, weakening the nation as it began to fall. After Jehoiakim's death, his son Jehoiachin assumed the throne only to be deposed in three months after the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. He was carried to Babylon amongst the other exiles and his uncle, Zedekiah reigned in his place as a vassal to Babylon. Yet, Zedekiah also rebelled and in 586 B.C. Babylon returned and utterly destroyed the city of Jerusalem, ending the reign of the kings. 2 Kings closes with a meager portion of grace as we read that Jehoiachin, who had been taken to Babylon as a prisoner, was released from prison and permitted to remain in the Babylonian king's household, a promise that those Jews taken to Babylon would not remain forever in chains, but like their early years in Egypt, would begin to settle and grow in safety. A return to the land is coming.

#### **Isaiah:**

What about Chronicles and Job, the Psalms and the other Wisdom Literature? Why are we jumping all of the way to Isaiah already? As we have noted before, we are following the Hebrew order of the Old Testament Canon. More importantly, if you remember back to when we began, the Historical books we read (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings) are all part of the Prophetic works (called the Former Prophets) as they provide case evidence of God's faithfulness to his covenant in the midst of the people's unfaithfulness. The Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the 12 Minor Prophets) essentially play the role of covenant lawsuits against the people in light of the evidence given by the Former Prophets.

Isaiah lived in the 8th Century B.C. and had a prophetic ministry that

#### ISAIAH 1 – 14 (APRIL 6 – 11)

extended nearly to the fall of the Northern Kingdom. In the Former Prophets, we see Isaiah mentioned in 2 Kings 19-20 (2 Chronicles 26-32 also includes the accounts of Isaiah).

Isaiah begins with God's testimony against the people of Judah. We find even the covenantal language of the heavens and earth testifying against the people — God bringing all of his creation into the courtroom.

Probably the most well known passage in these early chapters begins in Isaiah 6, where we see Isaiah's prophetic calling. Volumes are written on this wonderful passage, but notice particularly the language of God keeping the hearts of the people "dull" so that they won't repent. This is the same justification that Jesus gives for telling parables (Matthew 13:14-15). Following the call, we also have some very intentionally Messianic language — that the Messiah will be born from a virgin (7:14), he will be a rock of stumbling (8:14), and the wonderful passage in 9:2-7 that presents the child Jesus as the light to the nations.

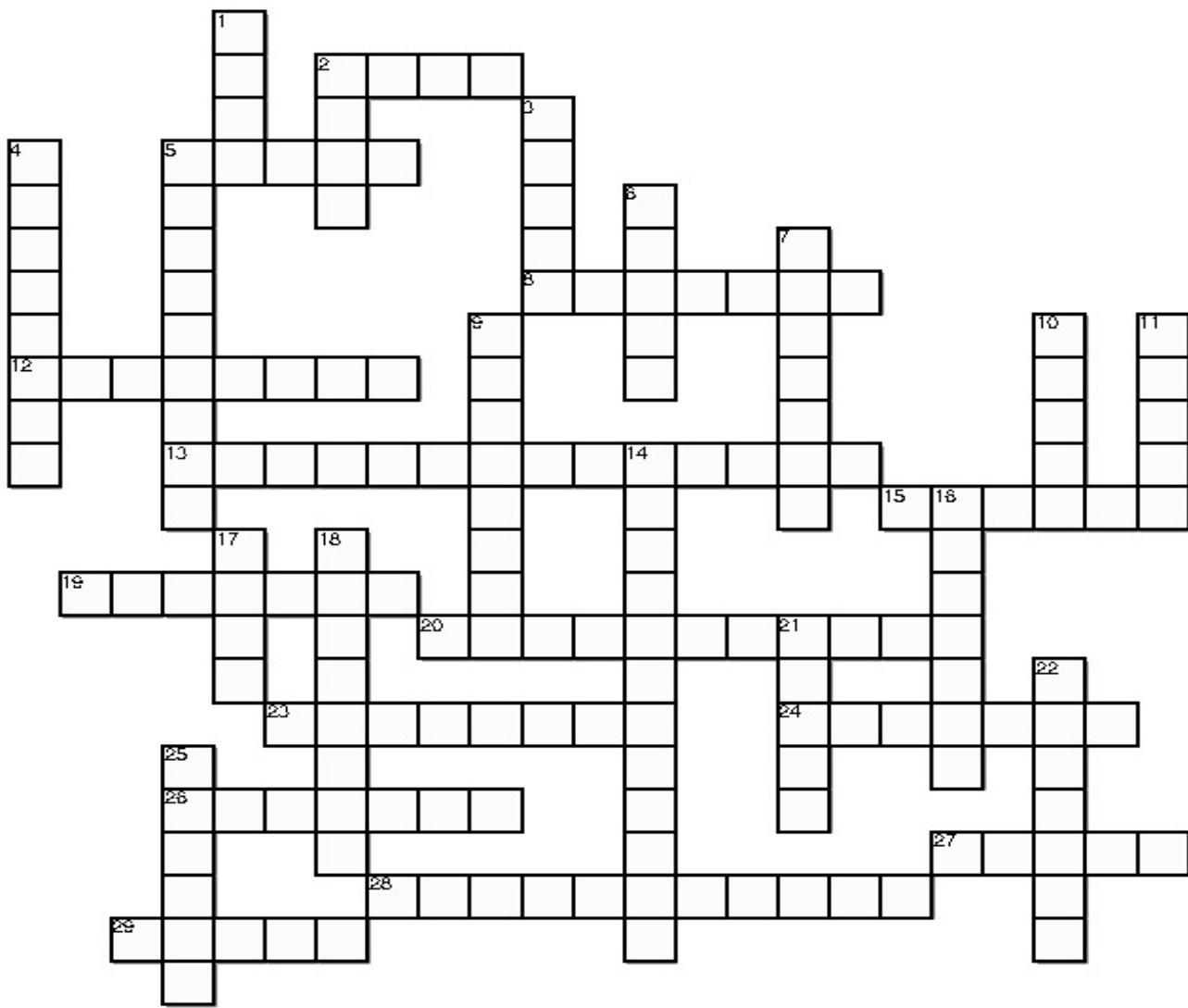
While we get a few tastes of promise in these first chapters of Isaiah, it won't be until we reach Isaiah 40 that we see the language transition to the work of the Messiah and the promise of redemption that he will bring.

#### **Chromatic Notes:**

- During King Ahaz' reign, you find a good illustration of the King commanding the Priest with respect to the sacrifices. Biblically this was never meant to be the King's role and is an illustration as to just how far the people had fallen.
- Note too, the reference to the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah... some argue that this is a reference to the book of Chronicles others as a reference to an otherwise lost book that refers to the annals kept during the lifetime of each king.
- You will notice that when the Assyrian king conquered Israel (the northern kingdom), he relocated the people to various places throughout the empire and then he took people from various parts of the empire and moved them into Israel, which is what would give Samaria its distinction as a people who were only half-breeds and not true Jews — a distinction that would remain even up to Jesus' day.
- At the end of Hezekiah's life there is a mention of a conduit that brought water into the city. This conduit went from the Spring of Gihon to what would be known as the Pool of Siloam. Modern archaeological evidence has also discovered that this conduit and discovered that this tunnel was not dug with pilot holes from the surface (as was typical of tunnels in ancient times), but was dug with a crew at both ends, meeting in the middle, guided by people hammering on metal stakes on the surface, listening to the sound echoing straight down through eighty feet of rock.
- The reference in 2 Kings 23 is that Josiah was the first to keep the Passover since the days of the Judges. Some object to this as 2 Chronicles 30 records Hezekiah as having kept the Passover festival. The reference here, though, seems to be referring to the re-establishment of the annual event, not something done just at one time as was done under Hezekiah.
- The Hill of Megiddo (in Hebrew: "Har Magiddo) is considered by many the source of the reference of Armageddon in Revelation 16:16.
- There is a reference in 2 Kings 24:4 that "the Lord would not pardon" the sins of this king. It is a reminder to us that while God is merciful to his own, the wicked do not receive mercy and God intentionally keeps his enemies under the hand of his judgment.
- Isaiah's name means: "Yahweh has Saved."
- Notice in Isaiah 1:3 that God uses the analogy that even the donkey knows its master but God's people do not recognize theirs. Not only is it a reminder that sin is rebellion against God, but it is a testimony that one of the effects of sin is the dumbing down of the human race to the point where they don't even know things that the stupid animals know. In theological terms, we call this the "Noetic Effect of Sin."
- Notice the allusion to the Book of Life in Isaiah 4:3.
- Typically when people encounter Isaiah's statement that he was a "man of unclean lips" they think of breaking the 3rd commandment about using God's name in vain. Yet, it is probably a reflection of the ancient practice of kissing idols, a practice that would spiritually give someone unclean lips.
- John 12:41 records that when Isaiah saw "The Lord high and lifted up" he was seeing the pre-incarnate Jesus.
- Isaiah 14:12 is the passage from which we get the name Lucifer. It speaks of the "Son of Dawn" as a fallen angel. Lucifer is the Latin translation of the phrase.

## Week 15: 2 Kings 16 - Isaiah 14

Complete the crossword below



### Across

2. This king was assassinated by his own servants.
5. The Israelites were so corrupt during Isaiah's day that God refers to them as the rulers of this pagan city (Hint: fire from heaven)
8. This was Jehoiakim's real name.
12. This is the reason the northern kingdom was carried into captivity.
13. This Babylonian king conquered Jerusalem.
15. 'Come now, let us \_\_\_\_\_ together...' (Hint: Latin translation of 'Son of Dawn')
19. This is the Latin translation of 'Son of Dawn.'
20. This Assyrian king defeated Hoshea, King of Israel, and carried the people of the northern kingdom into exile.
23. Amongst other reforms, Josiah re-established this festival.
24. Isaiah predicts that the Messiah will begin his ministerial work in this region. (Hint: Isaiah 9)
26. This was the region of Israel where the Assyrians relocated subjects from across their empire.
27. This is the first group that God chastises through Isaiah: the people of...
28. This Assyrian king laid siege to Jerusalem but had his army destroyed by the Angel of the Lord.
29. According to Isaiah, if you are not firm in this you will not be firm at anything at all.

### Down

1. This Egyptian Pharaoh killed Josiah.
2. The name of Isaiah's father.
3. Zedekiah was of this relationship to Jehoiachin.
4. This king had a tunnel dug that brought fresh water into the city walls.
5. Isaiah speaks of the Messiah being a 'rock of \_\_\_\_\_' to the people.
6. For to us a \_\_\_\_\_ is born.
7. This High Priest found the book of the Law and had it presented to Josiah.
9. One of the kings of Judah that burned his son as a sacrifice to a pagan god.
10. Who does Isaiah see 'high and lifted up'?
11. As a result of the war and males being killed and taken into captivity, Isaiah warns that this many women will take hold of one man that they may bear children.
14. This Babylonian king freed Jehoiachin from his bondage and permitted him to sit at his table.
16. In Isaiah, this tribal name is often used to speak of the northern tribes of Israel (Hint: region is tribal inheritance of one of Joseph's sons).
17. Isaiah lamented because he had this unclean body part.
18. This king only reigned for 3 months due to his treachery.
21. Josiah began his reign at this age.
22. It was here that Josiah was killed in battle.
25. This prophet prophesied Sennacherib's fall.

## CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

### WEEK 16: ISAIAH 15 – 38 (APRIL 13-19)

#### Summary:

As we continue through Isaiah, we continue with a series of condemnations of the nations that surround Israel. Those in these nations are hostile to the people of Israel for trusting in God (our home is not on this earth!). We see a promised destruction of Moab, Damascus, Cush, Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, Sidon, and then the nations of the earth. Even the wicked of Jerusalem are spoken of in this judgment.

We have an interlude in chapter 20 from the condemnation of the nations and find one of those many occasions in the scriptures where the prophets of God are asked to do some pretty extreme things to be a living demonstration to the people of God's plan. In this case, Isaiah is called by God to essentially strip down naked and walk amongst the people to show them how the Egyptians will be led off into custody by the Assyrians and to say to the Israelites — "why would you place your trust in them instead of in the Lord?"

Chapter 22 begins with a condemnation of Jerusalem for trusting in their surrounding nations but then switches attention to Shebna, whom we have already seen in 2 Kings 18-19. Shebna was the steward of the household of God and who was essentially feathering his own nest with that which he was expected to steward. Having abused his authority, he is stripped of his position and his responsibility is given to Eliakim.

Chapters 25 and 26 change gears and in them we find two hymns to God that speak of the benefits of trusting in God over trusting in the powers of this world. The first speaks of the redemption and the restoration that God works and the second speaks of the peace that comes to the city and nation that trusts in God. Yet, even in this context, do not miss the judgement upon those who oppose God and his people. Isaiah 26:13-14 summarize that idea when it presents a picture of God ordaining peace for his own yet turning the wicked who had oppressed Israel into shadows and shades of reality.

Chapter 27 begins with Messianic language, a promise that the coming Messiah will slay the Leviathan, the "dragon in the sea." This ought to draw our attention back to God's promise in Genesis 3:15, that the Messiah would crush the head of the serpent and Revelation 12:9, which connects Satan with the ancient serpent — or dragon. This leads into a section of Isaiah which calls the people to trust God and not Egypt — the connection found in that the symbol of Egyptian power was the serpent.

In chapter 28, though, we have a remarkable statement. Though God is going to condemn them for making a covenant with death (Isaiah 28:15), God reminds them that he has laid a cornerstone in Zion that is an immovable foundation (Isaiah 28:16). What follows, though, in chapters 29 & 30 is God's frustration with the people for turing their heads toward Egypt even when they knew better. God goes even to the extent of referring to the people as a "Rahab who sits still" — a Prostitute who refuses to turn from her ways and embrace the living God. God will be gracious to those who turn to him, but to those who turn toward Egypt, there will be punishment.

As Isaiah moves into chapters 34-35, we again find a change in direction. There is a call upon the Lord to be gracious to the people and a promise that the Lord God is our king, our lawgiver, and our savior (Isaiah 33:22). He is the only authority and the absolute plumb line by which all things are measured (Isaiah 34:11). And God will bring back to himself and to the land, the people who have been cut off and sent into exile — a partial fulfillment in earthly history and en

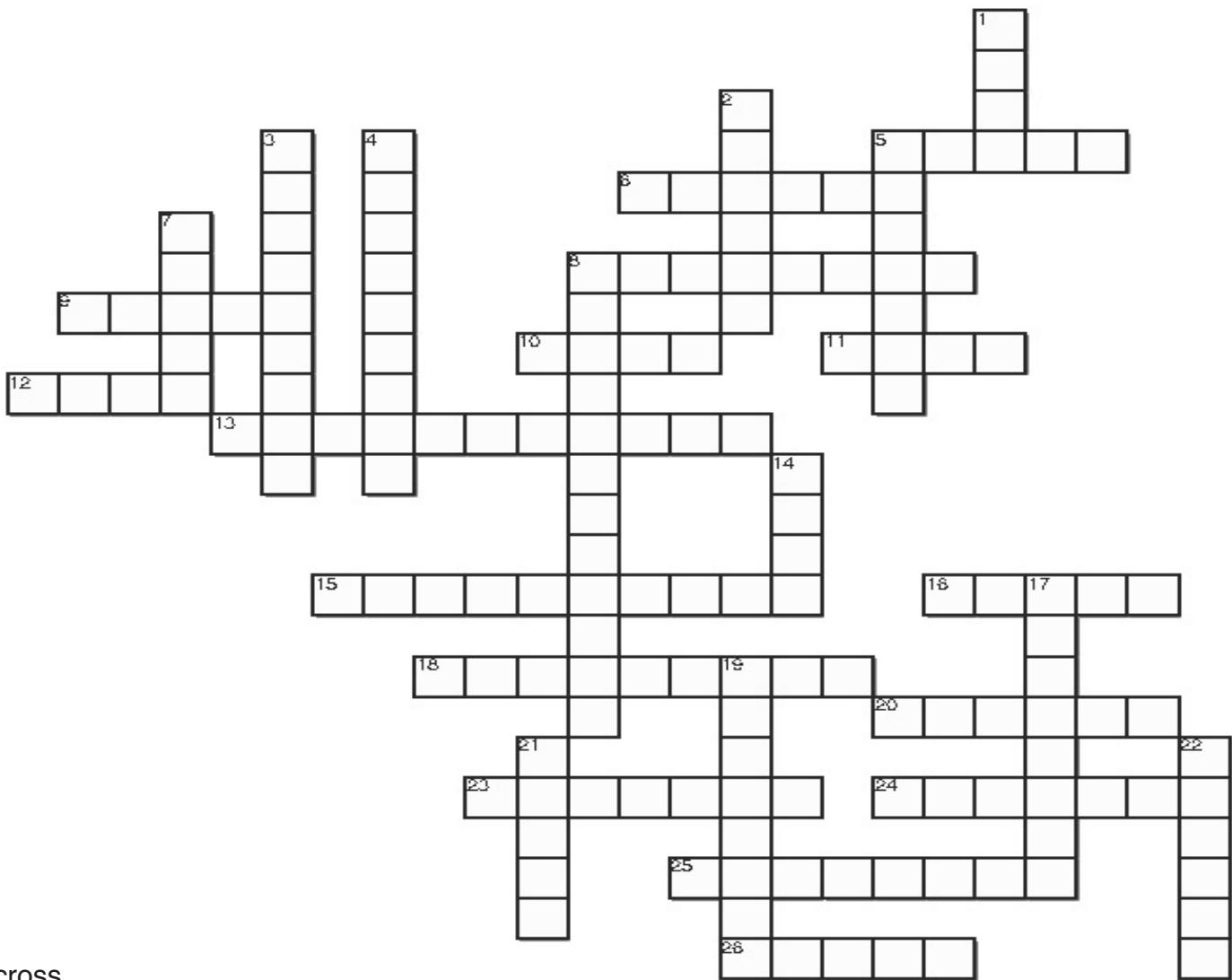
ternal history and a complete fulfillment when Christ returns.

Now, if you got bogged down some in the prophetic language of much of the text, rest easy, because chapters 36-38 change gears from the prophetic calls and focus on the narrative of Sennacherib's invasion of

Judah during the reign of Hezekiah. This then relates and parallels what is recorded in 2 Kings 19 and specifically the Angel of the Lord's striking down of 185,000 Assyrians in a single night. We close our reading this week with the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery as well as his plea for protection from God.

#### Chromatic Notes:

- Note Isaiah 17:7-8. This is reminiscent of the language in Philippians 2:10-11, where Paul speaks of all the nations bowing the knee to Christ. In Isaiah's language, the people of the nations will look to their maker and find (to their utter regret) that their maker is the Holy one of Israel, not the images created by their own hands.
- In chapter 19 there is an interesting little interlude where God speaks of believers in the midst of the Egyptians and in the midst of the Assyrians. Two explanations can be given for this...first, that there is a remnant that ended up in exile in these place but secondly, in God's original promise to Abraham, the eastern portion of Egypt and the western portion of Assyria were given to the people of Israel (Genesis 15:18-21).
- Though Isaiah would have to remove his loincloth and prophesy naked to the people, the prophet Jeremiah would have to take things a step further as you will read when we get to Jeremiah 13.
- In Isaiah 21:9 you will find language that forms the refrain in Revelation 18.
- There is a popular book of Puritan Prayers published under the title: "The Valley of Vision" — the book gets its title from Isaiah 22:1&5. Interestingly, the context of the phrase has to do with the Lord bringing judgment and confusion upon even the land of the valley of vision (vision in the Hebrew being synonymous with divine revelation).
- While the meaning of Shebna's name is uncertain (traditionally: "He Rests Himself"; some scholars think perhaps that it is a shortened form of "Shebanyahu," which would mean, "Yahweh has drawn close") but Eliakim's name is certain: "God Raised Up."
- Note the language that is being used in Isaiah 22:22 — it is the basis for the language that Jesus uses in Revelation 3:7.
- The language of "shades" speaking of the enemies of God's people in Isaiah 26:14 is picked up by C.S. Lewis in his novel, *The Great Divorce*, as he describes those condemned to Hell as being insubstantial and shadows of what they once were.
- Note the language in Isaiah 28:16 is in the past tense — God "has laid" the cornerstone in Zion — not "will lay." Though Jesus has yet to come in chronology, it has been so ordained by God since before the foundations of the earth.
- Notice the language of the sealed revelation in Isaiah 29:11; it is reminiscent of the sealed revelations spoken of in Revelation 5. The following verse, Jesus himself quotes in Mark 7.



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

5. God commands the people not to place their trust in this nation.
6. Under God's judgment, the skies are described as rolling up like this.
8. The king of Judah who is delivered from the Assyrians.
9. In Messianic promise, God promises to swallow this forever. (Hint: see chapter 25)
10. This enemy of God is described as bringing Tribute to God on Mount Zion.
11. 'The LORD is our \_\_\_\_\_; he will save us.'
12. This naval city will be forgotten for seventy years as part of God's judgment.
13. The king of the Assyrians who besieged Jerusalem.
15. 'I am the one who has laid a \_\_\_\_\_ in Zion.'
16. '\_\_\_\_\_ who sits still' is a term used to describe Egypt.
18. This is another term for the dragon in the sea.
20. In the Valley of \_\_\_\_\_ God will bring confusion.
23. Reminiscent of the book of Revelation, this cry goes out, 'Fallen, Fallen is \_\_\_\_\_.'
24. After the Angel of the Lord slew 185,000 Assyrians, the king fled to this wicked city where he lived.
25. This place will cease to be a city and become a heap of ruins.
26. The people draw near to God with this body part, but do not honor him with their hearts.

### Down

1. Shall the potter be regarded as the \_\_\_\_\_?
2. This mountain (along with Bashan) is described as shaking like a leaf under God's hand.
3. This is the spokesperson for the Assyrian king who taunted the people.
4. God will stretch one of these over the nations to establish justice. (2 words)
5. This son of Hilkiah replaces Shebna.
7. God 'ordains' this for his people.
8. Eliakim is given the key to this place. (3 words)
14. This will be as the light of the sun in the day when God binds up the wounds of his people.
17. The highway to God's kingdom will be called 'The Way of \_\_\_\_\_.'
19. On this road, Isaiah's heart raises a cry of destruction for Moab.
21. As a sign against Egypt and Cush, Isaiah is called to walk around this way.
22. As a sign that he would heal Hezekiah, God promised that he would see this turn back ten steps.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 17: ISAIAH 39 – 62 (APRIL 20 – 26)

### Summary:

Our reading in Isaiah this week picks up in an interesting way. This is a parallel passage to 2 Kings 20:12-19 there the envoys from Babylon are foolishly shown the wealth of Jerusalem...something that Isaiah points out will be carried off into exile along with his sons. Then he makes the statement (as is also recorded in 2 Kings), that this action is okay because there would be peace in his own lifetime. How often we fall into the trap of thinking of ourselves and our own lifetime and not thinking for generations to come.

Chapter 40 begins a new section of the writings of Isaiah focused on the future redemption that God is going to bring through the person of the Suffering Servant. Thus the language begins with some very familiar words..."Comfort, Comfort, my people, says your God." It is a song of salvation reflecting both on God's mighty hand of deliverance and of his judgment upon his enemies. This word will last forever (vs. 8), it is brought by God's counsel alone (vs. 14), and it is given to those who find their strength in the Lord (vs. 31).

Chapter 41 contains a series of promises of God's presence with his own...ones that he has chosen for himself. Yet, at the same time, God clearly condemns the people's willingness to include pagan ideas into their worship.

Chapter 42 begins the process of introducing us to the Suffering Servant of God...note the mildness of his character and the force of his endurance. He will not break a "bruised reed" (verse 3) while at the same time he will not grow weary (verse 4). He is described as being given as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, and a redeemer to those who are suffering...and at his presence a new song will be sung by the faithful, yet as a whole, the people will remain blind and deaf and unrepentant.

As we move into chapter 43, notice the language of God giving up to destruction the nations in ransom for his own, a reminder of God's sovereign election to be gracious and merciful upon those whom he chooses to show grace and mercy. It is but the elect from the nations that God calls and for them he will make a path of redemption...but all others face judgment.

Isaiah 44 contains a powerful commentary on the first commandment — God is God alone and there is no other like him. Those who fashion idols enter into trade in folly and bring shame upon themselves.

In Isaiah 45 we find an important prophesy taking place. God instructs Isaiah in the name of the Persian king that will redeem the people and return them from exile...he is Cyrus and this prophesy was given more than 100 years before Cyrus was even born. Yet, we are still reminded clearly that God chose to raise up Cyrus and to make the nations fall to him for the sake of Jacob. Verses 22 & 23 of this chapter offer one more powerful reminder to the people to turn away from the wicked and turn to God for redemption — a passage that Paul will cite in Philippians 2:10-11.

Part of the purpose of raising up the Persian king Cyrus was to humble Babylon for taking the people of God into captivity and thus after chapter 45 we enter into a rather long section that speaks of God's judgment upon this wicked nation that God will crush them for their evil deeds.

In chapter 49, we see the Servant of the Lord (Jesus) speaking for the first time and he enters into this proclamation. We could spend weeks discussing just this chapter, but we should move forward as Isaiah goes on to speak of the brokenness of the people (chapter 50) — they are like a woman who has been given into slavery for no cost and God will offer to redeem her if she will turn to him for redemption.

Chapter 52 begins the language of how this redemption is going to take place...in many ways, Chapters 52 & 53 are a summary

of the work of Atonement — Jesus restoring us into a right relationship with God by exchanging his righteousness for our wickedness. How appropriate it is that we read this passage the week after we celebrate the Resurrection in church. And thus, God brings joy to the spiritually barren and promises marriage (wholeness in the spiritual family)...a promise reminiscent of Hosea 2.

As the salvation is pronounced in the chapters that follow, pay special attention to the language of the gentiles (foreign nations) being brought into the life of the fellowship of God's people. The language here is intensely evangelistic (as a result of the Messiah's work in Isaiah 53). There will be futility to those who continue pursuing idols, but grace to those who come with a "contrite heart and lowly spirit."

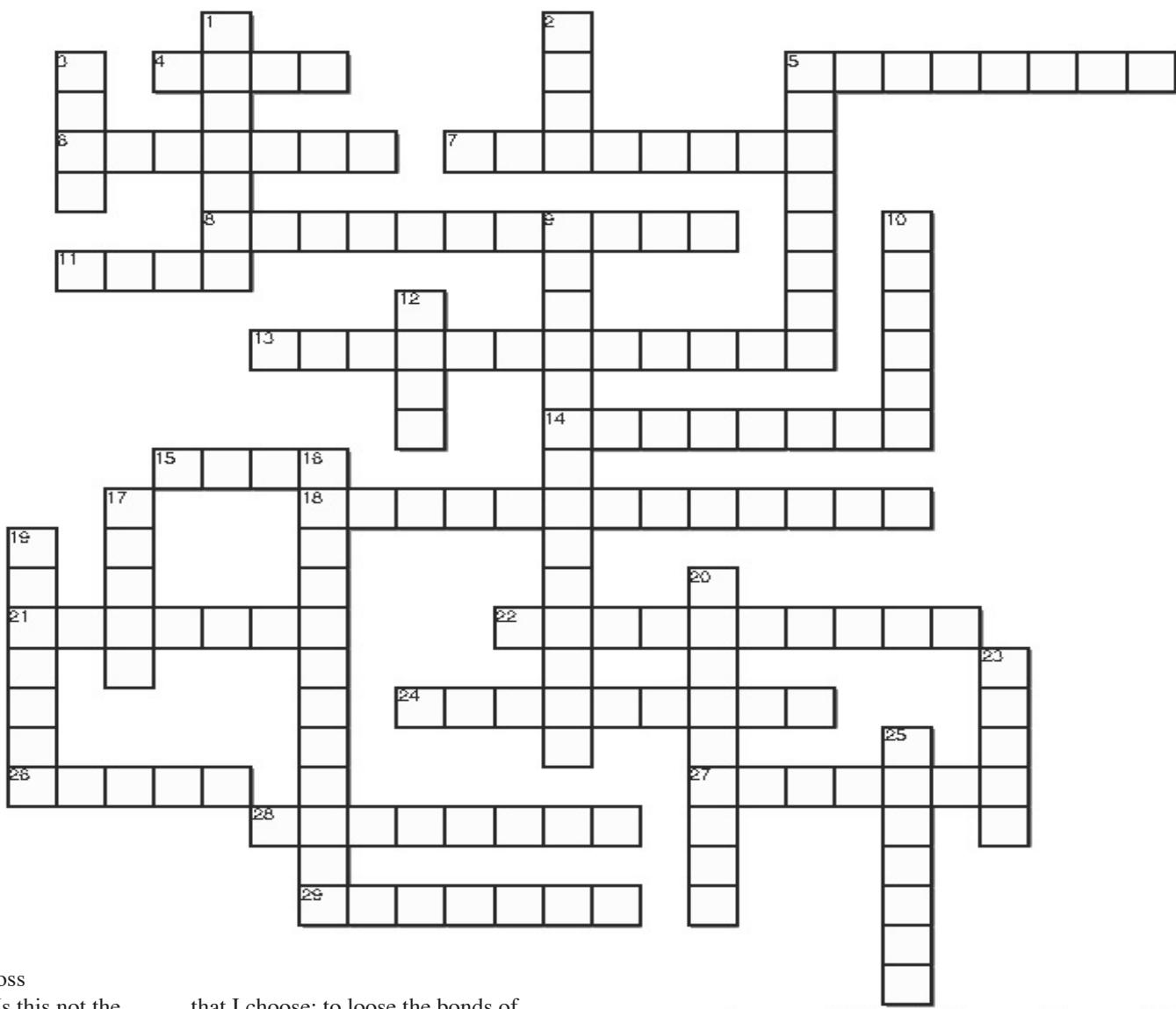
The final chapters of our reading for this week will leave you wanting not to stop. They are marked by words of promise that anticipate the coming of Christ. God is promising salvation to his own..."Behold, your salvation comes; behold his reward is with him and his recompense before him."

### Chromatic Notes:

- The language of making a straight road in the wilderness found in Isaiah 40 and then spoken of Jesus in the Gospels is language that speaks of removing obstacles to holiness.
- What makes a friend of God? 1. God's presence with him 2. God's choice of him. What identifies a friend of God is God's call on a person's life (see Isaiah 41:8-10) — notice especially the language in verse 9 of those being brought in from the ends of the earth — this is speaking of the gentile church even.
- Notice Isaiah 43:25 — notice that God blots out our transgressions for his own sake, not for our sake...
- Isaiah 44:2 & 44:24 are passages often chosen by pro-life people to remind us that it is God who knew us and formed us even in our mother's womb.
- Isaiah 44:9 best reads: "All who form idols are void" — they are empty, disordered, and without substance...just like their idols are.
- Isaiah 44:12-20 portrays a picture of the idol-maker having complete control over his idol; yet who controls the living God of the universe? How often we like to act and think as if we can or do control Him and his actions.
- Isaiah 45:7 is one of the most powerful reminders that God is sovereign over not only the good things that take place in this world but also the bad things.
- Isaiah 49:6 we find that the Servant not only brings light and salvation, but he *is* light and salvation to the people.
- Notice Isaiah 53:10. Literally the first part of the verse translates as: "Yet Yahweh delighted to crush him..." Spend some time wrapping your head around that idea...the pleasure of redeeming the elect outweighing the grief of crushing the Son.
- Notice how God speaks of Noah as a historical person (Isaiah 54:9) not some sort of mythological figure as many take him today.
- Isaiah 58:13-14 contains one of the most beautiful and poignant promises to us as God's people if we will but count the Sabbath Day as God would have us use it...as is so often the case, we "opt out" and seek to make the day our own.
- Notice the gifts mentioned in Isaiah 60:6...reminiscent of the Nativity account?

## Week 17: Isaiah 39-6

Complete the crossword below



### Across

4. 'Is this not the \_\_\_\_\_ that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness...!'
5. 'I make well-being and create \_\_\_\_\_'
6. This Patriarch is described as 'friend of God.'
7. This God will set on Jerusalem's walls.
8. In chapter 41, those who do the work of idolatry are described as this to God.
11. The Redeemer will come to this mountain...
13. This is one of the gifts brought on camels to our God.
14. Isaiah 61 speaks of this kind of oil.
15. The people are encouraged to sing a 'new' one of these.
18. This and strength are said to be found only in the Lord.
21. The Messiah is also referred to as the 'Man of \_\_\_\_\_'
22. 'Prepare a way' for the Lord here...
24. God calls this land formation to sing praises for his work of redemption.
26. One of the nations that God gives in ransom for Israel.
27. The Redeemer is also called: 'the \_\_\_\_\_ of Israel' (2 words)
28. This king showed off his treasure to the Babylonian envoys.
29. God wants us to call this day a delight.

Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Down

1. The name of Merodach-baladan's father.
2. The virgin daughter of Babylon is invited to sit in this...
3. Isaiah uses this imagery to speak of the folly of men who try and tell their God what to do with them  
(Hint: chapter 45)
5. God delights to revive the spirit of the lowly and the \_\_\_\_\_
9. God blot out his peoples \_\_\_\_\_ for his own sake.
10. They who wait upon the Lord will mount up with wings like this bird.
12. Every one of these will bow before God.
16. Isaiah describes the inhabitants of the earth as this bug in comparison to God (chapter 40).
17. Everyone who is called by God's name is created for God's \_\_\_\_\_ (Isaiah 43:7).
19. Isaiah 61 speaks of this that God loves...
20. 'Yet Yahweh \_\_\_\_\_ to crush him...'
23. If you had paid attention to the commandments of God, your peace would be like this... (Hint: there is a hymn that cites this passage).
25. 'The grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of our God will stand \_\_\_\_\_'

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 18: ISAIAH 63 – JEREMIAH 20 (APRIL 27 - MAY 3 )

### Summary:

As we wrap up Isaiah this week, continue to pay attention to the combination of wrath and mercy...these judgments of God always go together in the Biblical accounts. We find a long prayer for mercy asking God to tear open the heavens and come down and redeem his people. In addition, we find God speaking of a new heavens and earth that he is going to create where we will rejoice with God forever...something that finds its fulfillment in the second coming of Jesus.

Isaiah then closes with some of the most wonderful language in the prophetic works. He begins: "Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool, what is the house that you will make for me?" It is God saying to all of us, "Yes, I know you built that building or that organization or even that ministry...where is it again? Oh yes, that is where I rest my feet..." How big we regularly perceive ourselves but how small we really are. This chapter speaks of God sending peace to his own while at the same time sending fire to destroy the wicked and then gives a promise that God will send missionaries out with the Gospel to the pagan nations while also calling gentiles into his priesthood...sounds a lot like the book of Acts to me!

### Jeremiah...

Like Isaiah, Jeremiah had a lengthy ministry under several kings. Unlike Isaiah, Jeremiah's ministry was marked by a great deal of personal suffering as well as having had the sad experience of watching the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple from the inside. It is believed that he began his ministry around 627 BC and completed his ministry in the year 586 or shortly thereafter as he ministered to the Jews who had been carried off into Egypt after the fall of Jerusalem. He did have the benefit of having a scribe named, Baruch, to whom he dictated his prophecies.

It should be noted that while Jeremiah's prophecy is usually associated with sadness (he is sometimes called "the weeping prophet"), he also prophesied during the reign of Josiah, so saw at least a season of reform and faithful worship within the land. In fact, that is exactly how Jeremiah's book begins — "in the thirteenth year" of Josiah's reign (verse 2) which is just one year after Josiah had begun the process of tearing down the Asherim from the high places in Judah (2 Chronicles 34:3). That meant that means that his first 18 years of ministry were spiritually profitable ones in Judah and Jerusalem, yet God clearly lays out from the beginning that destruction is on its way.

Jeremiah's first three chapters focus on his call to the prophetic ministry. We know that Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah, who happened to be the High Priest who discovered the Book of the Law while cleaning out the Temple (2 Kings 22:8).

Chapter 2 establishes the sin of the people...they pursued vanity and became vain (vs. 5). In doing so, the priests and prophets pursued the Baals and not the Lord (vs. 8) and they forsook the fountain of living water — The Lord himself. God even uses the analogy of a bride and her wedding gown. If she will remember her gown why won't she remember her God who has delivered her from evil? (vs. 32). Jeremiah goes on into chapter 3 with the condemnation pointing out also that the people even refused to be ashamed of their immorality (oh how little things change!).

The theme changes somewhat from Jeremiah's call to a condemnation of the evil heart as we move into chapters 4-6 and the disaster from the north forecast by the boiling pot in chapter 1 is expounded upon as punishment for the wickedness of their hearts. God calls them to wash their hearts from evil for the destroyer is coming. Jerusalem even refuses to repent and thus the promise of disaster is upon her.

Chapters 7-10 are often grouped together, beginning with Jeremiah's condemnation of the people in the city gates, pronouncement against their idolatry, and grief for the people. The final chapter in this section expounding on the folly of idolatry, comparing idols to scarecrows in a cucumber field (10:5)...they just don't do much good and you ought not fear them.

Chapter 11 is one of the more well known and significant chapters

in this early part of the text and its emphasis is on the binding nature of covenant...a covenant that the people have ignored and have pretended not to have heard. Yet God places a curse on those who do not hear (recognizing that Hearing in ancient Hebrew implies obeying what has been heard). And in this chapter we find the imagery of the olive tree being cut off — an image that Paul will later explain takes place so that the gentiles can be grafted into the root and the stalk.

Chapter 12 raises a lament much in the style of Job and the martyrs under the throne in Revelation 6, asking God how he can allow the wicked to prosper and how much longer it will be until God redeems his own name. God's response is to speak about the judgment to come that God has long before ordained and has been patient in working out.

We discussed Isaiah's call to walk amongst the people naked prophesying against them, Jeremiah is called on to take a loincloth, wear it for a period without washing it, stuff it under a rock by the river, and then many days later go and retrieve it as a testimony that the people will be broken and taken away...the land laid to ruin and made worthless. Chapters 13-19, then, follow this pattern of speaking of judgment upon the people.

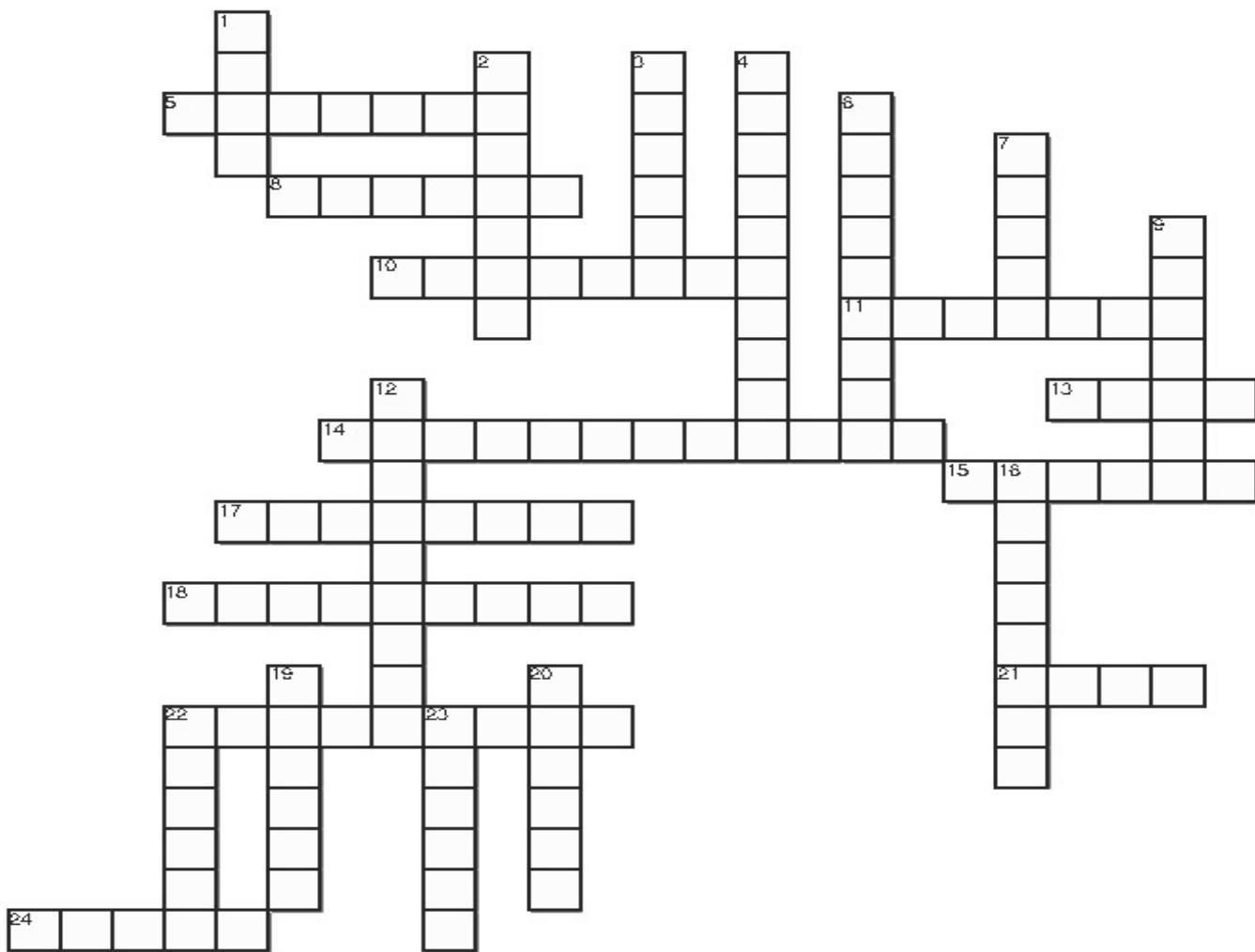
Chapter 20 introduces us to a priest named Pashhur who began systematically persecuting Jeremiah for prophesying to the people. We will see him again, but let us, for now, simply speak of him as a wicked man...the blind leading the blind.

### Chromatic Notes:

- The imagery of the winepress of God's wrath in Revelation 14 has its roots here in Isaiah 63.
- The Apostle Paul alludes to Isaiah 64:6 in Philippians 3:8 when he speaks of his own righteousness. In Philippians, Paul compares his righteousness to that of dung and here, Isaiah compares his righteousness to rags ancient women would have used during her time of the month...in both cases they were things to be cast away and destroyed. Such is our human righteousness in the eyes of God.
- In Herod the Great's temple, it is recorded that the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was embroidered with a pattern of the stars — the heavens above. When Jesus died, this curtain was rent in half, reminiscent of the prayer Isaiah is praying in 64:1.
- Jeremiah 1:5 is another passage of scripture that is often used in the context of the abortion debate. God has called Jeremiah even before he was born. While this calling is specific to Jeremiah and to his experience, the principle of God's fore-calling should be understood here alongside of God's fore-knowledge.
- Two evils are spoken of in Jeremiah 2:13: rejecting the source of living water (God) and trying to make their own cisterns (seeking the wisdom of men). How often the church is guilty of these things...
- In Jeremiah 4:23 we find an allusion to Genesis 1:2 — reflecting the unmaking of creation's order and beauty because of mankind's evil.
- The theme of people not listening to the watchman (Jeremiah 6:17) is also a theme we will see echoed in Ezekiel.
- Jeremiah 7:31 speaks of the "Valley of the Son of Hinnom." By Jesus' day this valley would be used for burning offal from the city and would be given the name in Greek of Gehenna — a place that Jesus used as an object lesson for what Hell would be like (where the fire is never quenched and the worm does not die).
- Paul echoes Jeremiah 9:23-24 when he writes that he only to boast in the Lord.
- The language of the potter and his clay is a common image that speaks of God's sovereignty over his creation and in chapter 18 we find this imagery once again. As with Isaiah and the Apostle Paul, Jeremiah affirms the principle that the potter has ultimate authority over the clay, to glorify it or to destroy it according to His good pleasure.

## Week 18: Isaiah 63-Jeremiah 20

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

5. This priest persecutes Jeremiah.
8. Isaiah and the Apostle Paul agree that their good works have no value and should be \_\_\_\_\_.
10. God set this over the people but the people refused to listen to their trumpets.
11. The name of Jeremiah's priestly father.
13. Jars filled with this fluid are again a sign of God's judgment.
14. God pronounces himself to be the fountain of this. (2 words, hint: Jeremiah 2 & John 7)
15. Will there be no balm in this region?
17. Cursed are those who do not hear the words of this \_\_\_\_\_.
18. Jeremiah was instructed to leave a loincloth under a rock by this river.
21. Jeremiah quotes from Psalm 1 when he says the man who trusts in the Lord is like this item in nature. 22. This is what I use the earth for, declares the Lord. 24. Isaiah points back to the example of God's strength being shown in this figure and the spreading of waters.

### Down

1. God demands his audience not even do this for the people under his wrath.
2. Isaiah anticipates God taking even gentiles as \_\_\_\_\_.
3. God made the earth with power and established it in \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Jeremiah sees this facing from the north. (2 words) 6. In Jeremiah's day, the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom would be called the 'Valley of slaughter'
7. Jeremiah is commanded to buy this from a potter and break it.
9. The Valley of the Sons of Hinnom would be known as this by Jesus' day.
12. 'Why are your garments red and like his who tread the \_\_\_\_\_?
16. This is the persistent problem in Judah and all of human history.
19. This is often a symbol of God in his sovereignty over his people.
20. Jeremiah prophesied under this good king's reign. 22. This is one of the ways that the lying prophets will be killed.
23. 'We looked for peace, but no good came; we looked for healing, but behold \_\_\_\_\_' is the verse that sums up the judgment of God.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 19: JEREMIAH 21 – 44 (MAY 4 – 10 )

### Summary:

Chapter 21 begins with the account of King Zedekiah, concerned about the coming threat of Nebuchadnezzar, sending Pashhur (don't forget him from the previous chapter!) and Zephaniah to Jeremiah to ask what would soon take place. The news is not favorable and the promise is made that Jerusalem would fall. Even the devastating decision offered: surrender and live; remain in Jerusalem and die (21:8-9). This condemnation is followed by further condemnations and witnesses against the kings of Judah for the evil of their hearts.

In chapter 23 we are given a glimmer of hope. While the shepherds over Israel have been faithless, God promises "good shepherds" who will care for the flock when he returns his remnant to the land. This shepherd will be known as the righteous Branch of David.

Chapter 24 and 25 bring us historically into the start of the 70 years of captivity. Chapter 24 speaks of the exile of Jeconiah to Babylon with the cup of God's wrath poured out on Jerusalem and its surrounding nations. This is also the time in history that took Mordacai into exile in Babylon (Esther 2:5-6).

Chapter 26 takes us chronologically backwards. That may seem a bit odd, but the chapter is continuing to develop the theme of Judgment, so think of it like you would think of a flashback in a novel you are reading or in a movie you are watching — surprising, but not something that ought to shake us up too much. Nevertheless, Jeremiah must have been shaken up, for God commanded him to preach judgment to the people and they responded by seeking to put him to death. Yet people remembered the past prophet Micah, who had prophesied under King Hezekiah and not been given up for death. Unfortunately the counter-argument was brought forward regarding the death of Uriah earlier in the reign of Jehoiakim. In the end, Jeremiah's life was protected by Ahikam, the son of Shaphan.

The text then shifts to the reign of Zedekiah, the last of the Kings of Judah, who rebelled against both God and men. As a result, Jeremiah was asked once again to do something strange in our context, wearing a yoke he was called to proclaim that God was putting the king and the city under the yoke of Babylon. Jeremiah pleaded with the king but the king chose to listen to those who told him what he wanted to hear, even to Hananiah who had the audacity to speak in the Lord's name and broke the yoke bars from Jeremiah's neck — a word of warning, don't engage in a prophetic duel as Hananiah did when your opponent is the true prophet of God. It will not end well (vs. 15-17).

As we transition to chapter 29, we see a letter drafted by Jeremiah to the Jews who surrendered themselves to the Babylonians in capture. Much of the promise that he makes to them is reminiscent of the time the Israelites spent in Egyptian captivity — they multiplied and prospered for they had agreed to accept the discipline of God. The difference, this time only 70 years would be spent in Babylon before God would restore them to their home. Jeremiah also does warn the people to live with faithfulness and integrity for their will be false prophets in their midst.

Chapters 30 & 31 contain some of the most cherished language in all of the book of Jeremiah. Not only does God look forward to the time of restoration, he also speaks of the "New Covenant" where the word of God will be written on tablets of the human heart. This is the circumcising of the heart that Moses called for in Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6 and Paul speaks of in Romans 2:28-29. The fullness of this is still yet to come, but as believers, we are participating in that promise even now as God cuts away the stone of our sinful heart and replaces it with a heart that beats for Him.

As an act of assurance that indeed the people will return, Jeremiah was instructed by God to buy a field. This chapter ends with a promise that God will restore the fortunes of his people when their time of discipline is over. Once again we also see the language of the Branch, the Messiah that God would raise up in fulfillment of his promise to David (2 Samuel 7:12-13).

We have two more prophesies, one against Zedekiah who just could not seem to be obey the Lord and the other around the faithfulness

of the Rechabites before this section comes to a close in chapter 36. Here we find Jeremiah's scribe coming into full view and had a scroll with Jeremiah's words presented to the king. The king cut up the scroll in strips and had them burned. Thus, poor Baruch would once again have to transcribe Jeremiah's prophetic words.

Chapters 37-44 tell the account of the siege on Jerusalem. Jeremiah is now put in prison and then later, as punishment for his continued plea that the people surrender to the Babylonians, was kept in a cistern filled with mud. Jeremiah would be rescued from the prison by an Ethiopian servant of the king but only to be returned to the court of the guards. Finally Jerusalem fell and Zedekiah was forced to witness the execution of his sons only to have his eyes plucked out afterwards — these executions being the last things that Zedekiah saw before being carted off to Babylon. Jeremiah would be delivered and provided for, but this story hardly has a happy ending. Gedaliah, the appointed governor, is assassinated. Those who had been unable to catch the assassin feared reprisal from Babylon so asked Jeremiah for advice. Jeremiah told them to trust in the mercy of the King of Babylon, the leaders thought he was lying and decided to flee to Egypt...taking Jeremiah with them!

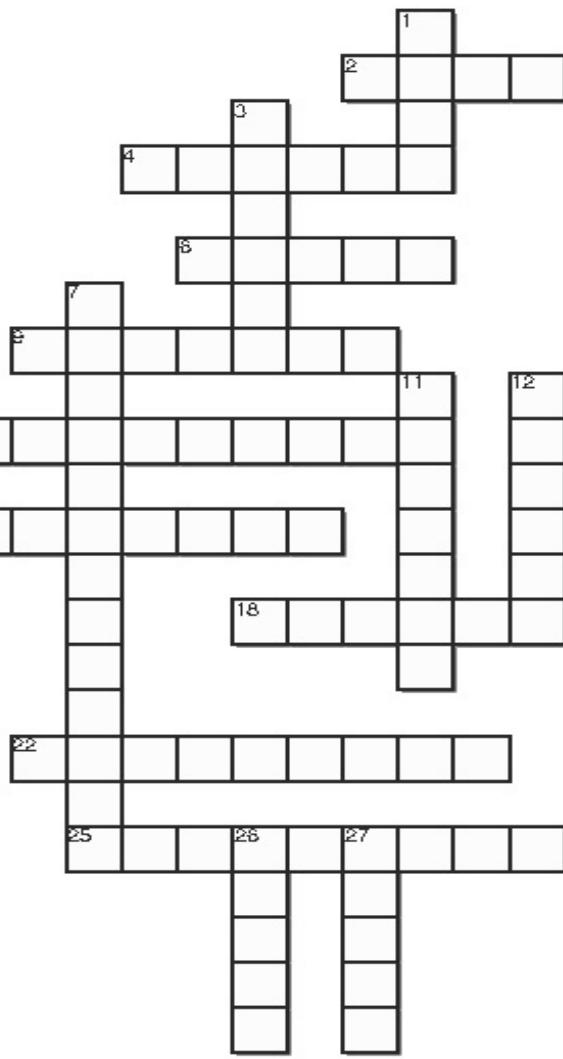
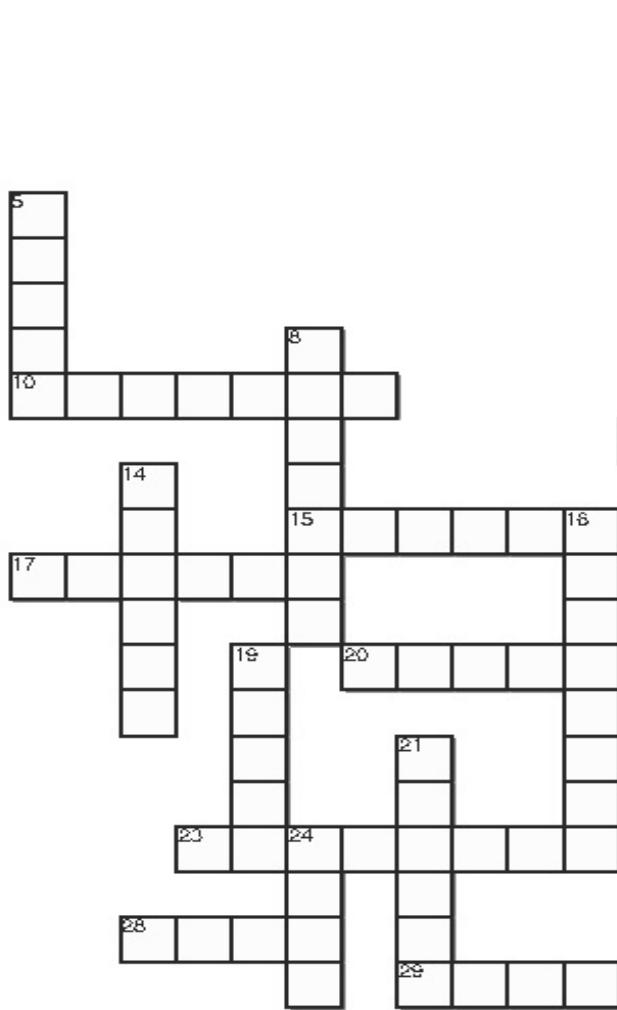
Chapter 44 closes the portion of Jeremiah that is actually written in first person; the last chapters will be written by Baruch as Baruch is recording the words and thoughts of Jeremiah...but that will come next week.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Jeremiah 22:3-4 contains echoes of the language of the prophet Malachi when he states that the requirement of God on his people is to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God." How grievous it must have been that the kings were unwilling to do so.
- Jeremiah 23:6 makes a wonderful statement of grace that anticipates the work of Christ — of the work of the Messiah it is said that "Yahweh is our righteousness." With more clarity we discover in the New Testament that when we stand before God in judgment, it is by Christ's righteousness we are offered salvation.
- Jeremiah 23:29 likens the Word of God to a hammer that breaks stones to pieces; when we understand that the heart of the sinner is like a stone (Ezekiel 11:19), this verse adds depth to the language of the author of Hebrews when he writes that the Word is like a two-edged sword, able to separate bone from marrow...able to cleave that heart of stone (Hebrews 4:12).
- Jeconiah and Jehoiachin are one in the same (2 Kings 24:6; Jeremiah 24:1), the difference likely between a formal and an informal name. He is also called, "Coniah" (Jeremiah 22:24).
- The language of the Cup is often connected with the idea of wrath in the scriptures. It is what will be poured out over God's enemies, it is what Jesus chose to drink for our sins (Luke 22:42) and it is described as being poured out in end-times judgment (Revelation 16).
- Jeremiah's rebuke of Hananiah (28:7-9) echoes the test of a true prophet given in Deuteronomy 18:19-20.
- Jeremiah 29:11 — God fulfills his plans for his own even when they are in captivity.
- Matthew cites Jeremiah 31:15 in the birth narrative of Christ when he speaks of the mothers weeping over lost sons due to Herod's rage. The reminder, though, is that lament is joined with hope (vs 17) for the children will return to the land — as will Jesus, who at the time was being carried hastily toward Egypt.
- Jeremiah 31:31 speaks of the "New Covenant." In Hebrew, a better rendering of this phrase would be "a renewed covenant." The covenant was already there, it was just being reinstated and fulfilled (in Christ).
- Jeremiah 38:7 — Ebed-Melech means "Servant of the King." Isn't it interesting that we have an Ethiopian Eunuch here delivering Jeremiah and later in the book of Acts, an Ethiopian Eunuch being one of the first gentiles that are brought to faith (Acts 8).

## Week 19 (Jeremiah 21-44)

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

2. The Rechabites did not drink this.
4. The law will be written on the people's \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Jeremiah is called to buy this just before the siege takes place.
9. After being in prison, Jeremiah is lowered into one of these.
10. Jeremiah's cousin who sells Jeremiah something. 13. This clan chose to live in tents even in the promised land.
15. The king of Babylon at this time.
17. This person is the fulfillment of the 'New Covenant' that Jeremiah speaks of.
18. Sons and daughters were offered to this pagan god in the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom.
20. Another name for Jeconiah.
22. The prophets of this son of Josiah sought to have Jeremiah killed.
23. This false prophet was punished even to the extent of punishing his descendants.
25. God promises to place faithful ones of these over his people.
28. The word of the Lord is like this, God declares... 29. God promises this for the future of his remnant.

### Down

1. Jeremiah has a vision of baskets containing good and bad ones of these...
3. One of the ways in which those who remained in the city of Jerusalem would die.
5. There is a cup that will be drunk from...it contains God's what.
7. 'Thus says the Lord, 'Do justice and \_\_\_\_\_'
8. How many years of captivity do the people face in Babylon?
11. The man who assassinated Gedaliah.
12. Jeremiah's secretary.
14. Jehoiakim burns this from Jeremiah.
16. This false prophet sought to have a 'prophetic duel' with Jeremiah.
19. This prophet had fled to Egypt, but was brought back and killed.
21. A title given to the promised Messiah.
24. Zedekiah lost these just before being taken to Babylon.
26. 'For I know the \_\_\_\_\_ I have for you, declares the Lord...'
27. Jeremiah is taken to this pagan nation by Johanan and his associates.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 20: JEREMIAH 45 – EZEKIEL 16 (MAY 11 - 17)

### Summary:

Chapter 45 is once again a bit of a reflection backwards as everything is falling apart — again, inserted here as a reminder of God's design as well as his promise to Jehoiakim through Baruch. God is tearing down but Jehoiakim will survive (though taken to Babylon as a prisoner). As Jesus himself said, "every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matthew 7:19). Such is exactly what God is doing to national Israel.

And as chapter 45 warns, God is bringing disaster not only on the Jews, but on all of the nations. Thus, what we have following is a series of judgments and condemnations on the surrounding nations. They participated directly or indirectly in the destruction of the people, their judgment is due them. We find judgment then on Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedor, Hazor, Elam, and Babylon. In fact, the language against Babylon is long, harsh, and forceful. These are the people taking the Israelites into exile — their destruction will be absolute.

Jeremiah closes with a first-hand account of the fall of Jerusalem. The key verse is 52:3...because of the anger of the Lord, God cast them from his presence. How casually we tend to take this in our culture today, assuming that God will tolerate our disobedience indefinitely...this he will not do and this final chapter of Jeremiah should stand as a reminder of the consequences of pursuing sin as a people and as a culture. Judgment will come.

The city was besieged, famine struck the land, the wall was breached, and the soldiers fled leaving behind those they were to protect. The soldiers were captured, the king's sons were slaughtered before his eyes and then his eyes plucked out before taking him to prison in Babylon. The Temple was burned to the ground. The bronze pillars in the temple were taken apart and transported to Babylon as treasure. A total of 4,600 people were taken into exile with many more lying dead, slain from the fighting. Such is the end of those who rebel against God...though Jeremiah closes with the same promise that 2 Kings closes with...Jehoiachin being brought out from prison and being allowed to sit at the king's table...a reminder that even in Babylon, God is with his people and that the people will be provided for. It is a reminder, too, that God is not totally done with the people of Israel — these verses stand as a divine, "to be continued..."

### Ezekiel:

Chronologically, Ezekiel is a contemporary of Jeremiah, yet geographically they are very much separated from one another. While Jeremiah remained in Jerusalem, Ezekiel was taken in the earliest part of the exile and ministered to the people as a priest while they were in exile. The very presence of Ezekiel back to back with Jeremiah is a reminder that God will be present with his people, no matter where in the world they happen to be taken — grace even in exile.

Broadly, Ezekiel can be divided in two parts. The first 32 chapters focus on God's judgment on Israel, namely in the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet, in chapter 33, Ezekiel becomes aware of the fall and the destruction of the temple and the tone turns toward the promise of God's restoration of Israel. Yet, as this second section progresses, it becomes clear that there is an end-times fulfillment that is in Ezekiel's sights as the eternal temple is portrayed.

This book contains a lot of imagery, often in a form of a parable, so don't shy away from its text. Many literary scholars have pointed out that there is nothing quite like Ezekiel to be found in the ancient literature of other cultures...much like the book of Job, it is truly a literary masterpiece.

Ezekiel begins with a kind of "Close Encounter" for Ezekiel as he encounters a group of "living creatures" which he will later identify as Cherubim (see Ezekiel 10). At first, one might wonder what it is that Ezekiel is witnessing as the picture is so radically "non-earthly," but that is the point, for God is not-earthly and all of this initial language surrounding Ezekiel's calling is meant to signify that God in his glory is still present in the life of his people. Not a bad promise.

What we should make sure that we do not miss is the language of the one enthroned above the expanse — Jesus himself. Much like Isaiah's call, Ezekiel gets to witness the pre-incarnate Christ enthroned in glory. This leads us into one of the longest prophetic calls in the scriptures, again, it seems, as a reminder that God is prepared to minister

to his people even outside of the land (which gives us a foretaste of the expansion of the church after the resurrection of Christ).

Ezekiel is called to steel himself up for the message he is called to give and is given the familiar scroll to eat that tasted like honey (see also Revelation 10:9-10 for the same imagery) only to be followed by a commission to be a watchman on the wall of the house of Israel.

As we move forward into chapters 4-7, Ezekiel is given a vision and description of the fall of Jerusalem. They will fall for their wickedness and for their commitment to idolatry.

Chapter 8 begins a section where God testifies to the righteousness of his coming judgment, giving Ezekiel a vision of the idolatry of the people of Judah. In chapter 9 there is a vision of a scribe commissioned to put a mark on the foreheads of all of the believers in Jerusalem to spare them from the executioners to come. This is not only reminiscent of the blood of passover but also anticipates the language of the mark in Revelation — in a positive sense in Revelation 3:12 and in a negative sense in Revelation 13 and 14.

In chapter 10, Ezekiel witnesses the glory of God leaving the temple...and we never see the glory cloud returning to the temple after it is rebuilt...a reminder that Jesus is the greater temple and thus the return of the glory of the Lord is found in the coming of his Son, Jesus. Chapter 11:18-21, in the midst of a great deal of destruction, speaks of redemption and of God's grace to those who turn to him, a taste of grace in the midst of wrath.

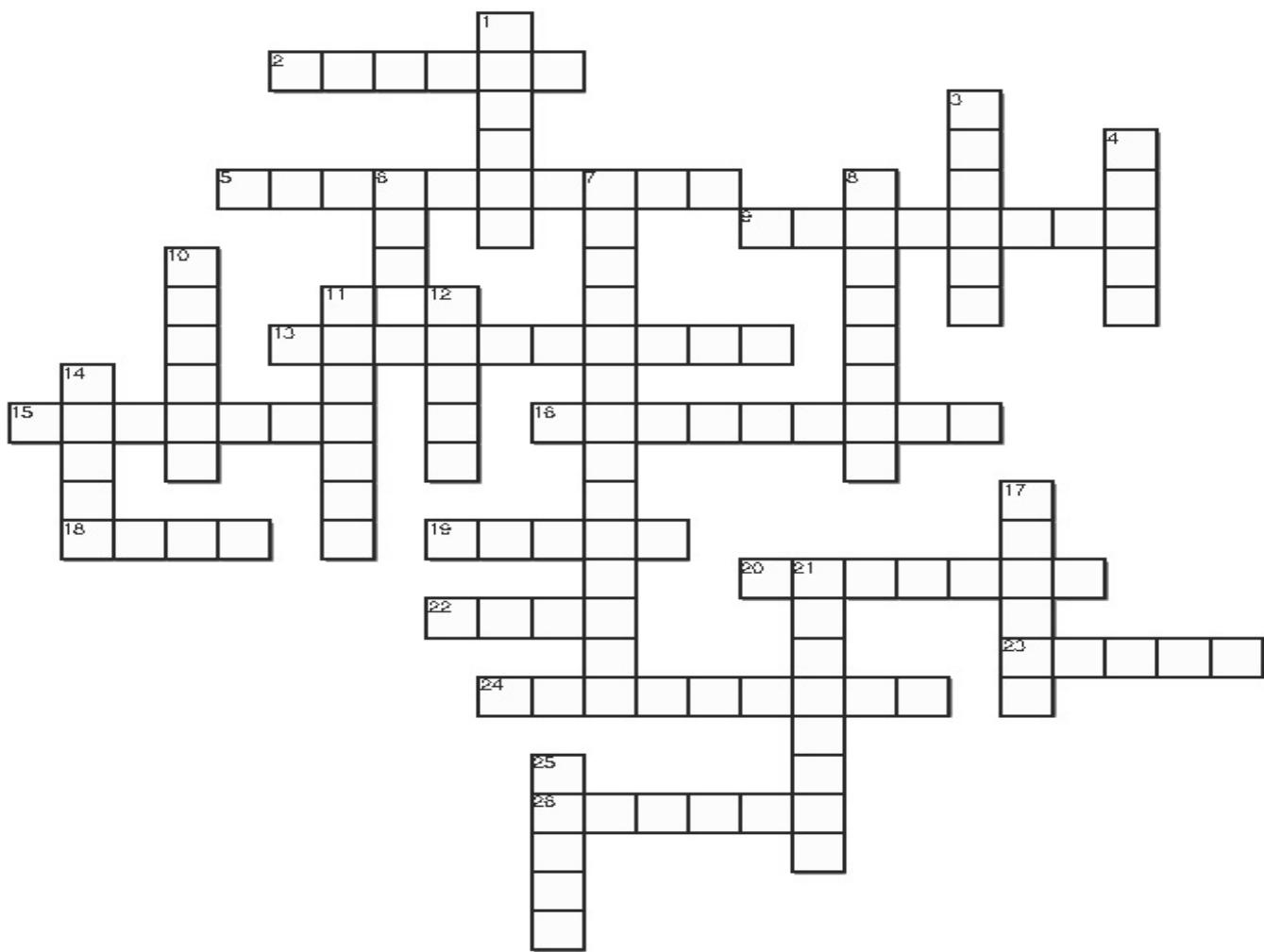
Chapters 12-16 contain more of the same...a righteous condemnation of the people for their sins...even Samaria, we are told, hasn't engaged in as much idolatry as has Judah. Yet, this section ends once again with a sign of hope — God re-establishing his covenant with his people, again, something that will be fulfilled in Christ.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Notice the description of the cherubim in Ezekiel...they are not pudgy little babies with wings as today's popular culture would portray them.
- Notice Ezekiel 1:12 and John 3:8...the Spirit goes where he will.
- As you read Ezekiel 1, take note on how much of this imagery is echoed in Revelation 4.
- Ezekiel 1:28...notice the language of the "bow that is in the cloud on a day of rain" — this is an allusion to the rainbow given in Genesis 9 as a sign of God's covenant with the earth...how appropriate as the Israelites have been taken into the world and are no longer in the land.
- In Ezekiel 3:15, the prophet is taken to Tel Abib...spelled in Hebrew the same way as the modern city of Tel Aviv. These are obviously different places given that Ezekiel is in Babylon and the modern city was probably named in honor of those who came back to Israel from Tel Aviv in Babylon. The city name means, "the hill of cornstalks."
- The language of the watchman is a common one both on a personal level (we are to watch over our hearts), on a family level (fathers are to be watchmen on the wall of their families), and on a corporate level (pastors and church leaders are to be watchmen over the congregation of God). The key to being a good watchman are: 1) clear vision and knowledge of that which is a threat, 2) attention to the task and an unwillingness to be distracted, and 3) a readiness to call a warning to the city and defend the wall. How often we fail in our readiness in these areas.
- Chapter 8 introduces a section that not only holds similarities with Revelation but also with the classic work by Charles Dickens, *The Christmas Carol*, as Ezekiel is being given a vision of the past, present, and future, but not of Christmas, of idolatry — even Noah, Daniel, and Job were unable to avert the disaster being brought in their direction (14:14).
- Note that in 9:4, when it speaks of a mark, literally it reads "taw" which is the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet and their letter "t." Being that it is a "t", some people have incorrectly referred to this as a cross...but that would only be true if the text were written in English. In Hebrew, the letter "taw" looks like this: ת.

## Week 20: Jeremiah 45-Ezekiel 16

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

2. One of those three figures from ages past that is mentioned that would be unable to stop God's wrath.
5. God is sending this into the land to be added judgment.
9. Another name for the 4 living creatures.
13. This former Israelite king was given the privilege to sit at the King of Babylon's table.
15. Even this nation hasn't committed as many sins as has Jerusalem.
16. False prophets are connected with this class of sinner.
18. Those from this nation helped the Babylonians gather those who fled Jerusalem.
19. The scroll that Ezekiel was to eat tasted like this.
20. These bronze items were taken from the temple and used in Babylon.
22. One of the kings that sacrificed a son to Molech.
23. After the fall of Jerusalem, Jeremiah is taken forcibly to this country.
24. From a distance, Ezekiel receives a vision of this city being besieged.
26. In their condemnation, Egypt is referred to as a beautiful one of these animals...

### Down

1. The glory of the Lord is seen leaving this dwelling place, by Ezekiel.
3. The name of Jeremiah's Secretary.
4. In the condemnation against Babylon, it is said that God will raise up a sword and turn their men into \_\_\_\_\_.
6. This letter is placed on the foreheads of the people to prevent their destruction.
7. The king of Babylon during the fall of Jerusalem.
8. This Israelite king lost his eyes after he lost his sons.
10. Ezekiel received his vision on this canal.
11. Ezekiel is taken to this settlement after his call to the prophetic ministry — the same name as a major modern city (2 words)
12. In their condemnation, this Moab is said to wallow in its own \_\_\_\_\_.
14. The living creatures had four faces, that of a: man, a lion, an ox and an \_\_\_\_\_.
17. God pronounces Israel to be a 'useless vine', only to be \_\_\_\_\_.
21. This is the primary reason that Jerusalem was being destroyed.
25. Ezekiel is commanded to forge one of these to symbolize the wickedness of the people.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 21: EZEKIEL 17 – 40 (MAY 18-24)

### Summary:

Sometimes passages like these that contain so much language of judgment can weigh on us heavily, but it must be pointed out that they are a reminder that God does not tolerate the sin of men... whether those people are his covenant people or the nations of the world. God will bring justice where justice is due.

Chapter 17 begins with a parable told by God to portray the state of leadership of the people. At first reading it may seem a little odd, but remember that prophetic language contains a great deal of imagery. Essentially we find two eagles portrayed, each coming and transplanting a remnant from Canaan. The first eagle represents Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon and his taking of the first group of Jews into exile (this is the group to whom Ezekiel is speaking). The second eagle is the Pharaoh of Egypt. This is probably not Neco that was mentioned in 2 Kings, as he had been defeated by Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 46:2), but is likely Uahibre, one of his successors. In each of these images, the planted branch turned away from the "abundant water" (the water of the living covenant) and turned toward the eagle for water. Thus God sent the east wind to scorch the plants. Such is the result of turning anywhere but to God for nourishment. Though the picture of chapter 17 may seem bleak, note that it ends with another transplanting...one where God does the transplanting and the nourishment of the plant that it might grow as a great tree in Israel. This leads us into a similar parable in chapter 18, but this time with a focus on God's sovereign right as judge over all mankind.

Despite the lamentation over Israel (chapter 19) and the warnings given to "cast away detestable things (chapter 20), Israel continues to sin. But though in the midst of this judgment, God still offers a promise of redemption (end of chapter 20) with a promise to purge the wicked from Israel through the use of the rod (discipline).

The language of chapter 21 is based on the language of the Deuteronomy 21:18-21, which speaks of a child that will not accept discipline from the parents and is commanded to be put to death by the community (to preserve the rest of the children from following the pathway of the impudent child). This is exactly the way that God is treating unrepentant Israel that has scoffed at his rod of discipline... now is the time for cutting off.

Chapter 23 again introduces some strong imagery, this time in the form of an allegory more so than in the form of a parable. Two sisters, Oholah and Oholibah, who were corrupt and whored after those that destroyed them. As they grew into their sin, they longed for more and more and thus God gave them over to their enemies. The first represents Samaria and the second represents Judah, and that leads us to Ezekiel's vision of the fall of Jerusalem.

As we have seen, God often permits the prophet to enter into his own sadness for what is to be done and Ezekiel is no exception. As God gives up Jerusalem to destruction, Ezekiel's wife is brought to death and Ezekiel is not permitted to mourn outwardly for her loss. Indeed, what a burden being the prophet of God can be...

What follows in chapters 25-32 is a series of prophesies against and laments for the fall of the surrounding nations (much like the language of Isaiah and Jeremiah). Prophesies are given against Ammon, Moab, Seir, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, Egypt, and Babylon.

Chapter 33 marks the transition point in the prophesy of Ezekiel. As Jerusalem is destroyed, God issues a promise to shepherd them in himself and to give them peace and in fact in chapter 36 we find the imagery of God commanding the mountains to prepare a place for the people when they return (a fulfillment of what God spoke back in chapter 17).

One of the most quoted chapters in Ezekiel is chapter 37 and the vision of the valley of dry bones...a promise to restore Israel, which again we would argue is fulfilled in "True Israel" — the church.

Chapter 40 begins a remarkable picture of "the New Temple" that is anticipated toward the end times. As Jesus is the greater temple, this clearly speaks of the New Jerusalem and the throne of Christ, not the reestablishment of the temple in Jerusalem begun by Ezra and

completed by Herod the Great. One might object to this reading as Revelation speaks of there being no temple in the New Jerusalem because God is in the midst of his people, but this can be harmonized partly by recognizing that the symbolism found here in Ezekiel is around the establishment of holiness and the Spirit of God in the lives of God's people and in Revelation it is around the presence of God being restored to his people. Both images are fulfilled in Christ in the New Jerusalem, thus no need for a physical temple as the spiritual one is fulfilled in Christ. For those of you weary over the language of judgment, these final chapters of Ezekiel should be a breath of fresh air.

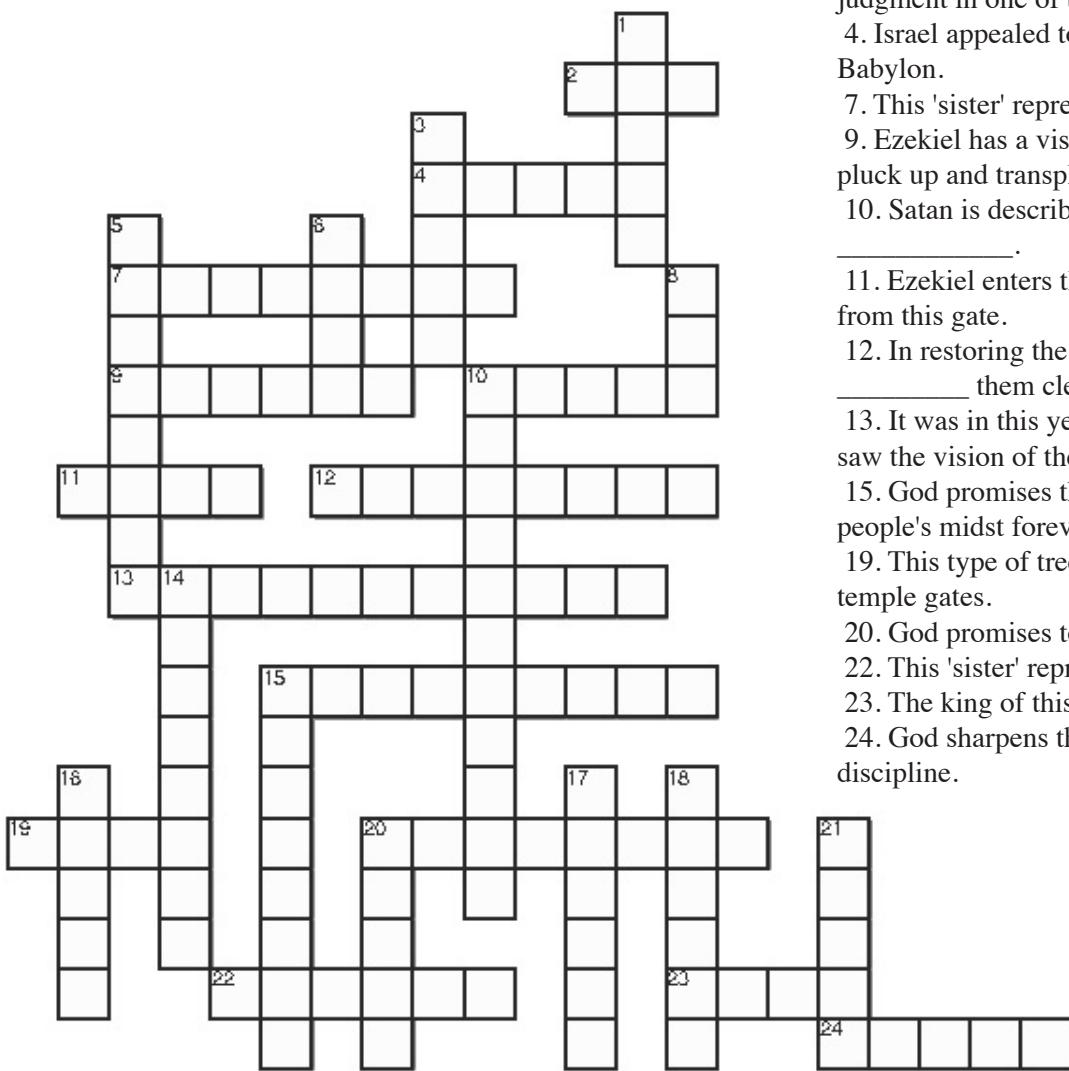
### Chromatic Notes:

- Note the connection between the parable in Ezekiel 17:22-24 and Mark 4:30-32 — Jesus is stating that the church is the fulfillment of this prophesy in Ezekiel.
- Sometimes people assert that morality is determined by each local culture; God would disagree with such a statement, for he proclaims himself absolute judge over the wicked soul in Ezekiel 18.
- Notice the language of God's orchestrating all things found in God's promise of restoration... "I will *make* you pass under the rod" and "I will *bring* you into the bond of covenant." This is not a result of the will of the people, redemption is a result of the will of a sovereign God (see Romans 9:16).
- Oholah and Oholibah both have names that refers to tents of cult prostitution; the former name speaks of one having one's own special cultic tent and the latter speaks of the tent within her own being.
- Ezekiel 28:11-19 is a prophesy against the "King of Tyre." Historically, during this era, Tyre was ruled by a group of princes and did not have a singular king over the small city. That fact, along with the language of the passage has caused people to take a second look at this portion of the prophesy and attribute it to the fall of Satan. It speaks of this "king of Tyre" as having been a guardian Cherub in the Garden of Eden who rebelled against God because of his pride, had corrupted wisdom, and was eventually cast to the ground. Thus, it is from this passage we learn the reason for Satan's fall as we are reminded that the true king over the wicked government of Tyre (as well as all wicked governments) is Satan himself.
- Note Ezekiel 33:11...God states "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Note that in context, God is speaking of his own people, not of the world without exception.
- Israel has fallen largely as a result of wicked shepherds in the midst of the people; God thus promises to "shepherd them myself" (Ezekiel 34:15) — a promise fulfilled by Christ (John 10:14).
- Notice the language of God bringing the people back into the land (Ezekiel 36:24-26) and God "sprinkling" the people clean with water...an act fulfilled in John's baptism.
- Chapters 38 and 39 contain prophesies against Gog who was of the region of Magog. There is a wealth of debate over the significance of these names. Traditionally, Gog is considered a person who ruled over the land of Magog. The origin of Magog goes back to a descendent of Japheth (Genesis 10:2) who migrated to the east. While there is no certainty, it is considered by many commentators that Magog was the land in the region between Persia and the Black Sea. Due to these chapter's use of the language "after many days" and "in the latter years" (38:8), many commentators have placed the failed invasion of Gog in the end times — a foretaste of the final battle referenced in Revelation 20. Noting the proximity of Gog's fall to the establishment of the "New Temple" in chapter 40, which clearly is a vision of end times, seems to support this reading as well.
- Note, like Ezekiel measured the new temple in chapter 40, so too John does the same in Revelation 11:1-2.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Week 21 (Ezekiel 17-40)

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Down

1. Ezekiel enters the inner courts of the New Temple through this gate.
3. God plants this kind of tree on the top of the mountains of Israel to signify Israel's return to the land.
5. God promises to make the people pass under the rod and into a bond of the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. This relative of Ezekiel dies as a sign of the fall of Jerusalem.
8. 'When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall \_\_\_\_\_.'
10. Ezekiel pronounces judgment against this coastal people because they took vengeance with malice.
14. If this man does not sound the trumpet, his blood will be required by God.

### Across

2. Ezekiel is called to make a kind of soup of judgment in one of these.
4. Israel appealed to this nation for defense from Babylon.
7. This 'sister' represents Judah.
9. Ezekiel has a vision of two great \_\_\_\_\_ that pluck up and transplant the people of Israel.
10. Satan is described as falling because of his great \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Ezekiel enters the outer courts of the New Temple from this gate.
12. In restoring the people, he promises that he will \_\_\_\_\_ them clean with water.
13. It was in this year of the 70 year exile that Ezekiel saw the vision of the New Temple.
15. God promises that his \_\_\_\_\_ will be in the people's midst forevermore.
19. This type of tree is carved on the jambs of the temple gates.
20. God promises to do this himself for the people.
22. This 'sister' represents Samaria.
23. The king of this nation is equated to Satan.
24. God sharpens this when the people despise his discipline.

15. Not only have the people committed idolatry, but they have profaned these.
16. This is a land ruled by Gog.
17. Satan is described as being a guardian \_\_\_\_\_ in Eden.
18. God restores the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision with his \_\_\_\_\_. (hint: an allusion to the Spirit)
20. All of these belong to God.
21. 'Son of Man, can these \_\_\_\_\_ live?'

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 21: EZEKIEL 41 – HOSEA 14 (MAY 25-31)

### Summary:

As Ezekiel continues in this vision, he moves closer inward to the heart of the Temple (again, a foretaste of the throne of God in the New Creation). There have been some who have suggested that this temple is a foretaste of the rebuilt temple begun in Ezra's day and completed by Herod. Others have suggested that it is a restoration of the Jewish temple worship in latter times, but not yet in the New Creation. Both views ought to be dismissed for the following reasons:

1. The temple district is no longer found within Jerusalem, but is a district that adjoins the tribal territory of Judah (48:8). Any truly Jewish rebuilding of the Temple must be within Jerusalem on Mount Zion.
2. The size of this temple precludes it from being within Jerusalem as well...for it is marked as 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits broad. This works out to just over 7 miles by 5 and two-thirds miles wide. The entirety of ancient Jerusalem was only about 1 mile by 1 mile. In addition, this temple, described by Ezekiel, is about triple the size of the one that was rebuilt.
3. This temple that Ezekiel describes is dedicated to the worship of all Israel, every tribe, and even to the peoples of the world...what was rebuilt by Ezra and Herod was dedicated for the worship of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin only.
4. In Ezekiel's description of the land, the priests are given an inheritance and there are no longer any Cities of Refuge appointed...implying that there will no longer be need for such cities.
5. Ezekiel 43:7 presents God promising that here in this temple he will: a) dwell with Israel forever (see Revelation 21:3) and b) man would never defile the sanctuary of his presence ever again.

Thus, as we read these chapters, recognize that this is an end times, or "eschatological" vision that Ezekiel is receiving. One might object to this on the basis of the language of burnt offerings being made on the altar. Yet, note the language of Ezekiel 41:22 — it is referred to as "the table that is before the Lord." These sacrifices, as all Old Testament blood sacrifices, prefigure the once and for all time sacrifice of Christ Jesus, transforming the altar into a table. Only twice in the Old Testament is this language of a Table used in terms of the Altar, the other being Malachi 1:7, a later writing referring to abuses of the people and their priests, but incorporating this language of Ezekiel to add force to the condemnation.

Chapter 43 introduces us to a picture of the return of the Glory of the Lord to the temple...a reversal of what we witnessed in chapter 10. And again, knowing that the Glory of the Lord is never described as descending into the earthly temple to dwell after it was rebuilt (Jesus, being the greater Temple is the fullness of the glory of God (Hebrews 1:3).

The Holy District is found in chapter 45 with instructions for the prince to execute justice and righteousness...instructions basic for a Biblical definition of the role of government.

Chapter 47 introduces Ezekiel to water flowing from under the door of the temple...implying that this water is coming from the throne of God in the Holy of Holies (see Revelation 22:1). In Revelation, this is referred to as "the Water of Life" and of course is a reflection of the outflowing of the Spirit into the world. This water grows deeper and deeper until it becomes a great river from which fish of every kind are drawn and is lined with trees on each side...the fruit being for food and the leaves for healing (see Revelation 22:2).

Chapter 48 closes with a description of the measurements of the new Jerusalem with its gates. Though its size is impressive and the language again reminiscent of Revelation, the most important aspect of this chapter is contained in the final words: "Yahweh is there." It is God's presence with us that makes us distinct from all of the nations (Exodus 33:16) and indeed, the presence of God is what will make heaven heaven.

### Hosea

Again, based on the order of our English Bible, we are jumping, but in the Jewish Bible, Daniel belongs to the writings, not to the prophets and thus we will address Daniel a little later.

Hosea is a wonderful story where God illustrates the idolatry of the people of God by the adultery of Hosea's wife. God also illustrates his faithfulness to unfaithful Israel through Hosea's faithfulness to Gomer. Though this book contains both judgments and prophecies, don't lose this core theme that governs the book.

In short, Hosea was a prophet and a contemporary of Isaiah, writing in the mid-700s BC. God came to Hosea and told him to go to the Red-Light district and find a prostitute named Gomer and bring her home as his wife. This he did and they had three children, each given a prophetic name: Jezreel, which refers to the punishment of the house of Jehu; LoRuhama, which means "no mercy"; and LoAmmi, which means "not my people."

As the children grow, Gomer begins to pine for the seduction of her previous life and eventually flees the house of Hosea, returning to prostitution. After a period of time, God comes back to Hosea and tells him that Gomer is being sold into slavery and that he is to go to the auction and buy her back, returning her to his home. This narrative can be found in chapters 1&3, but it establishes the context by which everything else is to be understood, for God is Hosea and the people of Israel, Gomer.

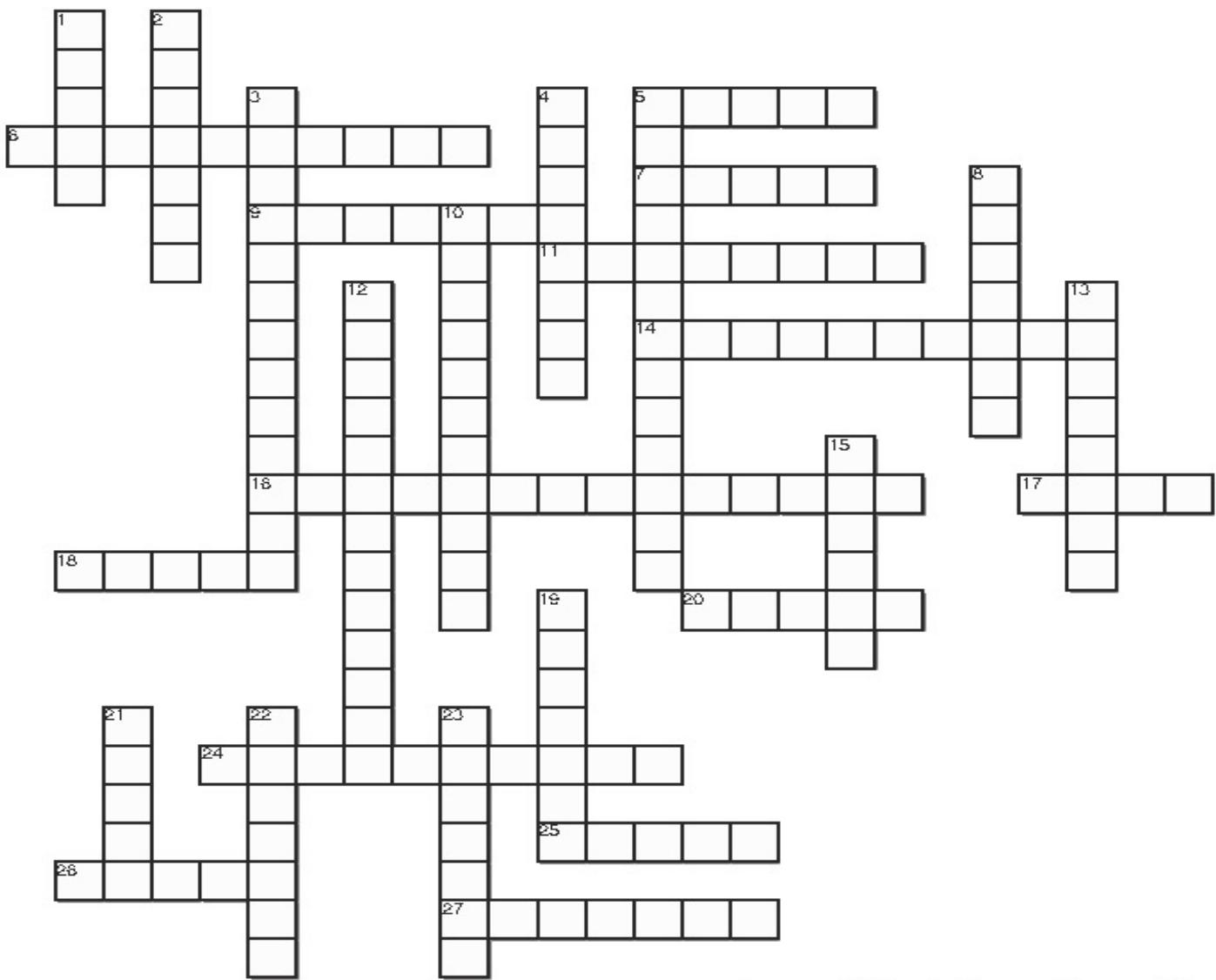
A lack of space limits us here, but let it suffice to say that as dark as the judgment of Hosea 4-13 can be, there are promises of hope...promises that culminate in its final chapter where God promises full restoration and healing for his people who turn back to him.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Note again the command to measure the Temple that Ezekiel receives and its parallel in Revelation 11:1-2.
- Note the similarities in these chapters to the language of Revelation: Ezekiel 40:2 & Revelation 21:10; Ezekiel 40:35 & Revelation 11:1, 21:15; Ezekiel 43:2 & Revelation 1:15,14:2; Ezekiel 47:1,2,12 & Revelation 22:1-2; Ezekiel 48:1-7 & Revelation 7:4-8; Ezekiel 48:31-34 & Revelation 21:12-13,16.
- Note Ezekiel 44:23...here is the basic command given not only to the Levitical priests of the old testament, but to pastors and church leaders and to parents for their households — Literally: teach the people the difference between what is holy and profane, between the defiled and the clean.
- Note Ezekiel 46:18 to see God's attitude toward an estate tax.
- 2 Kings 9-10 record the bloodshed mentioned in the valley of Jezreel.
- The Hebrew word "chesed" (speaks of God's covenant faithfulness) appears 6 times in the book of Hosea, more times "per verse" than any other book in the Old Testament except for Jonah.
- Hosea 4:6 speaks of the people being destroyed for "lack of knowledge." In the Hebrew context, knowledge was relational and knowledge of God was an essential part of their testimony and even their personal identity...sad that the Christian church has largely lost that mindset.
- Hosea 5:7 speaks of "children of strangers" or "alien children" depending on your translation, this is speaking of the children of believers who have married unbelievers...something that Paul speaks against in 2 Corinthians 6:14.
- Hosea 8:9 speaks of Assyria as a "wild donkey" possibly as a reminder of Assyria's connection to Ishmael (Genesis 16:12).
- Hosea 10:2 uses the illustration of pounding a piece of metal flat to speak of flattery...in this way, flattery pounds an idea into a person in such a way that you start believing it to be true and then can be manipulated by the flatterer.
- Hosea 11:1 is cited in Matthew 2:15 as speaking of Christ.
- Hosea 14:2 has the essentials of the Gospel in a nutshell: return to the Lord, ask for forgiveness, and he will take away our iniquity.

## Week 22 (Ezekiel 41-Hosea 14)

Complete the crossword below



### Across

5. The Altar is also referred to as the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord.
6. This was Gomer's profession before Hosea married her.
7. This valley shall be made a 'door of hope.'
9. The leaves of the tree by the temple is for this...
11. Hosea said that God will reject the people because they have not \_\_\_\_\_ to him.
14. These final chapters of Ezekiel are reminiscent of this book by the Apostle John.
16. This is a term that refers to end times or final things.
17. Hosea speaks of Ephraim pursuing this... (hint: think of Ecclesiastes).
18. Matthew says that Hosea 11:1 speaks of whom.
20. Hosea's wife.
24. Because of Israel's idolatry, God speaks of taking her back into the \_\_\_\_\_.
25. God speaks of his judgment going forth like \_\_\_\_\_.
26. This of Israel testifies to his face.
27. LaAmmi means this: (2 words).

### Down

1. Jesus is the fullness of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord.
2. Like John in Revelation, Ezekiel is asked to do this in the temple.
3. The people are called to sow \_\_\_\_\_ and reap steadfast love.
4. Fishermen from this region will cast their nets into the Great Sea that flows from the temple.
5. The wise know that the ways of the Lord are right and this class of people stumble in them.
8. The Biblical model is that the Prince and the Government is to preserve this.
10. The prince is not to take any of this from the people.
12. No one with a \_\_\_\_\_ heart shall come into the Temple.
13. Hosea reminds the people that they have stumbled because of this...
15. Those who offer human sacrifice are described as kissing these...
19. Hosea's eldest son.
21. This flows from under the door of the temple.
22. Hosea redeemed Gomer for this many Shekels of silver along with about 9 bushels of Barley.
23. The priests are commanded to teach the people the difference between the holy and the \_\_\_\_\_.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 23: JOEL I – MICAH 4 (JUNE 1-7)

### **Summary:**

### **Joel:**

If you are the type that likes things in neat, chronological order, these next few weeks, going through the minor prophets, will likely cause you some degree of frustration. There is an order to these books, but it is thematic and theological, not chronological, so we will be jumping around in time and space a bit.

Joel is a bit of a trick, though, when it comes to nailing down his date and scholars divide radically as to his time frame. Most seem to place Joel very late, sometime after the Exile and the restoration of the Temple. This assumption is based on the fact that there is no mention of the northern kingdom in Joel and that Babylonia and Assyria are also not mentioned as enemies. Yet, I would side with those who place this text as very early, probably in the 9th century BC, making Joel potentially the first of the writing prophets. The style of Hebrew is a much older style first of all and second of all the exile and restoration to which Joel points would have already taken place were Joel to have been writing late. Either way, Joel contains some important Messianic language.

In short, Joel is writing during the time of a great plague of locusts on the land of Judah (a punishment for their sin) and he uses the analogy of the locusts to speak of the coming of much bigger "locusts," armies that will destroy the land. There is a plea to the people to return to God and then a promise that in time, God will destroy the wicked, restore the people, and pour out his Spirit on all flesh — a promise that Peter points out was fulfilled at Pentecost (see Acts 2).

### **Amos:**

Amos was writing somewhere in between the writing of Joel (assuming the earlier date) and the writing of Isaiah, overlapping Isaiah slightly. Unlike many of the writing prophets before him, Amos was not a formal priest but instead was a herdsman. The earthquake that places Amos' prophesy in time and space is likely the one spoken of in Zechariah 14:5 as taking place within the reign of Uzziah. There is quite a bit of rich language within Amos' text, calling the rich women "cows of Bashan" and things like that. There is also a promise of restoration at the end of the text that speaks of the abundance of the productions of grapes and the flow of wine like water from the mountains.

In short, the theme of the book of Amos is that God will bring justice upon sin in a way consistent with his righteousness... the wicked will not escape his grasp even if they are amongst the people of Israel. Some scholars have compared the tone of Amos to that of James in the New Testament, judging the wealthy for building up their riches at the expense of the poor in the land.

### **Obadiah:**

Obadiah is a tiny little book that packs a mammoth punch against Edom. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob. Though the covenant passed through Jacob and not his brother, there is still a sense of kinship and that kinship was betrayed with the Edomites assisted the Babylonians in rounding up the inhabitants of Jerusalem that were trying to escape capture in 586 BC.

This, of course, causes most scholars to date Obadiah around the fall of Jerusalem, making him a contemporary of Jeremiah. Others emphasize the prophetic nature of Obadiah's message and place his writings earlier, perhaps as early as 841 BC, thus grouping him with the other early writing prophets.

Either way, Obadiah clearly points out that Edom will not escape God's wrath for their sin...a sin against the covenant people of God.

### **Jonah:**

Probably the most well-known and beloved of the minor prophets, Jonah breaks the mold if you will, and presents more of a story than a prophetic narrative of judgment on the wicked. We are told that Jonah is the son of Amittai, which makes him the same Jonah as is spoken of in 2 Kings 14:25 — a time when God brought expansion and economic growth to Israel despite the fact that they had a wicked king (Jeroboam the son of Joash).

What we don't know about Jonah is whether the account we have here was early or late in his ministry. I prefer to hold that it was early and the lesson he learned about grace even to Nineveh is one that guided him as he taught grace to Israel, yet all we can do is to speculate as to such things.

### **Micah:**

Micah is another contemporary of Isaiah, writing in the south but with a focus to the Northern Nation as well. While all of the prophetic writings take the form of Covenant Lawsuits with God demonstrating himself faithful and demonstrating that the people have been faithless, Micah especially reminds us of a modern trial with witnesses being called and cases being plead (see especially chapter 6).

Micah begins with the language of judgment against Jerusalem and Samaria (the capitals of Judah and Israel respectively) for their abuses and sin and predicts their downfalls. He goes on to say that he will judge those who oppress with harshness. But Micah does not end by speaking of the capitals of the nations, but speaks of the leaders and priests within the capitals who are essentially "skinning" the people for their own comfort (see Malachi 3:3).

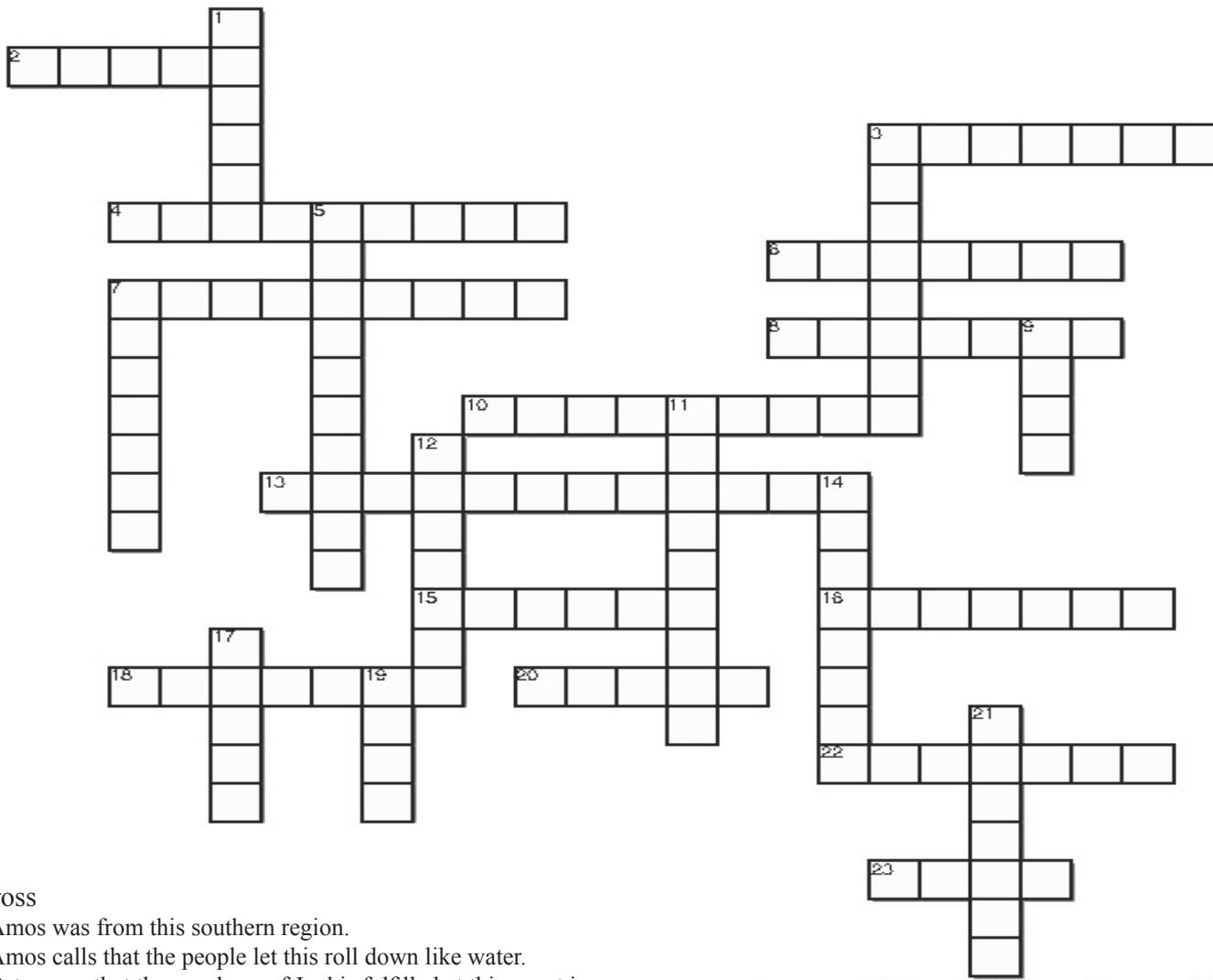
Yet, chapter 4 begins speaking of a promise for redemption where God will bring back people from exile along with the Gentiles who will flow into the temple to worship God.

### **Chromatic Notes:**

- Joel also introduces the idea of "the Day of Yahweh" — This is a time where God would send a King that was so powerful that he would meet all of his enemies on the field of battle and destroy them in one day. This, of course, anticipates the coming of Christ.
- Amos begins with a series of condemnations against the nations that surround Israel, beginning with Damascus and Syria to the north-east and then circling clockwise until he narrows in on Judah and Israel.
- It is Amos from whom we get the well-known line: "I was not a prophet nor a son of a prophet." (Amos 7:14)
- The Hebrew text speaks of Jonah being swallowed by a "great fish." Thus, the creature could have been anything that God providentially chose to use. Some people have trouble with applying the language of a "whale" to this text because whales are mammals. Yet, this is a modern classification, not an ancient one. For the ancients — especially for ancient Jews who did not like the ocean — if it lived in the water it was a fish.
- While Micah does speak of taking the people into exile, note that there is yet a Gospel focus that includes the gentiles, for in the return, "peoples shall flow to it." (Peoples is plural...)

## Week 23 (Joel - Micah 4)

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

2. Amos was from this southern region.
3. Amos calls that the people let this roll down like water.
4. Peter says that the prophecy of Joel is fulfilled at this event in history.
6. Through Amos, God promises a blessed return where the abundance will be so great that this person will overtake the reaper.
7. To Israel, God laments that he raised up some of their sons as prophets and some of their sons as these, yet they still pursue sin.
8. Amos did not consider himself this nor was he a son of one of these.
10. This was the capitol of the southern kingdom.
13. This was a theme developed in Joel that anticipates the day when the Messiah would destroy all of his enemies in a 24 hour period. (4 words)
15. Joel predicts a time when the Lord will pour out this on all flesh.
16. Jonah's father.
18. Micah promises a time of redemption where \_\_\_\_\_ shall flow to the temple (hint: gentile focus).
20. Like Job, Amos speaks of this constellation and affirms that God is its creator.
22. This was the capitol of the northern kingdom.
23. God tells the people through the prophet Micah that they need to lament the coming judgment by making themselves

### Down

1. Those who oppress the poor, Amos says, are like cows of this region.
3. Jonah was prophet during this evil king's reign.
5. Amos receives his prophecy two years before this.
7. It was to this city that Jonah would ultimately go.
9. The Edomites are descendants of this brother of Jacob.
11. The theme of Jonah's prayer is ultimately that this belongs to the Lord.
12. Joel was writing when the land was swarmed by these.
14. Through Amos, God begins his pronouncement of judgment with this region to the northeast of Jerusalem.
17. Jonah fled to this city to find a boat and sailors.
19. Obadiah writes particularly against this nation.
21. Micah predicts that the wicked will be taken into exile into this nation.

CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR  
WEEK 24: MICAH 5 – ZECHARIAH 4 (JUNE 8-14)

**Summary:**

**Micah 5-7:**

Micah 5 begins with fairly familiar language as it is here that Micah predicts that the Messiah will be born in the city of Bethlehem. Yet, this chapter's significance is greater than just an indication of where the Messiah was to be born, for it speaks of his character as well. He will be the peace of the people, shepherding them in the strength of the Lord (vs. 4), he shall destroy his adversaries (vs. 9), and he will destroy idolatry from the mist of his people (vs. 11-14).

Chapter 6 contains some of the most familiar language in this whole book. It begins as a covenant lawsuit where God calls the mountains to stand witness at the accusation he brings against his people. In verse 6, though, the tone shifts to a rhetorical question...what shall I bring before the Lord? Micah recites that God is not pleased with the many offerings and sacrifice unless the duty of Man to God is faithfully pursued: to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

Micah closes, as do many of the prophets, with a promise of restoration, though again, not given without a promise of judgment upon the wicked. These two go together — the redemption of God's own means the condemnation of God's enemies. There is no way of separating these things.

**Nahum:**

In a sense, you could consider Nahum to be Jonah, part 2. In the early 8th century BC, Jonah preached to the people of Nineveh that God was going to destroy them. The people repented (though clearly a cultural repentance out of fear of judgment, not a repentance that joins saving faith). Now, about 100 years later (approx. 663 BC), the people again have backslidden into their wicked ways and God sends a second prophet, Nahum, to speak to them one last time. Yet this time there is no promise to withhold judgment in the presence of repentance and too, there is no repentance. God would send Babylon (the nation that would crush Jerusalem) to crush Nineveh...an event that took place in 612 BC, about 25 years before the fall of Jerusalem. This book stands both as a warning to those who would practice wickedness against God's people but also to God's people, for God is a jealous God and there comes a time when he will not turn back his hand of wrath.

**Habakkuk:**

Habakkuk has been called by one theologian: "the prophet of reverential awe." Essentially he raises the question as to how a good and holy God can actively use the wicked Chaldeans (Babylonians) to bring judgment upon his own wicked people. Habakkuk is writing after the northern Kingdom fell to the Assyrians and about 30 years before the southern kingdom would fall to Babylon, so he has seen the one and is getting ready to watch the other. His book is structured around two laments (with God's response to each lament) and then a final song that praises God despite the judgment taking place all around him and because of the judgment upon the wicked.

**Zephaniah:**

There are several Zephaniah's in the historical record, so don't get too tripped up when you find this name and perhaps assume that it belongs to the prophet. What we do know is that he prophesied during the reign of Josiah (probably early in Josiah's reforms), which places him in the mid to late seventh century, writing not that long after Nahum. Based on his father's name (Cushi), some commentators have speculated that Zephaniah was the great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah, though that view is far from proven.

The theme of Zephaniah is that even in the midst of judgment, God will preserve a remnant of his people for himself. The principle can be summarized in 3:17 where Zephaniah writes that "Yahweh your God is in your midst and he is a mighty one to save."

**Haggai:**

As we arrive at Haggai and Zechariah, we jump forward in history to the return from exile. The people were charged to rebuild the temple and the walls to Jerusalem, yet had done a poor job, using building materials to reconstruct their own homes before trying to rebuild the temple. This work is recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Because the people need both encouragement and swift kick in the pants to get to work, God raises up Haggai and Zechariah.

Haggai begins with chastising the people for providing for their own homes before they provide for the house of worship. Yet, after the brief rebuke, he begins speaking of the greater glory of the house of God...an allusion to the coming of the greater temple, Jesus Christ.

**Zechariah 1-4:**

Zechariah follows Haggai as they are contemporaries, and brings a series of prophesies designed to engage the people, show them what is coming, and encourage them to be bold in their faith.

As we focus on the first four chapters, what we see is that this book begins with a series of visions, many of which we find thematically showing up again in Revelation. Yet, while many of these visions are significant in what they teach, the most significant of those visions is found in Zechariah 3 where the Angel of Yahweh appears and takes away the iniquity of the high priest named Joshua. This is a glorious picture of the exchange and imputation of righteousness given by Christ in his completed work.

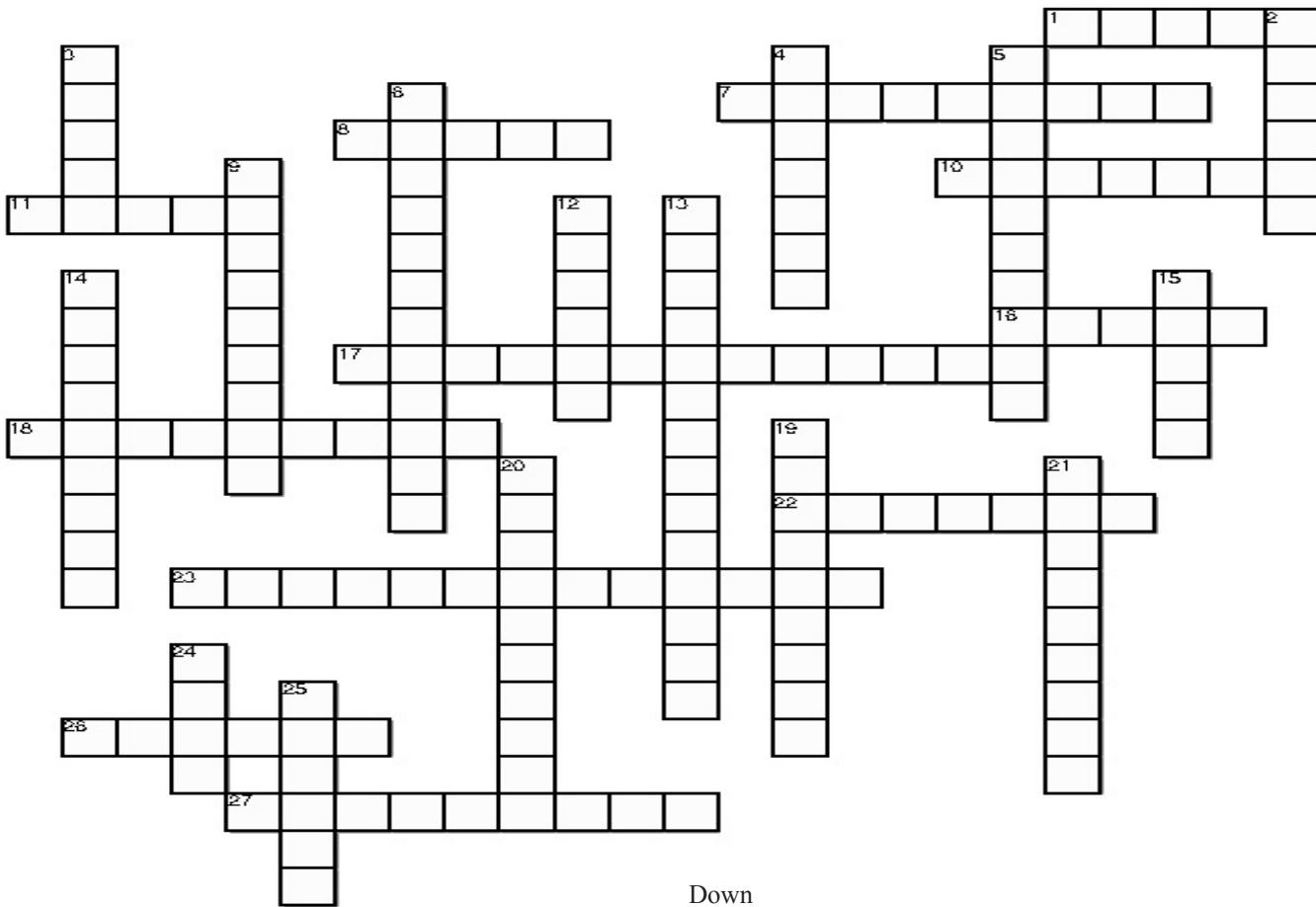
**Chromatic Notes:**

- Matthew 2 records Herod sending his wise men to discover where the Messiah was to be born...Micah 5:2 is the passage they quote to answer his inquiry.
- Micah 6:8 is rich and demands a lifetime to plumb its depths...the mercy, though, that is spoken of, is the Hebrew word *chesed* (pronounced with a hard 'h' at the beginning as in the word *Loch*), which refers to God's covenantal faithfulness despite his people's unfaithfulness. Oh how that is worthy of our love! Yet, how often we take it for granted.
- Note the judgment pronounced in Micah 6:14-15...you shall eat but not be satisfied, put away but not preserve, tread olives but not anoint with oil, etc... This is a picture of frustrated labor without the satisfaction of enjoying the fruits of our labors; it is a picture of a people without a Sabbath rest, something we often rob ourselves of.
- The irony in Nahum is that while his words convey a picture of God's retributive justice, his name means "Compassionate." God's compassion is seen by his own people when the wicked are brought to justice.
- Nahum's condemnation of Nineveh in chapter 3 speaks of the fall of this "great prostitute." John will pick up on this language in Revelation 17.
- Many of our English translations refer to Habakkuk's laments as "complaints." While we might feel he is complaining, the right word is lament, recognizing that Habakkuk is not speaking against God for his design, but only trying to understand.
- Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38, an indication of the significance that the Righteous walk by faith.
- Habakkuk 3:17-19 is probably the most well known and most quoted passage from the book of Habakkuk. We often focus on the testimony of praising God even in the midst of trials. Yet, the Hebrew of this text also gives an additional nuance...that of praising God because of his judgment on the wicked. God will judge Babylon for what Babylon did to the Jews and God's people will rejoice in God's good work of judgment.
- A recurring theme in Zephaniah is "The Day of the Lord." This anticipates a day when a great king would defeat all of his enemies within a 24 hour period of time. That great king is Jesus and that great victory was won on the cross, though Jesus is allowing the wicked freedom long enough to gather his elect before he will once and for all time cast the wicked into the fires of hell and restore the earth to glory.
- Haggai tells the people that the latter glory of the Temple will be greater than its former glory (Haggai 2:9), yet when the people witnessed the foundations of the new temple laid, those who remembered the old one wept (Ezra 3:12). The greater glory is fulfilled in Jesus' body, which he points out is the temple of which the prophet speaks (John 2:19-20).
- Zechariah 3 is a great picture of the imputation of righteousness, with the Angel of Yahweh (the pre-incarnate Son of God) taking off Joshua's filthy garments and replacing them with clean ones. The turban placed on his head is the High Priest's turban...one with the statement on the front "Holy to the Lord."

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Week 24 (Micah 5-Zechariah 4)

Complete the crossword below



### Across

1. This prophet has already warned the city to which Nahum is pronouncing judgment.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ will live by faith.
8. Zechariah witnesses the Angel of Yahweh debating with this entity over the sin of Joshua.
10. The lord requires that we 'do' this, speaks Micah.
11. Of the Messiah, Micah says that 'he shall be their \_\_\_\_\_'.
16. Zephaniah 3:9 foretells a reversal of the punishment given upon the people of this disobedient city. (hint: think Genesis...)
17. Much like Ezekiel and later the Apostle John, Zechariah witnesses a man with one of these, though in this case he is walking the length and breadth of Jerusalem, not the temple. (2 words)
18. Though the fig will fail and nothing be in the barns, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will take joy in the God of my \_\_\_\_\_.
22. Micah closes with an appeal to this patriarch.
23. Nahum's name means this.
26. The Angel of the Lord has this placed on Joshua's head.
27. In this town, the Messiah will be born.

### Down

2. Haggai is raised up because the people were refocusing on building their own paneled \_\_\_\_\_ rather than the Temple.
3. Zechariah witnesses a man riding a red one of these in his first vision.
4. Nahum is writing against this ancient city.
5. He is chosen in the time of Haggai to be a signet ring and the governor of Judah.
6. This theme is prominent in Zephaniah, a time when God will destroy his enemies in a 24 hour period. (4 words)
9. The father of Zechariah.
12. The name of the High Priest in Haggai and Zechariah's day.
13. Chessed is the Hebrew word that refers to 'God's faithfulness despite our \_\_\_\_\_'.
14. Of the prophets we read this week, this prophet ministers during the time of Josiah's reform.
15. Haggai speaks of the latter glory of the temple; of whom is he speaking?
19. Zechariah witnesses 4 horns which represent four of these coming.
20. This is a name that Nahum gives to God's enemies that refers to their idolatry (hint: it is unflattering and it will be picked up by John in Revelation 17).
21. Zechariah also speaks of one of these that holds seven lamps and is fed by two olive trees.
24. This historical author writes of Haggai and Zechariah.
25. Habakkuk's book is structured around two of these and a song.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 25: ZECHARIAH 5 – PSALM 8 (JUNE 15-21)

### Summary:

#### **Zechariah 5:**

Zechariah continues to relate some pretty fantastic visions revealed by God. Chapter 5 begins with a vision of a flying scroll which condemns the people for their sins. Following that is the vision of the woman in the basket being flown out of the land by stork-like creatures. Following that vision, Zechariah again witnesses the angels that patrol the earth (representing God's sovereign control over things that take place) and then there is a vision of the crowning of Joshua, the High Priest, a reminder that when the Messiah comes he will fulfill all three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King.

Zechariah 7 begins to change gears into what we are more used to from our prophets. Here the people are asking whether or not they should continue weeping and fasting. In turn, they were rebuked, for their fasts were ritualistic and not from the heart and if they want to genuinely show their humility and repentance, they should follow their words with acts of kindness, mercy, and justice.

Zechariah 8-14 is a closing section that really focuses on two themes: The first is that of God's promise to restore Israel and the second is the prophesy that the people will reject his Messiah. In the end, though the people are reestablished in the land, their rejection of the Messiah will bring judgment and once again God will return to his people with judgment. Zechariah concludes with the language of "The Day of the Lord" once again, and looks to the final restoration, the new Jerusalem where all things will be marked "Holy to the Lord."

#### **Malachi:**

Malachi is the last of the writing prophets, probably written about 515 BC. The temple has been completed but the people have fallen into ritual, habit, and corruption. The people are offering blemished offerings to God, the priests are not honoring God's name, the people are adulterous and taking foreign wives, they have called on sorcerers, are paying unfair wages to those working for them, and are withholding their tithes and offerings. Then they have the audacity to cry out — "Where is the God of Justice and why will he not accept our sacrifices!"

In principle, the theme of this little book can be summarized in terms of the ungratefulness of God's people for his great salvation...sadly, that is a condemnation that can often be applied to the church as well.

#### **Psalms:**

We now make another large jump in our English Bibles, back to the book of Psalms, the first of the third section of the Hebrew Scriptures known as "the Writings." The Word "Psalm" comes from the Greek word, "Psalmos," which means "A Song of Praise." In Hebrew, the book is called the "Sepher Tehillim" — literally, "the Book of Praises." The Hebrew word that is translated as "psalm" is the word "Mizmor," which literally means "a song to be sung while accompanied by a stringed instrument." In Hebrew, Psalms is sometimes also referred to as "Sepher Tephillath" or "the Book of Prayers."

The book of Psalms is actually broken up into 5 separate books, typically notated in our translations: Book 1 containing Psalms 1-41; Book 2 containing Psalms 42-72; Book 3 containing 73-89; Book 4 containing Psalms 90-106; and book 5 containing Psalms 107-150. Each of these divisions ends with an "Amen and

Amen" and Psalm 150 in its entirety is considered the great Amen of the Psalms. Of these psalms, 73 are attributed to David and 55 are listed as having been written for "the director of music."

116 of the Psalms also contain what are called "superscriptions" or titles at the top of the psalm attributing its authorship, telling its context, instructing the singer what the tune happens to be, or telling when it was to be used. While our English translations place these words as separate from the text, they are actually a part of the ancient, inspired manuscripts, and thus should be seen as God's word as well. While 34 of the Psalms do not have superscriptions, many scholars would argue that they are grouped in such a way that the most previous superscription applies to all following psalms until the next superscription is given. Thus, for example, the superscription on Psalm 103 would also apply to Psalms 104, 105, and 106. Similarly, as we begin the psalms, the superscription of Psalm 1 most likely applies to Psalm 2 as well.

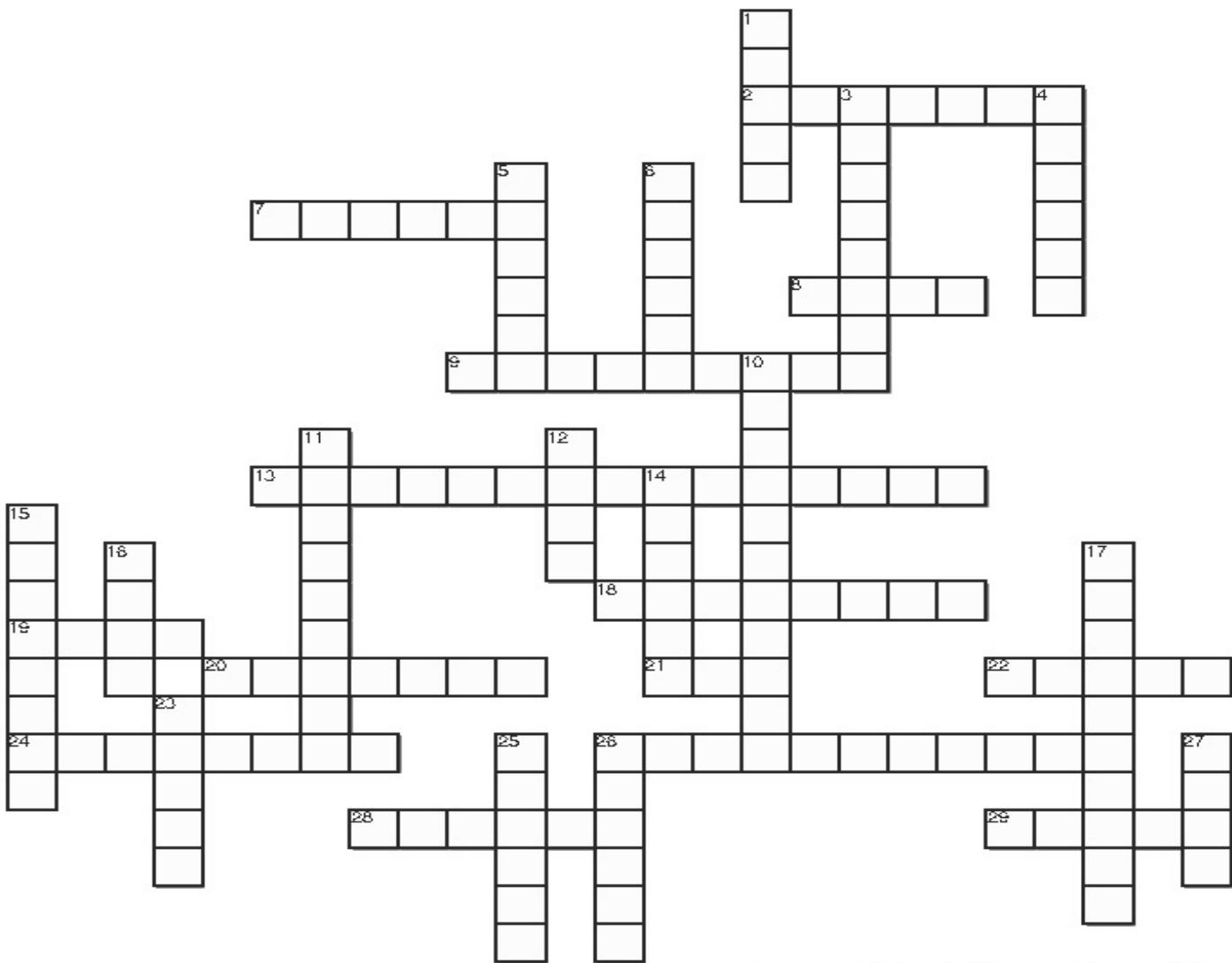
Psalms 1-8 are all Davidic in nature and mostly contain the historical context in which David wrote them. Major themes are God's faithfulness despite times of distress and the wisdom of following the Lord. Psalm 2, like many of the psalms, is also Messianic in nature, and speaks of the Sonship of the Messiah as well as his rulership over all the earth...the final words of this psalm summarize the whole: "Kiss the Son" (a reference to worship) "That he not be angry and you perish in your way for his wrath is kindled; blessed are those who take refuge in Him."

#### **Chromatic Notes:**

- The flying scroll in Zechariah 5 carries condemnation against those who steal (8th commandment) and those who swear falsely (3rd commandment). Some scholars suggest that this is an image of the Law of God, condemning the people for disobedience.
- Shinar (Zechariah 5:11) is another name for Babylonia.
- In Zechariah, Joshua's name is prophetic, for that is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek name, Jesus. In addition, the reference to "the man whose name is the Branch" (Zechariah 6:12) is Messianic as Jesus is referred to both as "the Branch of David" (Jeremiah 23:5) and the "Branch from the stump of Jesse" (Isaiah 11:1).
- Zechariah 9:9 contains the prophesy that speaks of Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem at his final Passover. He will ride in mounted "on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."
- Zechariah 11 is the passage often referenced when people see the 30 pieces of silver that Judas was bribed with and that money going to buy a potter's field.
- Zechariah 12:10 anticipates the language of people looking "on him who they have pierced," fulfilled in Jesus on the cross (John 19:37).
- Malachi 4 focuses on the promised coming of the Messiah with his forerunner, Elijah...a promise fulfilled in John the Baptist.
- Many of the psalms contain the word "selah" in their text (see 3:2,4,8; 4:4; 7:5). Nobody knows for sure just what this term means, but most scholars seem to consider this a musical term that indicated either a key change for the musicians or perhaps some kind of instrumental solo. Yet, it is part of the Hebrew text and thus should be read.

## Week 25 (Zechariah 5-Psalm 8)

Complete the crossword below



### Across

2. David wrote Psalm 3 when fleeing from this son.
7. Zechariah throws his thirty pieces of silver on the floor of the house of this man.
8. All things are under God's metaphorical \_\_\_\_\_.
9. God turns his anger against these people in Israel.
13. Zechariah prophesies the final coming of this time when God will strike down all his enemies in a day's time (5 words).
18. Zechariah witnesses the angels with the multicolored horses a second time, this time the horses are pulling these.
19. The cover on the basket that contained wickedness was made from this metal.
20. This is the ninth month on the Jewish calendar.
21. 'Be angry but do not \_\_\_\_\_.'
22. This is one of the classes of people that the people are not to oppress.
24. This of God with his people was one of life and peace.
26. These are the small-print above most of the psalms telling who wrote it or what it was written for.
28. To women with wings like a stork carried wickedness in a basket to this eastern realm.
29. Out of the mouth of these God has established strength before his foes.

### Down

1. The psalmist laments that every night he fills his bed with these.
3. Blessed is the man who does not sit in the seat of these folks.
4. This is the Hebrew word for 'Psalm.'
5. The man whose name is this shall take the throne.
6. This is the forerunner of the Messiah, fulfilled in John the Baptist.
10. Malachi speaks of a Book of \_\_\_\_\_, similar to what the New Testament refers to at the Book of Life.
11. This psalm of David was sung to the Lord concerning the words of Cush and was sung in this style.
12. The Messiah will come like fuller's \_\_\_\_\_.
14. Malachi says that we are to bring the full amount of these into the storehouses of God.
15. The one who hates and divorces covers his garments with this.
16. Malachi boldly states that God hates the descendants of this man.
17. Polluted offerings despise this. (2 words...hint: 5 times per year at Burry's)
23. This is probably a musical term that indicated a change in key or an instrumental portion of the song.
25. Behold your king comes riding one of these.
26. Zechariah witnesses a flying one of these.
27. Psalm 2 calls you to do this with respect to the Son...a sign of worship.

Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

## CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

### WEEK 26: PSALM 9 – 32 (JUNE 22-28)

#### **Summary:**

Whoohoo! If you have been following along with this reading chart, and especially if this is your first time reading through the Bible in a year, celebrate! At the end of this week, you have hit the half-way mark, and while there is still a lot of reading ahead, some of the most difficult books, including the prophets, are behind you. Then again, there's still Revelation...but we will take that book a little slower as we wrap up the year.

If you find yourself having difficult just sitting down and reading the psalms one after the other, let me suggest that you break them up across the day and use the psalms as your prayers, perhaps morning, lunch, dinner, and bedtime. If you are musically inclined, you can find copies of metrical psalters online, and you might find it edifying to sing them, perhaps, rather than to read them. However you approach the psalms, know that they are rich and address every emotion common to mankind...and in a holy way.

As we return to the individual psalms, then, we return to the psalms of King David. Psalm 9, we are told, was to be sung according to the Muth-Labben, arguably the name of a tune the musicians were familiar with. This should not be too surprising to us as many of our hymns share tunes with other hymns or, as it is with many of our hymns, the hymn began as a poem with someone later adding music. In the end, this psalm is the only one that is given to this particular tune. This psalm contains another "musical" term within its context: Higgaion. The meaning of this term is debated. On occasion it is used to indicate personal prayer at other times it is a reference to the Zither, a stringed musical instrument...a forebear of the guitar. This could indicate, then, a particular instrument solo or be a call for the worshipper to pray privately mid-song — or both. Again, we are just not totally sure.

Psalm 10 does not contain a superscript, so some scholars believe that it belongs to psalm 9. Thematically, they are similar with an emphasis of God being enthroned and sovereign God over all mankind, delivering and strengthening his own and bringing justice upon his enemies.

Psalm 11 begins a series of very brief songs of praise to God that does not come to a close until the end of Psalm 15. In this series is the familiar language of Psalm 14, that the fool says in his heart that there is no God. Yet, notice that these are almost exactly the same words as are found in Psalm 53. Again, not unlike our hymnals, there is a great deal of overlap within the psalms, so again, nothing to throw us for a loop.

Psalm 16 introduces us to another musical or liturgical term, that of Miktam. In this case, psalm 16 is not alone (at last!) and Psalm 56, 57, 58, 59, and 60 are all

described as Miktam. Again, we are not entirely sure what this term means, though it is most certainly meant as a "type" of psalm, not a tune to which the psalm is sung (as later Miktam have their own tunes listed). If we compare these psalms, a Miktam seems to do with God's divine deliverance of his people during times of great duress.

Psalm 18 is considered by many to be Messianic in nature. It also alludes to the language of the prophet Jonah in verses 4-6. We are also told the historical setting to this psalm, which is found in 2 Samuel 22, when God delivered David from the hand of Saul. Psalm 19 is one of the more familiar psalms, which contains the language of the heavens declaring the glory of God and the Law of the Lord being perfect, reviving the soul. Indeed, too, we find the words that speak of Jesus, who will be our rock and our redeemer.

Psalm 22 is most familiar to us from the lips of our Lord on the cross. These words begin in a haunting way, speaking of the felt abandonment of Christ from God the Father — experiencing the utter abandonment that we deserve. Yet, though the psalm begins on a distressful note, it ends on a note of victory...indeed, our Lord knew what the results of his sacrifice would bring.

Of the psalms, Psalm 23 and 24 are amongst people's favorites. Psalm 23 reminds us of the shepherding care that God gives to his people and Psalm 24 speaks of the Messiah entering into the Holy of Holies in our behalf, making intercession for us as his people.

In the final psalms of this section, you will notice some familiar language: "One thing that I have asked of the Lord, that I will seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life...": "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness"; "You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness"; "Into your hands I commit my spirit"; and "Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity" are all passages that can be found within these psalms.

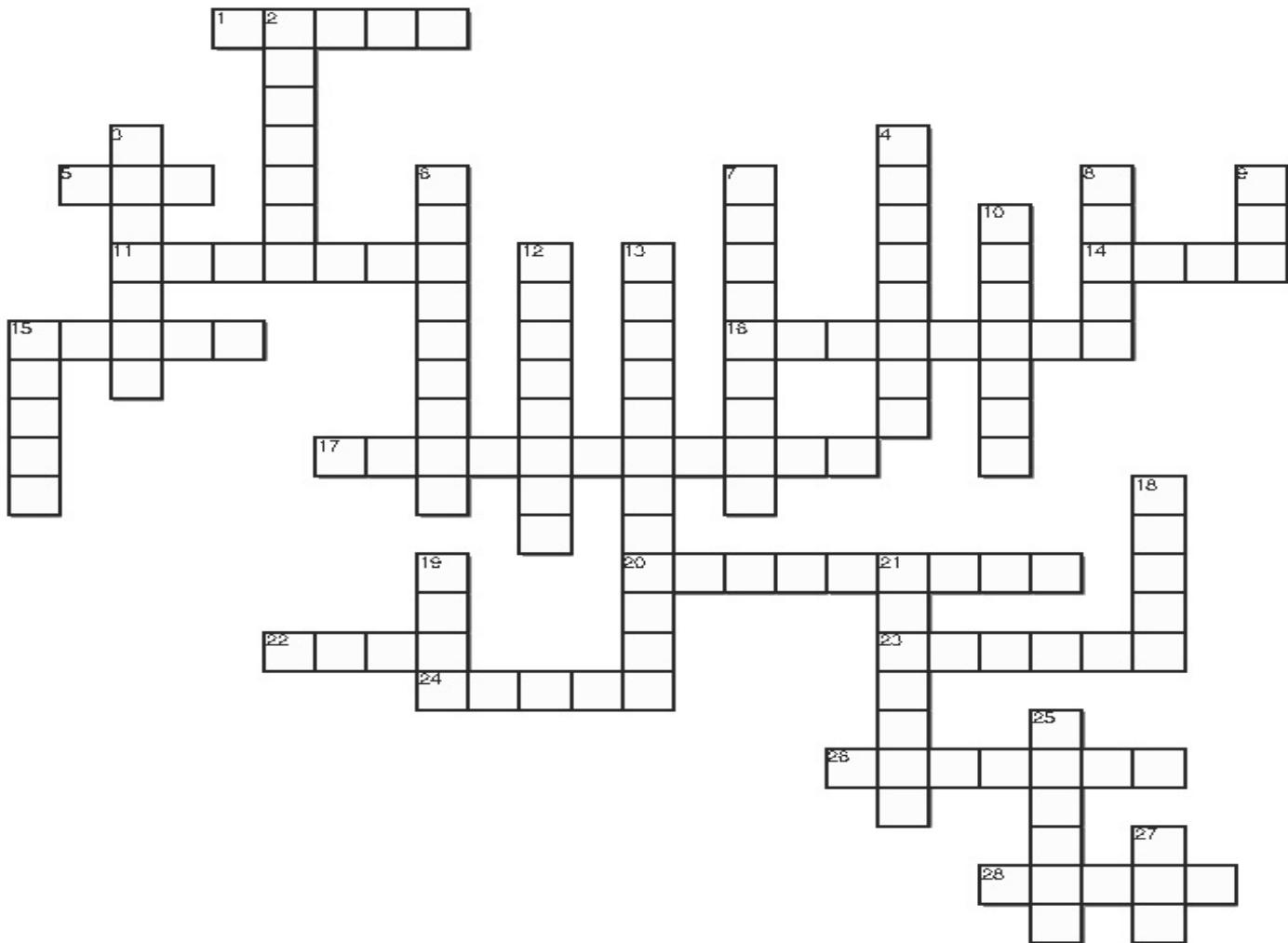
Again, as you read through these, seek to take the time to personalize these psalms as you make them part of your personal devotional life. God has given us these psalms to nurture our souls and teach us to pray, we need to take advantage of that Gift that God has given us.

#### **Chromatic Notes:**

- You will find that the term "Sheol" pops up quite frequently in the psalms. This term, depending on its context, sometimes means the grave and sometimes means the place of eternal damnation. Psalm 16:8 uses this term in a Messianic way, and, given that Jesus did not go to hell, it is clear that it is the grave that is in view in this case.

## Week 26 (Psalm 9-32)

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

1. This term can mean the grave or it can mean hell.
5. This that the Lord gives us is perfect (a Biblical testimony as to the inerrancy of scripture).
11. The mouth of the wicked is filled with this.
14. I have none of this apart from God.
15. Psalm 18 uses similar language to that used by which prophet?
16. The blameless does not put out his money and charge this.
17. In a very real sense, David prophetically describes this manner of death hundreds of years before the Roman empire was established.
20. This happens to my cup in the presence of my enemies.
22. The friendship of the Lord is for those who \_\_\_\_\_ him.
23. One thing do I ask... to gaze upon the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord.
24. All the psalms in our readings this week are attributed to this king of Israel.
26. I acknowledged my iniquity, Lord, and you \_\_\_\_\_ my sin.
28. I will give thanks with my whole \_\_\_\_\_.

### Down

2. This declares the glory of the God.
3. The Lord has changed my mourning into \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The Lord is my \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The Lord loves these kind of deeds.
7. This refers to a psalm that anticipates the person or work of Jesus.
8. The Lord is my \_\_\_\_\_ and my salvation...
9. The wicked thinks that there is no \_\_\_\_\_.
10. This is how long the Lord sits enthroned for...
12. A liturgical or musical term that may refer to a 'zither solo' in the midst of the song.
13. This is what the fool says in his heart. (4 words)
15. This New Testament figure quotes Psalm 22 in a very difficult circumstance.
18. Who is this King of \_\_\_\_\_? The Lord strong and mighty...
19. The psalmist flees like this animal to God's mountain.
21. God makes this region skip like a calf.
25. The historical setting for Psalm 18 is found in this book (Hint: it has 2 parts).
27. The psalmist asks God to break this body part of the wicked.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 27: PSALM 33 – 56 (JUNE 29-JULY 5)

### Summary:

Psalm 34 gives particular specifics as to about what it was written, which again, helps us to place this in the chronology of the life of David — an account that can be found in 1 Samuel 21. Notice how despite the fact that David is being pursued by Saul, his first words are still: "I will bless the Lord at all times..." And, as with many of these psalms, this psalm carries with it language that is dear to many of our hearts..."O, taste and see that the Lord is good" and "Come, Oh, Children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord" are two amongst many.

If you are a fan of the Third Day, song, *Your Love, Oh Lord*, then the language of Psalm 36:5-6 should sound familiar as it is drawn from these words. As we move into psalm 37, sometimes people struggle with verse 4, which speaks of God giving us the "desires of our heart." People often ask, if God gives us the desires of our hearts, why don't I have my desires? The answer to that question comes from context: If your delight is in the Lord (first part of verse) then God will give you your desires... but if your delight is in the Lord, the Lord is your heart's desire.

Psalm 38 is marked as "for the memorial" in many of our Bibles. Literally, the superscript reads: "A Psalm of David: for remembrance." Remembrance is a significant theme in the scriptural texts; when God's people remember his goodness and grace they act faithfully — when they forget, they fall back into sin. This psalm is a plea that is useful for many of us, as it is a plea by the psalmist that he remember God's grace and that God would remain faithful to him.

Psalm 40 again has language that is familiar, as "I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry" and "Sacrifice and offering you have don't desired, but you have given me an open ear..." It is a psalm that reminds us that God will not restrain his mercy toward his own and the blessings for those who seek God. And, Psalm 41 that follows closes "Book 1" of the Psalms with a reminder of the importance of meditating on the word and following God's path with integrity, ending in the refrain: "Amen and Amen."

### Book 2 of the Psalms:

Book 2 begins with a series of psalms written by the "Sons of Korah" (remembering that Psalms that do not begin with a superscript are arguably connected to the superscript of the psalm before it. Korah led a rebellion against Moses and Moses' authority during the wilderness wanderings and found himself consumed with fire that came out of the Holy of Holies and his family fell into the earth as it opened and swallowed him whole (see Numbers 16). Yet, God preserved the Sons of Korah (Numbers 26:11) and would even set them as guards over the Tabernacle's gate (1 Chronicles 9:31). These psalms that follow deal largely with the theme of redemption and grace — appropriate topics for these redeemed sons.

And so, Psalm 42 begins with the familiar words of the praise song, "As the Deer." How our souls must thirst for the things of God and for his righteousness. How rarely that "thirst" is much more than just wanting a sip...

Moving on to Psalm 46, we find more songs of the

sons of Korah, and this one likely finds its historical origins in 2 Chronicles 20:1-30 as we find similarities between the two. We also find language again that is very familiar — God being our ever present help in trouble. It also ends with the passage: "Be still and know that I am God." Notice, too, the boldness of these psalms...they have no qualms about calling the pagan nations to worship even though the pagan nations will be destroyed — they should worship because God has been faithful to his own.

Psalm 50 introduces us to a psalm of Asaph. Asaph authored 12 psalms altogether, but this one stands alone (the rest found in Psalms 73-80). Asaph was a levitical priest during the time of David, appointed as one of the singers who helped bring the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15; Nehemiah 12:46).

As we move into our final Psalms for this week, we return to those of David's pen. Psalm 51 deserves special note, though, as it was the psalm that David wrote after he was caught in an adulterous affair with Bathsheba. It is a reminder that even "great" believers are capable of great sin. It is a wonderful psalm to guide our own prayers of repentance.

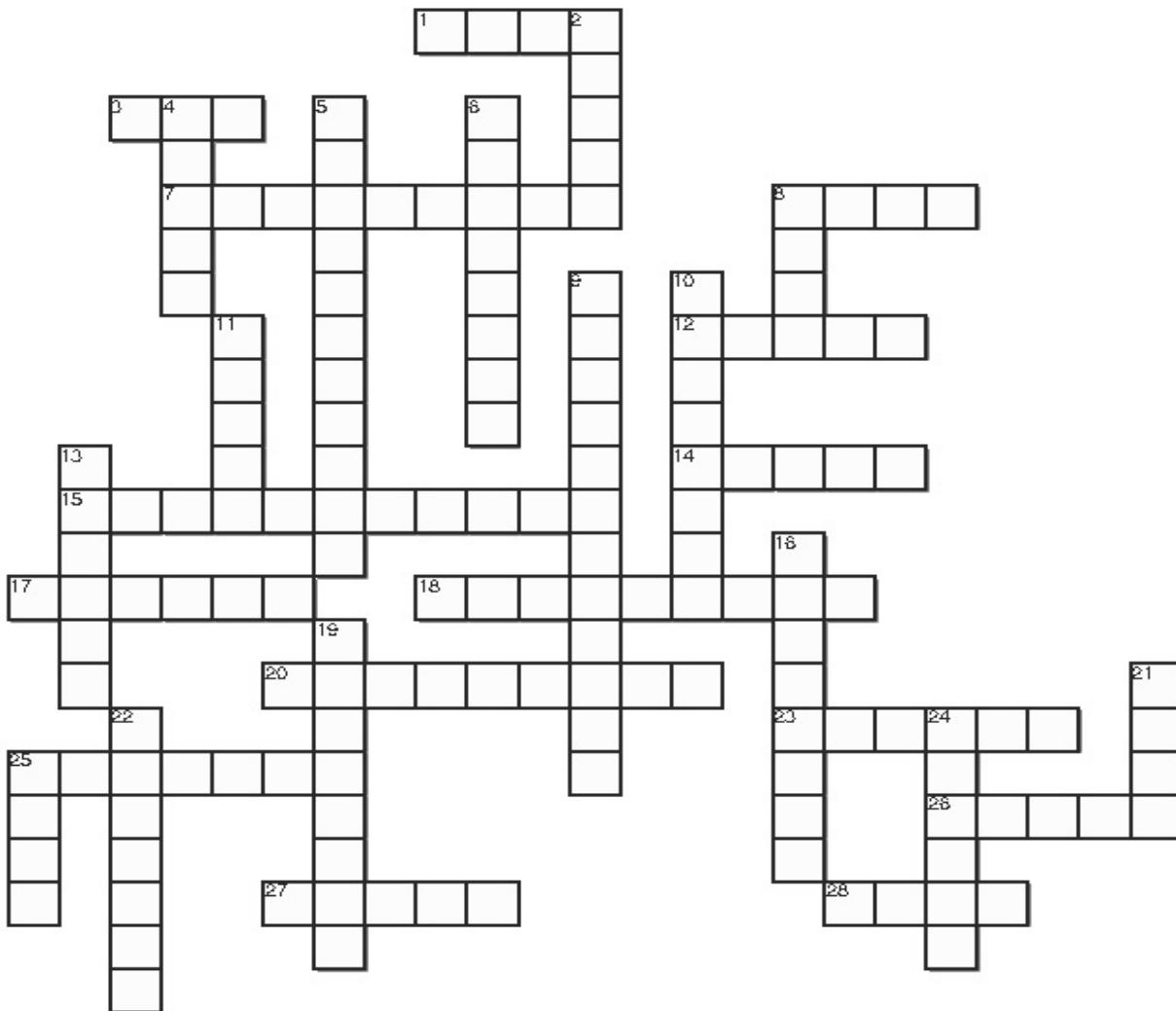
Psalm 53 is a near repeat of Psalm 14, though there are some subtle variations. Even so, such truth deserves being repeated.

### Chromatic Notes:

- The superscript for Psalm 39 contains the phrase: "to Jeduthun." Many of our Bible translators note that this is a liturgical term or a melody, but it should be noted that there was a real person named Jeduthun that served in the temple, whose sons were committed to the service of music in the temple (1 Chronicles 25:1). This, then, may indicate a tune written by Jeduthun or his sons.
- Note Psalm 46:1...literally it reads: "God is *for us* a refuge and strength." If he is such for *us* the implication is that he is not so for others...namely for those who are not believers.
- Psalm 49:15 contains the basic promise of the Gospel...God will deliver my soul (life) from Sheol. Sheol is a word that sometimes refers to the place of punishment for the wicked and sometimes refers to the grave, depending on context. In this case, both meanings carry equal weight..."oh death where is your sting!" for Jesus has defeated death and Sheol.
- Psalm 51:4 records the words "Against you and you alone, have I sinned..." Sometimes people confuse these words to believe that we have no obligation toward our fellow man when we sin against them. Yet, that is not what is in sight, what David is realizing is the primacy of his sin before God. How can we make our sin right with men if we do not first and foremost repent of our sin before God Almighty?
- Psalm 56:4 contains some words that ought to remind us of our national slogan as Americans: "In God I trust..." As a nation, shall we continue down this road of distrust in God and hypocrisy, claiming allegiance to God while only practicing allegiance to self? This psalm stands as a reminder of the significance of this little statement.

## Week 27: (Psalm 33-56)

Complete the crossword below



### Across

1. The wicked do this with their eye when they hate without cause and devise plans to harm the righteous.
3. Sacrifice and offerings God does not desire, but he offers this body part toward us.
7. David 'changed his behavior' before this man, the psalms tell us.
8. This person says in his heart that there is no God.
12. Psalm 33 speaks of this being full of God's steadfast love.
14. 'In God I \_\_\_\_\_.'
15. Psalm 34 reminds us that 'many are the \_\_\_\_\_' of the righteous, but God gives deliverance.
17. Psalm 37 reminds us that this group of people borrows with no intention to pay back.
18. This is how we are to wait upon the Lord if we expect him to incline his ear toward our cry.
20. The righteousness of God is like these (hint: think about 'Third Day songs').
23. This prophet went in to confront King David after David had sinned with Bathsheba.
25. Do this in the Lord and he will give you your heart's desires (namely himself!).
26. We are not to trust in our \_\_\_\_\_ or bow, but instead in God for deliverance.
27. 'Be \_\_\_\_\_ and know that I am God...'
28. 'Blessed is the one who considers the \_\_\_\_\_' (hint: you will have them with you always).

### Down

2. The sons of this rebel are preserved and will write some remarkable psalms.
4. This psalmist was present when David brought the Ark into Jerusalem.
5. In Psalm 38, David speaks of a 'memorial offering,' which is an act of this...
6. The children of the one who lends generously are spoken of as a \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The eye of the Lord is said to be on those who have this toward him.
9. In Psalm 50, God said that this is the kind of sacrifice he desires from us.
10. Many of our translators consider this a liturgical term, but it is also a person whose sons were assigned to prepare music for the temple worship.
11. This place can refer to the grave or to hell depending on context, and it is a place that Jesus delivers his people from.
13. 'Blessed is the \_\_\_\_\_ whose God is the Lord'
16. In psalm 45, the psalmist speaks of being anointed with this kind of oil.
19. A broken and \_\_\_\_\_ heart God will not despise.
21. 'Oh taste and see that the Lord is \_\_\_\_\_.'
22. This is likely a tune to which the words: 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble' are sung to.
24. David seeks to be 'purged' with this flowering shrub commonly prized by beekeepers for the fragrant honey it produces.
25. We often sing of this animal panting for water as our soul pants for God.

Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

## CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

### WEEK 28: PSALM 57 – 80 (JULY 6-12)

#### Summary:

Psalm 57 again begins with a very helpful superscript (remembering that superscripts are part of the original inspired Hebrew text). This places the historical setting for the psalm in 1 Samuel 22). Isn't it interesting how often these psalms of David, many of which are written before he became King and was still being chased by the murderous Saul, focus so much on God's faithful provision for and protection of his people. You will also notice that Psalm 57 continues in a series of psalms referred to as "Miktams" which runs from 56-60. Apart from Psalm 16, this is the only place where Miktam's show up.

Psalm 62 contains language that ought to be familiar to us: "He only is my rock and my salvation, for fortress, I shall not be shaken. On God rests my salvation and my glory, my mighty rock, my refuge is God." (verses 6-7) These verses are echoed in the New Testament with the reminder that salvation does not come from our works, but comes entirely from the work of Jesus Christ through faith and the grace of God who gives us that faith.

Psalm 63 is one that was identified with in the early church, written by David as a result of a season when he was in the wilderness fleeing from his enemy (though it is debated whether this is as a result of Saul or Absalom). As the early church identified themselves as "the church in the wilderness" anticipating the new promised land with the second-coming of Christ, they would incorporate this into their prayer life, often praying this psalm daily.

Psalms 65 and 66 both emphasize God's sovereignty even over the pagan nations, calling them to praise God for his faithfulness to his people. While the pagans fear the coming of night (for the night is when it was believed that ghosts and demons roamed the earth), the believer has no need to fear these things, for God has ordered their coming and going. Even psalm 67, verse 4 contains the idea that the nations should be glad that God is just and that God will even judge them (fairly) for their sins and wickedness. We are prone to celebrate God's grace, and we rightly should, but the scriptures also call us to celebrate God's justice upon the nations and all those who reject his Son, Jesus.

Psalm 69 is significant covenantally in a number of ways. First, its theme is that of deliverance, which should not be overly surprising. Building on the theme of deliverance, though is the theme of deliverance from sinking into the water of destruction. Water trials are a significant part of covenant history. God destroyed the world with water, delivering Noah and his family through the Ark. God destroyed the Egyptian Army with the Red Sea yet delivered his people and again split the River Jordan to bring his people into the promised Land. Jonah, too, was

delivered through water by a giant fish (in fact, Jonah's prayer of repentance echoes some of this language).

Where this psalm becomes even more covenantally significant is that in the New Testament, deliverance through water trials are associated with baptism. Paul refers to the Red Sea crossing as a kind of Baptism (1 Corinthians 10:1-4) and Peter refers to Noah's flood as a baptism as well (1 Peter 3:18-22). One can argue that baptism is a kind of event where the old man is symbolically destroyed or purged and the new person in Christ is preserved (Romans 6:4). Thus, in Jesus' own baptism, we find him taking upon himself the waters of judgment (that this psalm speaks of!) so that he might give us deliverance through the waters.

As we move to Psalm 72, we find a psalm by David's son, Solomon. Solomon authored 2 psalms, this one and psalm 127. And Solomon's psalm here brings book 2 of the Psalms to an end...again with an "amen and amen!" though this one also has a reference to us that the psalms (or prayers) written by David are brought to a close. This does not mean that the Psalms contain no more of David's psalms, only that this was the end of the section of psalms that David collected and organized. Others behind him will discover psalms of David not included in the first two books and will include them where appropriate.

Book 3 begins with a series of psalms by Asaph. We were already introduced to Asaph in Psalm 50, but here is the larger body of Asaph's writings. As we have noted before, Asaph was amongst those that David put in charge of the tabernacle musical worship (1 Chronicles 6:39) and his sons would become Levitical singers in temple worship (2 Chronicles 5:12-13).

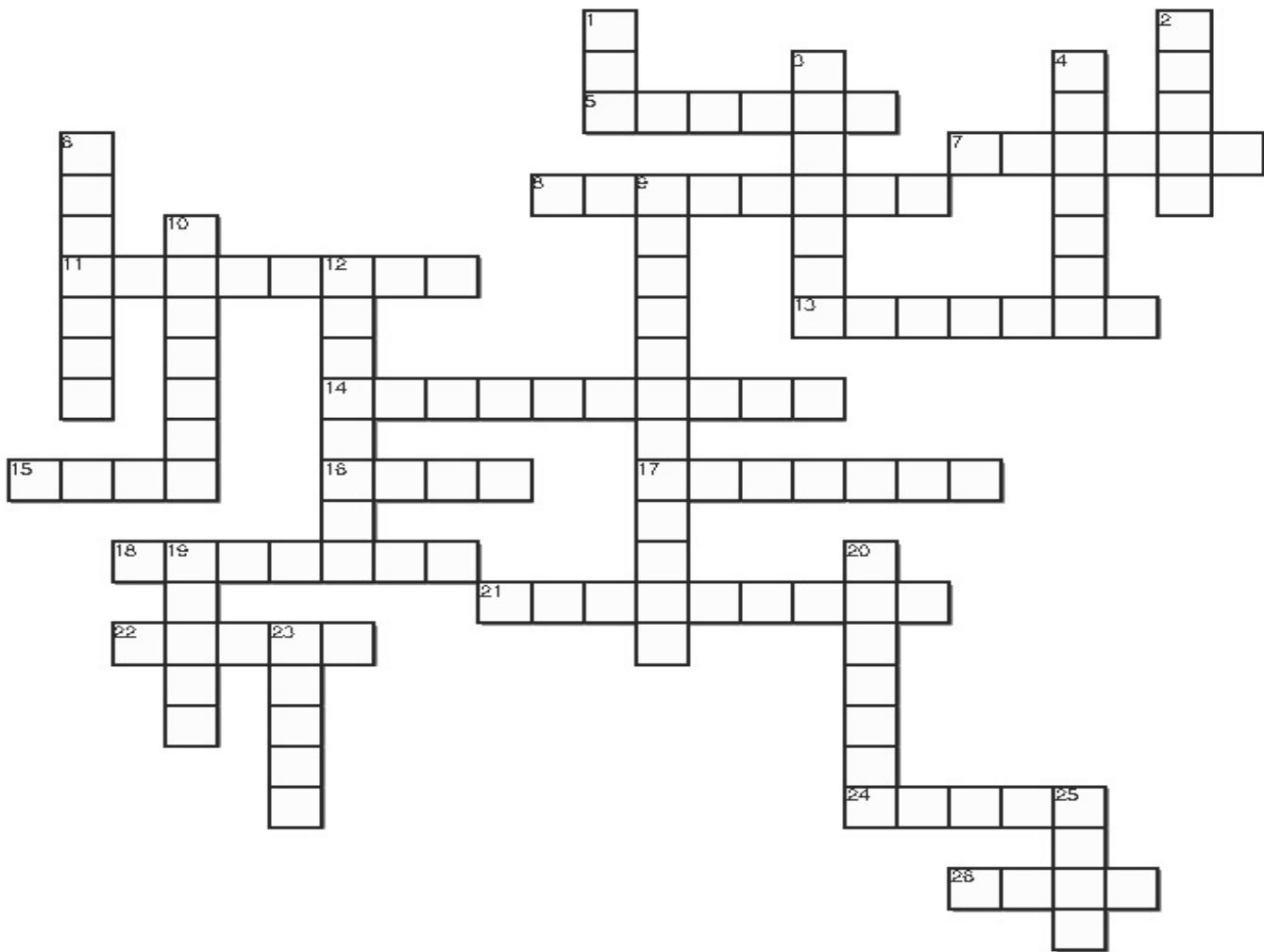
Of these psalms of Asaph, psalm 78 is the longest and is structured like a parable or proverb to the people of Israel, reminding them of their history and God's faithfulness so they might not fall away. For indeed, when God's people forget their roots they drift into sin and rebellion against God. Psalm 80, then, in our reading for the week, closes with the prayer to restore us and for God to shine his face upon us that we might be saved. An appropriate place to reflect on as we end the week.

#### Chromatic Notes:

- Though there is some discussion, it is believed by scholars that a "Miktam" or "Michtam" (depending on the word's transliteration) refers to an inscription...something written down or inscribed for permanence.

## Week 28 (Psalm 57-80)

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

5. Blessed be God for he has not rejected my \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Psalm 68 speaks of snow falling on this place...
8. These items of God are considered as twice ten thousand...
11. Psalm 80 speaks of God, as the shepherd of Israel, enthroned on this creature.
13. The pagan nations fear the coming of this, but the people of God rejoice for God is sovereign even over darkness.
14. When David writes that he wishes to dwell in God's tent forever, this is a reference to what?
15. David speaks of this animal that runs in a pack when speaking of the enemies of God in Psalm 59.
16. David wrote Psalm 57 as he was fleeing from this king.
17. David fled into the wilderness to escape the wrath of this relative.
18. This is the state of him who is chosen by God to dwell in his courts.
21. Psalm 74 speaks of the crushed head of this enemy of God's people.
22. This minor prophet was delivered from a water trial.
24. Shout to God all the \_\_\_\_\_ for awesome are his deeds.
26. Psalm 80 speaks of God's people as this kind of plant brought out of Egypt and transplanted in Israel.

### Down

1. In the hand of the Lord there is this that contains foaming wine of judgment.
2. Psalm 58 speaks of the wicked having this in their mouth like that of a snake.
3. The righteous will \_\_\_\_\_ when he sees the vengeance of God on the wicked.
4. This man has two psalms included in the book of Psalms.
6. David divided a portion from this Valley.
9. David strove with this man and such was the basis of Psalm 60.
10. God is to be exalted above the \_\_\_\_\_.
12. In the New Testament, water trials are sometimes referred to as \_\_\_\_\_.
19. David said his soul is in the midst of these wild animals.
20. Psalm 78 is described as this form of wisdom literature.
23. This levitical musician is credited with the first psalms of Book 3 of the Psalms.
25. In Psalm 71, David pleads to be delivered from this body part of the wicked.

## CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

### WEEK 29: PSALM 81 – 104 (JULY 13-19)

#### **Summary:**

As we continue with the psalms, we return to the psalms of Asaph. These final psalms of Asaph focus on God's sovereignty, his righteousness, and his judgment over those who oppose him.

Psalm 84 begins a section of psalms written by the sons of Korah. we have already seen some of these mens' psalms (Psalms 42-49), thus we won't discuss the background of the sons of Korah in detail other than to remind ourselves that Korah was one that rebelled against Moses in the wilderness (Numbers 16) but as a sign of grace, the Sons of Korah were spared (Numbers 26:11) and would eventually be given responsibility over protecting the Tabernacle entrances (1 Chronicles 9:19), a mark of God's mercy even to the descendants of a rebellious man.

And notice the very familiar language that comes from psalm 84: "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord..." The psalm continues with the promise of blessing to those whose strength is found in the Lord. For indeed, a day in God's courts is better than a thousand anywhere else in this world.

Psalm 86 inserts one more psalm of David before it returns to the psalms of the sons of Korah. Though we are poor and needy, David rejoices in the preservation found at the hand of God for he is merciful and gracious and there is none like our God amongst the gods worshipped on this earth.

Psalm 87 is the basis for the hymn "Glorious things of Thee are Spoken," a personal favorite of mine, praising God for his establishment of Zion, the place in which the church shall dwell. Psalm 88 has a fairly extended superscript, being a Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite played "according to the Mahalath Leannoth." Psalm 53 also speaks of a Mahalath and Leannoth is translated by some scholars as "to sing or to answer in song." Such makes sense in the context of this psalm, as the psalmist, like Job, is crying out day and night for the Lord to act and save him, yet he cannot see God's hand at work. Thus he is crying out to God for an answer to the ills of this life and the struggle with wickedness and suffering. Heman the Ezrahite is spoken of in 1 Kings 4:31 as one of those wise men of the day whose wisdom was surpassed by that of Solomon. Another mentioned in this way was Heman's brother, Ethan the Ezrahite, the author of psalm 89.

That said, Psalm 89 is highly messianic and is based on the promise given to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-16. Psalm 90 not only introduces Book 4 of the Psalms, but it introduces us to the only psalm written by Moses (though if it is correct that when a psalm does not have a superscript, then the superscript of the previous psalm applies to it, then Moses might be credited with Psalm 91 as well).

Psalm 92 is the only Psalm explicitly stated that it was written for the Sabbath day. While all psalms were (and

still are!) used on the Sabbath day, this one focuses on the gathered worship of God's people and not so much on the individual worship.

Psalm 93 is a nice interlude between the longer and heavier psalms that surround it and sings of the majesty of God. Psalm 94 changes gears, though, and proclaims the glory of God in his judgment of his enemies. Psalms 95-99 focus on character traits of God and proclaim his glory once again.

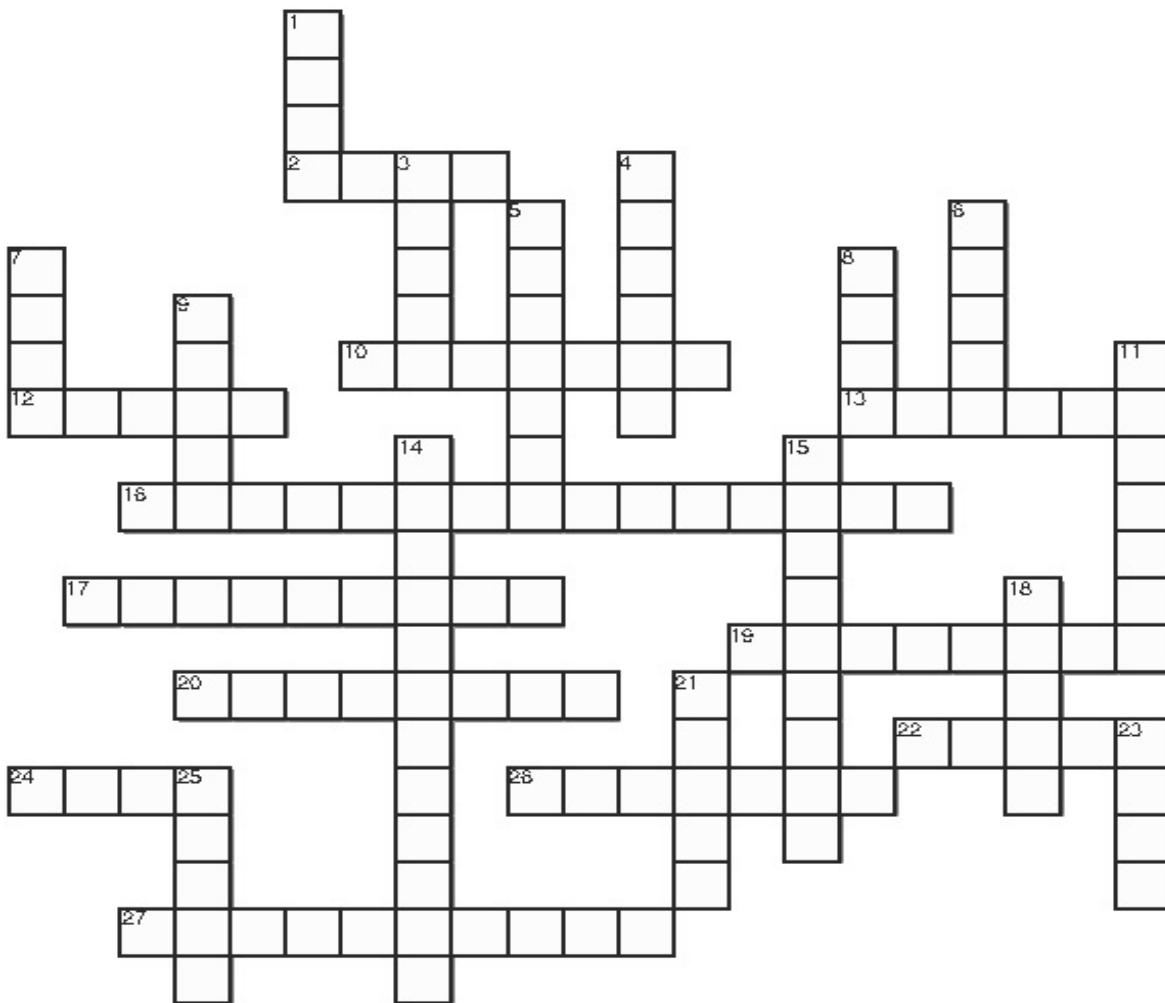
While many psalms do give thanks, Psalm 100 is for the explicit purpose of calling the people to give thanks to our God. Psalm 101 returns us again to a psalm of David and 102, though it does not give us an explicit author, it does speak of itself as a psalm for those that are afflicted and faint. Psalm 103-104 are likely both written by David and are longer, more like odes in the modern sense. Ultimately they call on the faithful to glorify God and bless the Lord. Amen and amen...that we shall do!

#### **Chromatic Notes:**

- Note that Psalms 81 and 84 are to be sung "according to the Gittith." There is a great deal of discussion around the meaning of this term. It might be derived from the name of the city "Gath" perhaps because the melody came out of Gath or was to be played on an instrument commonly used by the people of Gath. Another option is to look at the meaning of the word "gath," which means, "winepress." Thus another option is that it might be sung to a song commonly sung around winepresses, or perhaps it is a psalm to be sung during those times of the year when wine is being pressed, or perhaps it is a reference to a kind of dance that would be done that is reminiscent of pressing out the grapes with one's feet. The simple answer is that we don't know what the term means for sure and the best we can do here is to speculate a bit.
- Note that the psalms sometimes speak about the Tabernacle and the Temple as being "God's dwelling place." Sometimes people get hung up on this language as God dwells in heaven. Indeed, both can be said to be true. God's abode is in heaven, but as God can be everywhere at all times, he is not bound there. The language that speaks of the Temple addresses the idea of God's special presence with his people, in part in the Tabernacle and the Temple and in full in Christ (hence we no longer have a temple!).
- It is from Psalm 90 that the language of a thousand years in God's sight is as but a day can be found. Peter again cites this in 2 Peter 3:8. Sometimes people confuse this verse to assume that the days spoken of in Genesis 1 are long periods of time, but that misses the metaphor being applied, which speaks of God's patience and longsuffering towards his own.
- Satan quotes Psalm 91:9-13 when seeking to tempt Jesus to step off of the pinnacle of the temple.

## Week 29 (Psalm 81-104)

Complete the crossword below



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### Across

2. Righteousness and Peace to this with each other.
10. In Psalm 101, David promises to do this to those who slander their neighbor.
12. This is often described as a garment for God.
13. Asaph recounts the defeat of this wicked general at the river Kishon (hint: think tent stakes)
16. There is none of this in God.
17. Psalm 94 speaks of God as the God of \_\_\_\_\_.
19. Probably means a sung response or cry to God.
20. For a day in God's courts are better than this many anywhere else.
22. As for man, his days are like \_\_\_\_\_.
24. Some scholars think that a Gittith is connected with this city.
26. The waters of this place is a historic place of testing.
27. When the Sons of Korah sing, 'How lovely is your dwelling place...' of what place are they singing?

### Down

1. God is often called the \_\_\_\_\_ of my salvation.
3. David calls out to God to show him a sign of favor that his enemies would be put to this \_\_\_\_\_.
4. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Almighty.
5. We are the people of God's \_\_\_\_\_. (hint: 'baaa')
6. He is only credited with one Psalm, though there may be two.
7. The stupid man and the \_\_\_\_\_ cannot understand the design of God to wipe away the wicked.
8. 'I said, you are \_\_\_\_\_'
9. This wise man wrote a Messianic psalm based on God's promise in 2 Samuel 7.
11. Psalm 92 is the only psalm expressly written for this.
14. Psalm 100 is a psalm specifically for this.
15. A thousand years in God's sight are but as \_\_\_\_\_ to God's memory.
18. The sons of this rebel in the wilderness contributed a number of psalms to our psalmody.
21. We are called by Psalm 98 to make a joyful \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord.
23. Sing to the Lord a new one of these.
25. Though he was a cartoon hero in the 1980s, in the Bible time, he was known as a wise individual.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 30: PSALM 105-128 (JULY 20-26)

### **Summary:**

Psalms 105 and 106 complete book 4 of the Psalms. Taken together, these psalms form a great poetic history of the people of God, beginning with the covenant that God gave to Abraham and continuing through the captivity, concluding with a request that the people of God all be returned home to Jerusalem from the lands to which they had been scattered.

The fifth and final book within the psalms begins with psalm 107, a psalm that calls out to God and praises his name for his deliverance and for his provision through the generations. Psalm 108-110, again bring us to several psalms of David, which again captures the theme of God's provision even in the face of persecution and betrayal.

Psalm 111 and 112 are psalms again of praise to God and are a call to give God thanks in the company of the congregation for God takes care of his own.

### **Egyptian Hallel Psalms**

Psalms 113-118 are what is called the "Egyptian Hallel" psalms and they are psalms that are typically sung in conjunction with the Passover meal. Typically Psalms 113-114 would be sung before the meal and 115-118 after the meal. There is a certain bold witness in these psalms, especially as they proclaim to the world that the world should praise our God because God has been faithful to us...in other words, the pagan gods are not faithful but the God is Israel is — so utter praises in his name. If you find yourself interested in learning more about the Hallel psalms, I have written devotions on each that can be found on the display rack in the church fellowship hall. They have also been compiled into a devotional commentary entitled, *The Egyptian Hallel Psalms*.

### **Psalm 119**

This psalm is the longest of the psalms and the longest chapter in the entire Bible with 176 verses. This psalm is also a highly structured piece of poetry given to us by an unknown author. Structurally, this poem is an acrostic that is broken into 22 stanzas of 8 verses each. These 22 stanzas follow the Hebrew alphabet, and a letter is written as a superscript at the top of each section indicating the letter followed. In each stanza, each of the 8 lines of the stanza begin with the aforementioned letter of the alphabet... something that is quite a challenge for anyone to do.

The theme of this psalm is that of the goodness of God's law — His instructions for the life of the believer. Similar to that of the Egyptian Hallel Psalms, devotions

on Psalm 119 can be found on the display board and they likewise have been compiled into a devotional commentary entitled, *Keeping Your Way Pure*.

### **The Psalms of Ascent**

Psalms 120-128 round out our reading for this week, which introduce us to the first half of the Psalms of Ascent, which run from Psalms 120-134. Sometimes called "Pilgrim Psalms," these psalms represent the psalms that the Israelites would sing as they traveled to Jerusalem for the various celebrations and festivals. The name "ascents" was added for they anticipated the "ascending" of the hill of the Lord: Mount Zion. As with the above sections, I have a very brief series of devotions on these psalms that are in the display board in the fellowship hall.

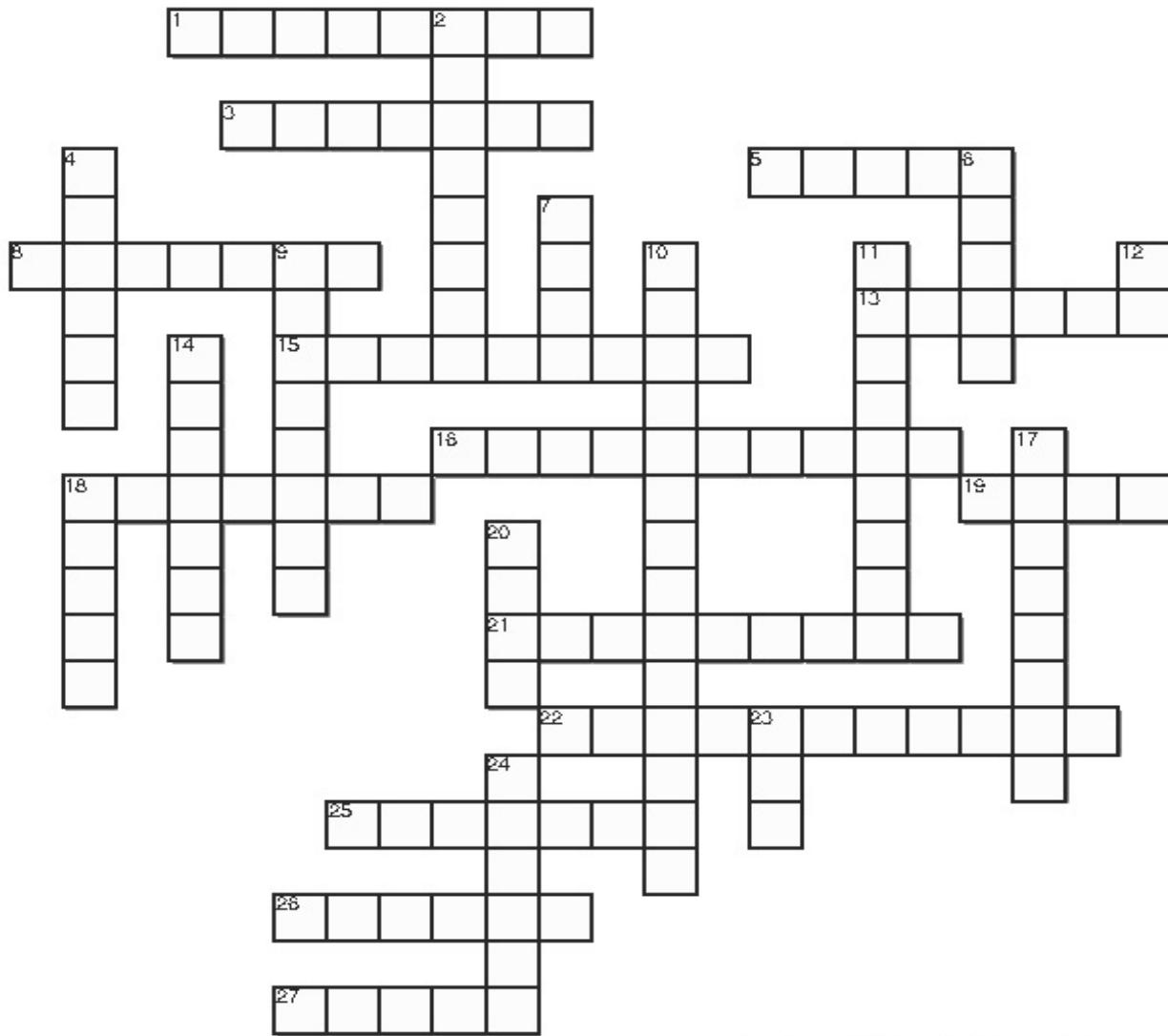
### **Chromatic Notes:**

- Psalm 109 is loosely about Judas Iscariot (see verse 8 in particular and Acts 1:20). It is a reminder not only of the wickedness of Jesus' betrayer, but also of the consequences for this wicked man's actions.
- Psalm 110:4 speaks of the Messiah being of the order of Melchizedek. For more on Melchizedek, look back to Genesis 14:17-24 and forward to Hebrews 7.
- Psalm 111:10 echoes the words of Solomon in Proverbs 9:10 — the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom... how this is lost in our culture today.
- Hallelujah simply means, "Praise Yahweh." Hosannah means, "Please save us!"
- It is likely that Psalms 115-118 were the psalms that Jesus sung with his disciples as is recorded in Matthew 26:30. Psalm 118 was also being sung as Jesus was coming into Jerusalem for his triumphal entry (Matthew 21:9).
- The Hebrew alphabet actually has 23 letters; psalm 119 combines the Hebrew letter "sin" and "shin" as these are nearly identical letters which some scholars have suggested may have been understood as the same letter at one time.
- Note that children of the faithful are like arrows in the hand of a warrior (Psalm 127:4). The word picture is that as a warrior expertly uses his arrows to slay the enemies of God, the Godly father will expertly train his children to tear down the strongholds of hell in our world.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Week 30 (Psalm 105-128)

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

1. 'Those who make idols become \_\_\_\_\_' (2 words)
3. '\_\_\_\_\_ is he who comes in the name of the Lord...''
5. 'The sum of your word is \_\_\_\_\_.'
8. Psalm 105 begins with the covenant of God with whom?
13. The children of the faithful are like these.
15. 'This is the gate of the Lord, the \_\_\_\_\_ shall enter through it.'
16. This means, 'Praise Yahweh.'
18. While Ephraim is God's helmet, Judah is this item in God's hand.
19. 'Your word is a \_\_\_\_\_ to my feet...'
21. 'The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my \_\_\_\_\_' (2 words)
22. Jesus is an eternal priest in the order of this priest.
25. The steadfast-love of God endures how long?
26. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of...
27. This betrayer is foretold in Psalm 109.

### Down

2. This means, 'Save us please!'
4. The 22 stanzas of Psalm 119 follow this alphabet.
6. 'I have stored up your word in my \_\_\_\_\_.'
7. How many 'books' are there within the Book of Psalms.
9. Psalm 119 is this type of poem.
10. I was glad when I was asked to go here... (4 words)
11. 'I will lift up the cup of \_\_\_\_\_ and call on the name of the Lord.'
12. Psalm 117 tells the nations to praise God because God has been faithful to \_\_\_\_\_.
14. This is a category of psalms sung as people came to Jerusalem.
17. The Egyptian Hallel Psalms would be sung at this feast.
18. It is vain to labor anxiously because God gives this to his beloved.
20. 'My help comes from the \_\_\_\_\_'
23. In Psalm 105, Egypt is referred to as the land of this son of Noah.
24. The Israelites fell into sin, psalm 106 reminds us, and served idols, even sacrificing their children to \_\_\_\_\_.

## CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

### WEEK 31: PSALM 129-150 (JULY 27-AUGUST 2)

#### **Summary:**

This week we complete the psalms and to do so, we begin by returning to complete the Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120-134). As noted last week, these were psalms that the pilgrims on the way to Jerusalem would sing as they prepared for the holy celebrations. These final psalms also seem to increase intensity as the pilgrims got closer to Jerusalem, calling us to wait for the Lord's timing (130:5-6), to be humble before the Lord (131), and to bless those faithful that gather to worship (134). Indeed, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity (133:1) — something best achieved in the context of worship where Christ and not self is lifted up.

Psalm 135 contrasts the glory of worshipping God with the folly of those who bow down to idols and in that are destroyed. Psalm 136 is sometimes known as "The Great Hallel," offering repeated reasons to worship God alone, both in terms of the things he has done and in terms of his character. He is indeed worthy of our praise and adoration!

After the high note of Psalm 135, it may seem odd to shift into Psalm 136 where the psalmist laments their exile. "How can we sing the songs of the Lord in a foreign land?" the psalmist asks. Indeed, though, in light of the psalm that came before, it is meant as a reminder that God is not just the God of the real estate in Israel, but that he has elect from every nation and tribe that he intends to bring to himself and we are the ones to take the Gospel to the world.

It should be noted too that psalm 137 is what is called an "imprecatory psalm." These are psalms where the psalmist asks that God's enemies fall under God's wrath and judgment. While they are often quite harsh (verse 9 speaks of dashing the babies of their enemies against the rocks!), they are fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and they serve as a way to teach us how to take the wrath and anger we feel into prayer to God. People sometimes ask, "should we still pray imprecatory psalms today? The answer is best given in the form of a question..."Are there still instances of injustice that ought to get us fired up today? Of course, there indeed are and as such we need to learn how to honor God as we express our wrath...though note, this is not permission to act upon some of the things prayed

about in these imprecatory psalms...it is merely the expression of our rage, trusting indeed that vengeance belongs to the Lord (Romans 12:19, Psalm 94:1).

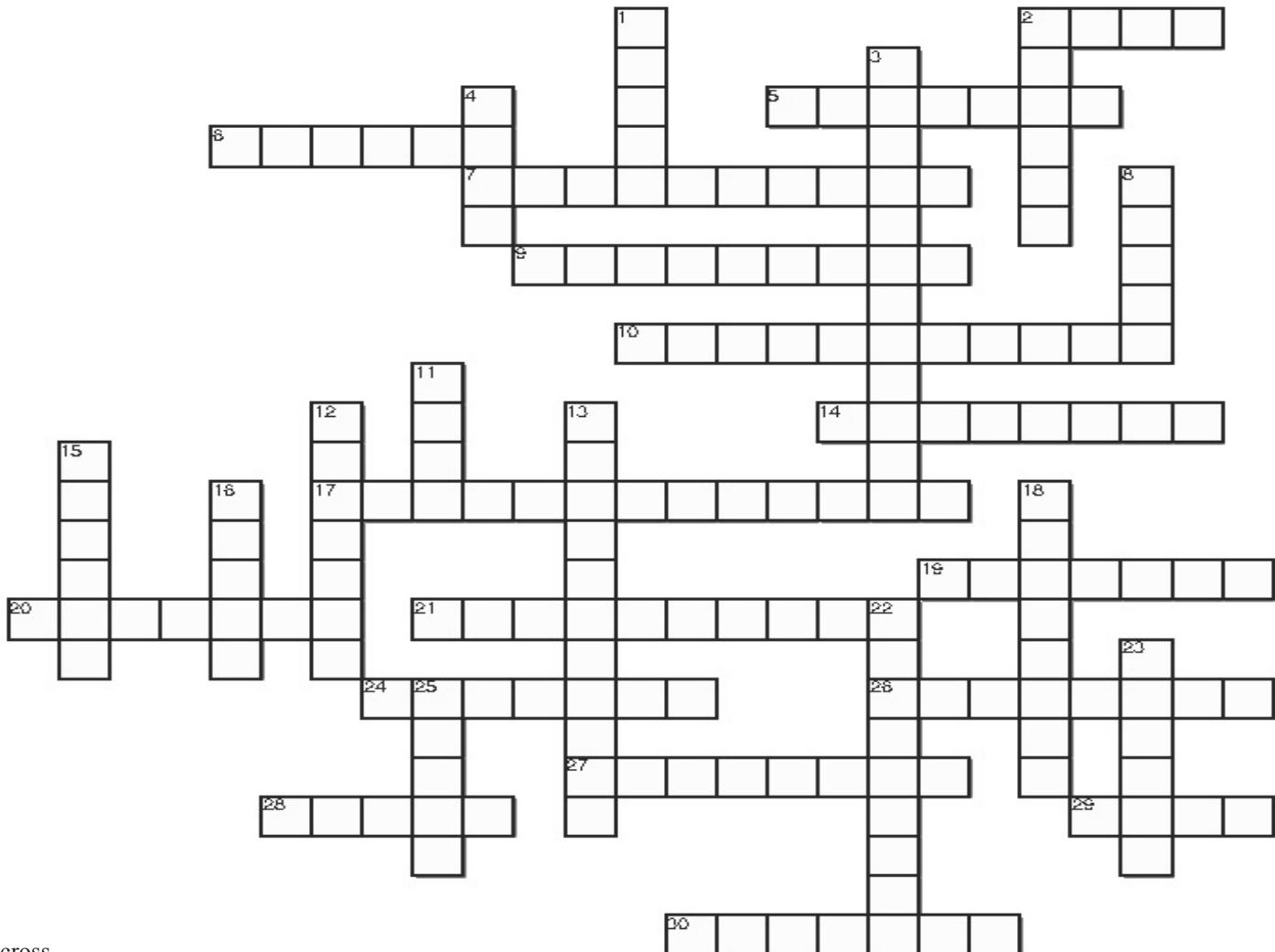
Psalm 139 is one of those favorite psalms that people quote regularly. Here we find the language of God knowing where I sit and rise up (vs. 2), owning knowledge that is too wonderful for me (vs. 6), being present in all places (vs. 7-12), forming our inward parts (vs. 13), making us fearfully and wonderfully (vs. 14), all my days are written in His book (vs 16 — again a reminder of God's sovereign ordination of all history), and search my heart and know my ways...(vs. 23). This is one of those very comprehensive psalms that encompasses every stage of life on a personal and individual basis. It is also a reminder to those who would believe that salvation is about groups in God's eyes, that here we find God in a very intense, and intentional relationship with his individual servant.

Psalms 140-144 enter into a series of psalms, again from David, that focus on God's deliverance... indeed, reminding us of God's promise to deliver in the context of the intimate relationship of the previous chapter. In this context, we find psalm 144 containing echoes of psalm 8, taking us back to some of the themes of the beginning of the book. Indeed, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord! (Psalm 144:15; Psalm 33:12).

The final six psalms are often referred to as Hallel psalms do to their emphasis on praise. The great St. Augustine began his classic work entitled *Confessions* with psalm 145, reflecting on the God of praise that called him and gave him life. Psalm 150, in this series is essentially the great "Amen and Amen" that closes not only this, Book 5 of the Psalms, but also the psalms as a whole — may every instrument be used to utter praises to God.

**Week 31 (Psalm 129-150)**

Complete the crossword below

**Across**

2. In this of God, all of my days were written and formed for me even from my mother's womb.
5. We are to praise God with this instrument.
6. This class of people, God lifts up while he casts the wicked to the ground.
7. This is another instrument with which we are to praise God.
9. This historic theologian and church father used Psalm 145 to begin his Confessions.
10. Psalm 137 is this type of psalm.
14. This is not too dark for God to see.
17. While the saints are to shout for joy, the priests are to be clothed with this.
19. We are to praise God with our \_\_\_\_\_.
20. God executes this for the oppressed.
21. God upholds the widow and the \_\_\_\_\_.
24. It was by the waters of this place that the people wept and hung up their lyres.
26. Those who make or trust in idols become \_\_\_\_\_ . (2 words)
27. How often are we to bless God's name (2 words).
28. If I make my bed here (the grave) God is there...
29. 'I wait for the Lord, my soul waits and in his \_\_\_\_\_ I hope.'
30. These were psalms that were sung on the way to festivals in Jerusalem.

**Down**

1. In psalm 132, God is called 'the Mighty one of \_\_\_\_\_ '.
2. Let everything that has \_\_\_\_\_ praise the Lord.
3. Let these fall upon the wicked (2 words).
4. While I pass by safely, let the wicked fall into their own \_\_\_\_\_.
8. How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in this.
11. It is pleasant to do this to the Lord's name.
12. Psalm 136 speaks of the steadfast love of God...how long does this love last?
13. Psalm 136 is called 'the \_\_\_\_\_ ' (2 words)
15. Even before a word is on this part of me, God knows it.
16. Psalm 132 affirms that God promised this person that one of his sons would reign upon the throne.
18. If a righteous man strikes me, it is this.
22. Don't trust in princes because these sons of men have no \_\_\_\_\_.
23. The days of man are like a passing \_\_\_\_\_.
25. Peace amongst the people is described as oil running down this priest's beard.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 32: JOB 1-24 (AUGUST 3-9)

### Summary:

I can almost hear a corporate groan coming as some of you are realizing that after the Psalms comes Job. How is it that the Psalms ends on such a high note and then runs right into the big book of Job? Might we not expect something a little lighter in tone? As I stated up front, there is a theological rhyme and reason behind the ordering of these books of the Bible and though the psalms contain a great deal of worship, the most common theme in the book of Psalms is lamentation for difficult times... and if there is anyone who exemplifies lamentation for difficult times, it is Job. Thus, he becomes the lived out illustration of the lamentation of God's people.

Up front, though, despite the difficulty of this book and the lament over suffering, as a piece of literature, Job stands amongst some of the most elegant literature of the ancient world. The story is one we can all relate to at least on a level, but it is also written in a more poetic form not unlike the more modern writings of Chaucer or Shakespeare. If we just see this book as a tale of woe, we will fail to appreciate its genius.

The dating of the book is debated. Some date it to a time when Noah lived and before the flood. This dating is based largely on the fact that Job seems very familiar with Behemoth and Leviathan...arguably dinosaurs of a sort. I would date him during the Patriarchal age (somewhere during the lifespan of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is based on the identification of Bildad as a Shuhite, making him a descendant of Shuah, was a son of Abraham through his third wife, Keturah (Genesis 25:2). This still places the book as one of the oldest accounts in scripture.

The structure of Job is also very distinct as it is classified as a "Framed Tale." Framed Tales are stories within a story...in this case, there is a more folksy story told in chapters 1,2, and 42. In a sense, you could read just these three chapters and be able to explain the basic story of Job.

Yet, within this frame is an elaborate dialogue between Job, his three "friends", a mysterious figure identified as "Elihu," and God. Job's wife and Satan only play a role in this story in the frame, not in the main dialogues.

One more note is worth making by way of introduction... this kind of story is called a "Theodicy," which refers to as a defense of God's good character in light of bad things and evil existing within the world. Though God permits, he is the potter and has rights over the clay, as Paul writes in Romans 9:21. We don't have say, but we are comforted by the reality that God is Good and his purposes (though they may seem harsh at the time) are good.

Thus the story of Job begins in heaven where God is having a meeting of sorts with his angels. Satan arrives and questions the faithfulness of Job..."surely, if you take away his good things he will curse you," is the approach that Satan takes. God gives Satan permission to take away "all that he has" with the exception that Satan must not harm Job himself. Thus we find Satan having Job's wealth looted, his flocks taken, his home destroyed, and worst of all, his children killed by a great wind. In turn, Job tears his garments and begins to weep, though Job did not curse the name of God.

That story in itself is enough to teach us the character of faith in the face of trial. Yet, it does not end there. Satan essentially asks God for a second round of torment, which God permits so long as Satan does not take Job's life. It is a devastating predicament that Job finds himself in, with sores all over his poor body. Job's wife is often criticized because she cries out to Job that he ought to curse God and die, but remember that these are

the words of a distraught wife who also has had everything taken from her and now is watching her husband be tormented. In the end, the scriptures do not criticize Job's wife for her comment; neither should we.

And that introduces us to Job's three friends. All three are pagans and all three have different ideas about the nature of the world and as to why Job is suffering. And the ideas of all three are pretty bad. Job himself does not get everything right by any stretch, but he is coming from a Biblical worldview and perspective (at least loosely). Each of Job's three friends take turns in sharing their thoughts about Job's state and their advice and in turn, Job rebukes each. In our reading for this week, two full cycles take place, with each man speaking twice and Job responding to each in turn. In chapter 22, the third cycle begins with Eliphaz speaking for a third time and again, Job's response.

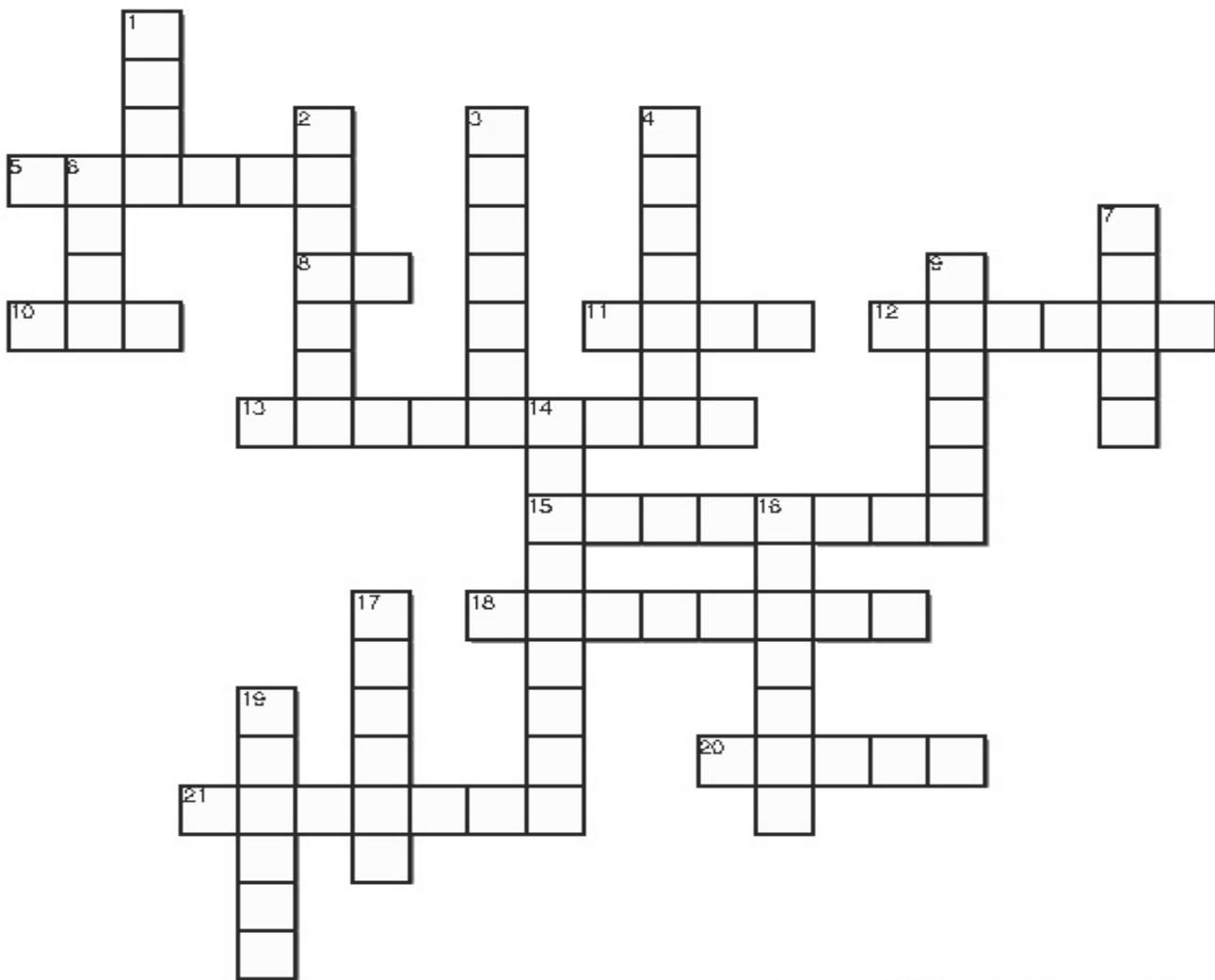
While each seems to consider Job as being punished for his sins, each approaches that question from different angles, each confusing the character of God. In many ways, this is a great study in philosophy and apologetics as different worldviews are all brought to bear on a man struggling with a crisis. In the next summary, I will lay out each "friend's" worldview more generally, but take note that even in the midst of a great deal of falsehood, each of the comforters does recognize a glimmer of truth. That is a reminder of God's common grace to the nations.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Note that the angels in Job are referred to as, "the sons of God." This has led some people to presume that the "sons of God" in contrast to the "sons of men" found in Genesis 6 is referring to angels intermarrying with mankind. Yet, here in the book of Job is the primary place where "sons of God" clearly refer to angels; in the majority of places the "sons of God" are spoken of, the phrase applies to believers.
- Satan's name means: "Accuser."
- Eliphaz' name means: "My God is pure gold," a reference to his idolatry.
- Bildad's name means: "Old Friend" or possibly, "Worn out acquaintance."
- Zophar's name is debated, but traditionally has been understood as "crown" or "yellow" (thinking the color of a gold crown). Interestingly, the LXX lists Zophar in Job 2:11 as the King of Minaios. Some consider the people of Minaios as the Maonites of Judges 10:12, though Judges would likely (though not impossibly) be after the life of Zophar.
- Job 4:17 captures the heart of the worldview known as "fatalism." It essentially assumes that since we cannot be right before God, why strive in that direction.
- Job 5:17 is a gem when it comes to the value of discipline.
- Job 9:4 is a good example of God's effectual calling...none can harden our hearts against God's call and succeed if God is calling us to himself.
- Job 9:13 introduces a reference to Rahab. This is a debated translation and is probably not a reference to Rahab of the book of Joshua.
- Zophar is by far the most vulgar of the three friends...my favorite comment is in Job 11:12 — a wild donkey's colt is going to be born a man before the stupid gain knowledge...
- Job 13:15 is one of the more famous quotes: "though he slay me I will hope in him" yet the most powerful is in Job 19:25, "I know that my redeemer lives!"

## Week 32 (Job 1-24)

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword

### Across

5. Job speaks of being poured out like milk and curdled like this milk product.
8. Job was a man from the land of \_\_\_\_\_.
10. How many children did Job have at the beginning of this account?
11. When Job states, in chapter 7, that man's service on the earth is hard and his days difficult like a slave,' what event is he ultimately referring back to that has caused such difficulty?
12. A stupid man will gain understanding, says Zophar, when this animal bears a man instead of a colt.
13. Job sounds much like Jesus when he says his friends do this with lies (Hint: Job 13)
15. 'For I know that my \_\_\_\_\_ lives'
18. This is the kind of literature that the book of Job would be classified as.
20. This person's name means, 'Accuser.'
21. Eliphaz says, '\_\_\_\_\_ is the one whom God reproves.'

### Down

1. This relative of Job succumbed to grief and told Job just to curse God and get it over with.
2. Shuah is a son of Abraham through this woman.
3. Eliphaz says that man is born to this as the sparks fly upward.
4. This marauding tribe stole Job's flocks.
6. 'Though he slay me, I will \_\_\_\_\_ in him.'
7. Job uses an analogy of the grave for his house (thinking he will die), but uses this Hebrew word that we have often seen in the Psalms that means either grave or hell.
9. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the LXX), this person is referred to as the King of Minaios.
14. This was Job's response to loss, he tore his robe, shaved his head, and \_\_\_\_\_.
16. This friend of Job has a name that refers to his idolatry.
17. Like the flower withers, Bildad points out, the paths of those who forget God will \_\_\_\_\_.
19. This friend of Job is a Shuhite.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 33: JOB 25 – PROVERBS 4 (AUGUST 10-16)

### **Summary:**

We pick up this week with Job 25 and Bildad speaking once again. As we mentioned before, each of these three "friends" represents a different perspective and worldview as to how the question of suffering is answered:

**Eliphaz:** Eliphaz is a fatalist at heart. This view basically holds the position that there is nothing you can do to affect the experiences of your life for good or ill, so why bother. Throughout history there have been people who have embraced this mindset (the largest of such groups today is found within Islam). From a Christian perspective, though, while God is absolutely sovereign over the events of this world, we still make legitimate choices and decisions (and thus are responsible for our actions). Though we may not change God or what happens to be taking place around us, we can change how we face our challenges and our disappointments -- either to God's glory or to our shame. Thus, ultimately, Eliphaz' message is, "repent, God is punishing you for your sin!"

**Bildad:** Bildad is a moralist. A moralist has a very black and white view of the world around them — if you do good, you will be rewarded; if you do bad, you will be punished. Sadly, probably the largest group of moralists would identify themselves as "Christian," though many of them entirely misunderstand the Gospel. For the Christian, there is an understanding that because of the fall, deep down, people are basically sinful. In fact, no matter how "good" we try to be, our good works are always tainted with sin and thus we can never "earn" God's favor. We are not "basically good"... nowhere close to it...we need grace. And grace is something that a moralist cannot understand. Bildad assumes Job to have sinned in a major way to have earned this judgment and thus needs to repent and stop complaining about his condition.

**Zophar:** Apart from being full of himself, Zophar is a bit of a mystic. He speaks of the depths of Sheol and the secret things of God in broad sweeping strokes, but at the same time his words convey that he has very little knowledge of his own. Mystics tend to believe that they have been given special knowledge and secret things of the Almighty...looking down upon those of us who have not received such special private revelation. Indeed, Zophar believes that Job has committed secret sins and is being punished for them...in fact, Zophar believes that Job is not being punished harshly enough for said sins.

**Elihu:** Elihu shows up in chapter 32, interrupting the cycle of discourse...though not without reason. Essentially he states that he has held his tongue long enough and now must speak. This has led a number of people to question who this man is that shows up. Some have suggested him to be another comforter that shows up later or who at least is not part of the company of the original three. It is my own feeling that Elihu is the author of the book of Job and is the one who has been transcribing the dialogues for posterity. Such would not only explain his abrupt entrance into the dialogue but would also explain why he shows up and then disappears entirely, never to be rebuked when God shows up. Either way, Elihu, while not perfect, has the closest to a Biblical

worldview and a reverence for the character of God.

**God:** God is the final "new speaker" to arrive, this time speaking from a whirlwind (a reminder of his power) and challenges Job to present his case. Interestingly, God never explains to Job the whole debate with Satan...God simply says, "who are you to question my decree?" Indeed, the decrees of God are always good, though we often don't feel them so.

**Dinosaurs in the Bible:** It is often pointed out that the word "dinosaur" does not appear in the Bible...indeed, that is because the word had not been invented when the Bible was being written. We do have two creatures, though, that strongly resemble dinosaur-like creatures...one of which we would describe even as a dragon. Behemoth (Job 40:15) is described as having a tail like a cedar tree, bones like bronze, and that eats grass like an ox. Such could a lot like a brontosaurus or other large herbivore. Leviathan, we have already seen in Isaiah and mentioned that this is likely the description of the ancient dragon, Satan (Revelation 12:3-4, 7-9). Is it possible that the bones that are being unearthed today were the bones of these pre-flood creatures and the creature whose form that Satan took? The answer is most likely, "yes."

**Restoration:** Job concludes with a restoration. He and his wife are given additional children and wealth and fortune are restored in abundance. Job also must make intercession on behalf of his foolish counselors (the original three), which he does.

### **Proverbs:**

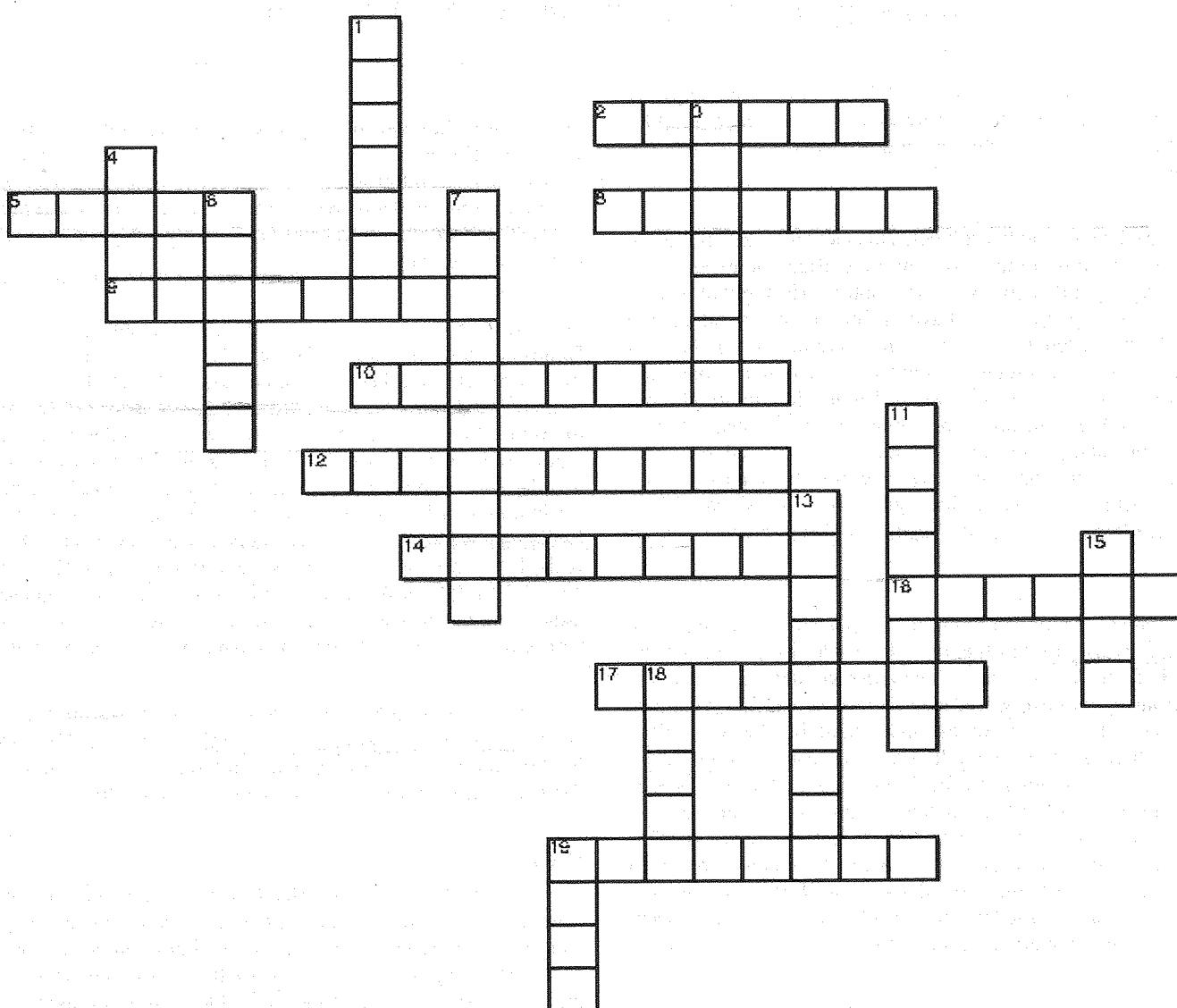
The book of proverbs forms a collection of wisdom teachings that King Solomon gathered throughout his life and would eventually gather together into a book under direction of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this book can be found in the first words: "to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to youth, and increased learning to the wise. And how does this begin? With the fear of the Lord. It should be noted up front that there are two women that form foils to one another — Sister Wisdom on one side and the harlot on the other. The call throughout the book is to pursue Wisdom and to flee from the seductive woman.

### **Chromatic Notes:**

- Job 28 presents all the things that man gains from the earth — ore from the mines, bread from the fields, gemstones and gold from the rocks...yet wisdom is not found in the earth, if man wishes to seek out wisdom, he must find it in God. Job 29 follows with a reminder of the folly of works.
- Job 30:9-10...how some people in churches even act like this towards those who are suffering around them.
- Job 31:15 —just one more reminder that God creates us specifically in the womb...making abortion murder.
- Job 32:8 — Note that it is the breath of the Almighty (His Spirit) that gives understanding.
- Proverbs 3:6 states that if we acknowledge God he will make our paths straight ... Jesus himself describes himself as the "straight way..."

## Week 33 (Job 25-Proverbs 4)

Complete the crossword below



Created on <https://teachercoloring.com/crossword-maker/>

### Across

- While gems and gold can be found in the earth, this is found in God.
- These people hate knowledge.
- This is the best way to learn wisdom from God... in
- The way of the wicked is like deep
- God appeared to job in this.
- Wisdom will deliver you from this forbidden woman.
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of this...
- Bildad compares man to this 'wormlike' creature.
- The wisdom of your parents is like this for your neck.
- Proverbs is to give this attribute to the simple.

### Down

- Wisdom will let you understand righteousness and
- Who compiled the book of Proverbs?
- Who gives wisdom?
- Wisdom calls aloud from this location.
- We are not to despise this from the Lord.
- This creature sounds much like a dinosaur.
- This creature is remarkably similar to the dragon from Revelation 12.
- Do not withhold this from someone when it is in your power to give it.
- This person shows up unexpectedly, interrupting Job's comforters.
- Job had to do this on behalf of his three comforters as God was angry with them.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 34: PROVERBS 5-28 (AUGUST 17-23)

### Summary:

As we continue into the book of Proverbs, it becomes clear that this book is quite distinct in the body of the scriptures. Many other books contain short proverbs and proverb-like sayings, but here is a collection of such sayings structured around the images of these two women — the harlot and sister wisdom...one to pursue and the other to flee.

It should be noted that the nature of this book is also unique amongst ancient literature for another reason. This is not merely a book of short collected sayings of the wisemen of Israel. Indeed, they are collected sayings of Solomon and others, but they are much more. These are also God's words collected by Solomon through some of the wise men of his day. Thus they not only form a body of sage advice; they form a body of commands given by God to us as his people by which we are to live.

Yet, these commands are distinct from many of the commands found in scripture...here in Proverbs these commands form normative principles and the blessings associated with the commands are to be considered normative responses. Yet, just because you do "everything right" does not guarantee the outcome...only that the outcome is likely apart from intervening circumstances. Does this mean that we shouldn't get excited about the blessings of Proverbs? No. Many of these blessings bring great comfort as we go through life. We just need to remember that these are normative blessings, not absolute ones.

It should be noted that some people have noticed a number of similarities between this book and the Instructions of Amenemope, an older Egyptian document. Yet it should be noted that Joseph led Egypt several generations before Amenemope lived, making Joseph the historical source for Amenemope and possibly even for Solomon to some extent.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Proverbs 5:1...notice the language of "my son, be attentive..." This is one of those often repeated phrases reminding us of the model of a parent passing down the wisdom that is rooted in their faith to their children. The opposite of this can be found in the book of Judges where there "arose a generation that forgot..."
- Proverbs 6:6...we find Solomon applying lessons found in the natural world to life...here, the ant who is diligent in its work and faithful, unlike the wicked person who goes about with crooked speech (in the verses that follow). The ant will make a second appearance in chapter 30, which we will discuss next week.
- Proverbs 6:16-19...seven things are an abomination to God: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, murderous hands, a scheming heart, feet that flee to evil, a false witness, and one who sows discord amongst brothers. Note the parallels to Galatians 5:16-21.
- Proverbs 8:13 — the fear of the Lord is a hatred of evil. What is the definition of evil here? Pride, arrogance, and perverted speech...
- Proverbs 9:1 speaks of "seven pillars" on which Wisdom builds her house. Seven was seen as a mark of perfection and completeness, thus Wisdom's house will stand no matter the challenge that it may face.
- Proverbs 9:10..."the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"

• Proverbs 10:23... fools (those who deny God...see Psalm 53) think it is a joke to do wrong where the man of understanding finds his pleasure in wisdom. Practical advice for every age, but especially for today when it is the fools that get all the press attention.

• Proverbs 11:4 — a warning against those who would trust in their own wealth or works for salvation...they will not serve you in the day of judgment...only righteousness (the righteousness of Christ that is) delivers from eternal death.

• Proverbs 11:22 — Jesus cites this image in Matthew 7:6.

• Proverbs 13:12 — none of us like to have our hopes deferred, but even disappointments are God's providential reordering of our lives to bring him glory. Thus we should not despise disappointment for to do so means that we are despising God's good providence.

• Proverbs 14:5...the word there that is translated, "breathes out lies" comes from the word meaning, "to hiss," like a snake would. Apart from the imagery of a person "hissing lies" this also reminds us that it was in the form of a Serpent that Satan hissed his lies to Eve.

• Proverbs 14:15 ... we are reminded in Psalm 19:7 that the solution for the simple is the Law of the Lord.

• Proverbs 14:30 — envy is a kind of spiritual osteoporosis.

• Proverbs 16:4 is the foreshadow of what Paul would develop further in Romans 9:21.

• Proverbs 16:25 — "there is a way that seems right to man, but its end are the ways of death." In the day and age of pragmatism, how we need to hear these words. We must not do things our way but God's way.

• Proverbs 16:33 — God is sovereign not only over major things, but even over the small things that we would take as random.

• Proverbs 17:17 — "Friends love at all times; brothers are born for adversity..." Those people we are closest to we grow close to in the midst of trying times...Jesus even had the inner circle of Peter, James, and John...how we all need people close to us to walk alongside of us in times of trouble.

• Proverbs 19:3 — how often it is that the atheist rages against the Lord...why? Because he is engaged in folly.

• Proverbs 19:8 — soul care is important!

• Proverbs 20:22-23...notice the connection between these two verses...were we to take revenge, our scales would be misbalanced (we like to "get one up" on those who do us wrong). When vengeance is left to the Lord, equity is maintained.

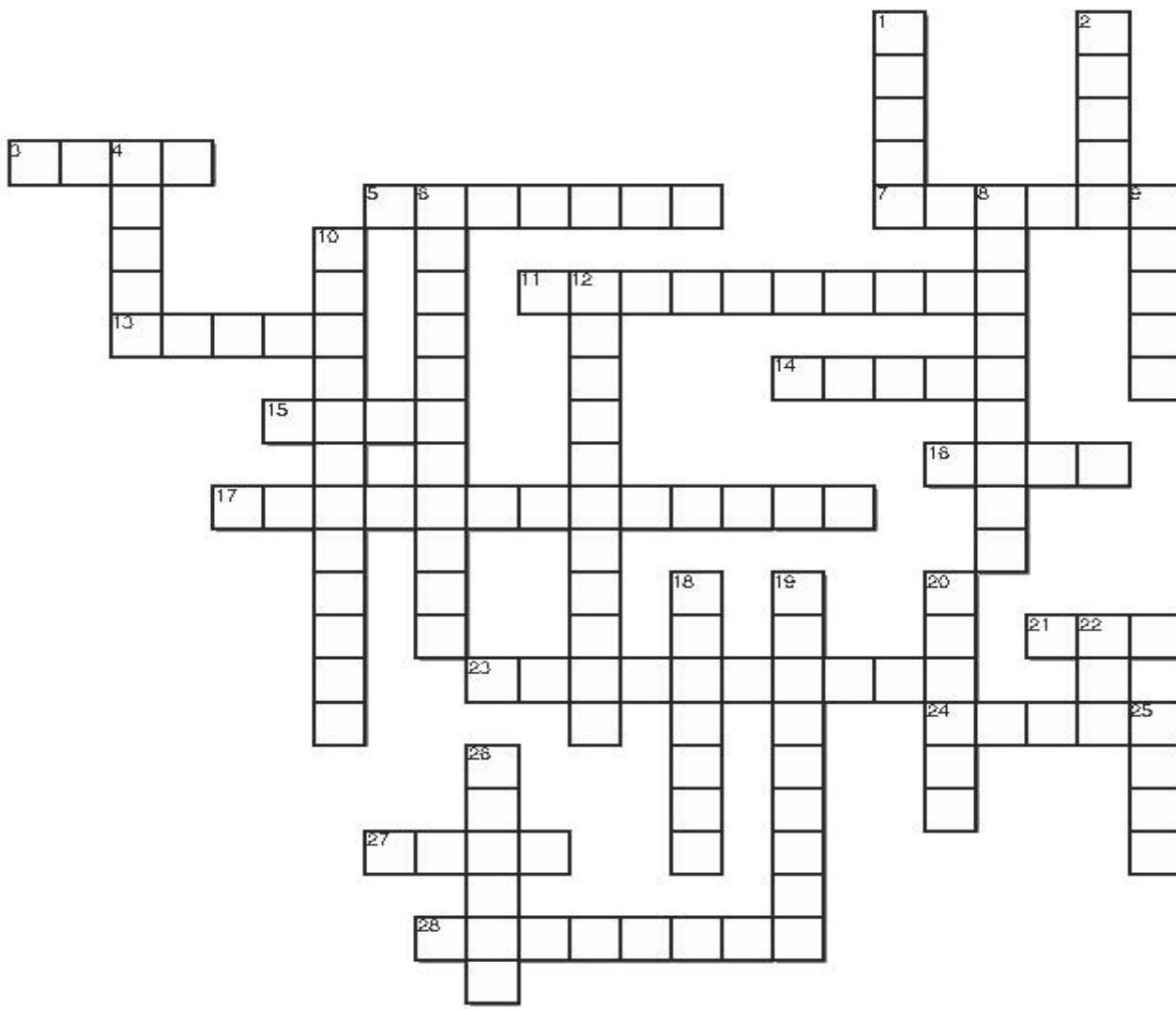
• Proverbs 22:17 — notice the transition from the proverbs of Solomon to the "words of the wise". These are words that Solomon compiled from other wise men of Israel. This will transition again in Proverbs 25:1 where we return to the words of Solomon, but this time as compiled by king Hezekiah.

• Proverbs 24:17-18 is the logical result of Psalm 139...we cannot escape from God's presence, thus we must be careful how we act and what we do.

• Psalm 25:21-22...a reminder of attitude of peace we ought to have with one another.

## Week 34 (Proverbs 5-28)

Complete the crossword below



### Across

3. This makes your bones rot.
5. A false one of these is an abomination to the Lord.
7. The crucible is for silver and the furnace for Gold...God tests this.
11. The wicked woman in Proverbs hates this while despising reproof.
13. 'The name of the Lord is a strong \_\_\_\_\_.'
14. Riches fly away like this animal.
15. The King's wrath is like the roar of this animal.
16. Doing wrong is a joke to this person.
17. This exalts a nation.
21. Though the simple believe everything, the \_\_\_\_\_ of God will make him wise.
23. At this location Wisdom (and Understanding) raises her voice and calls.
24. There is a way that seems right to man, but its end is this...
27. 'The lot is cast in the lap but its every decision is from the \_\_\_\_\_.'
28. 'A joyful heart is good \_\_\_\_\_.'

### Down

1. This body part on the fool is his ruin.
2. Bind the commandments of your father and the teaching of your mother to this body part.
4. Like a dog that returns to this is a fool who repeats his folly. (hint: think 2 Peter 2)
6. There are six things that God hates and seven that are an \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Some people note similarities between the Proverbs and the writings of this Egyptian.
9. How many pillars is Wisdom's house built upon?
10. If you are kind to your enemy it will be like heaping these on his head. (2 words)
12. Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores this.
18. The Knowledge of the Holy one is this.
19. Whoever loves discipline loves this as well.
20. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of this.
22. This creature is referenced as a rebuke to the sluggard.
25. Those who lie make this sound when they do so.
26. If a man carries fire against his chest, his clothes will be \_\_\_\_\_ ... so too if one flirts with the adulteress.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 35: PROVERBS 29 - ECCLESIASTES 8 (AUGUST 24-30)

### Summary:

Proverbs 29 picks up with a warning... "he who is often reprobated, yet stiffens his neck, will be broken beyond healing." This can be applied in two ways: first as a warning against those who would grow calloused when being rebuked — for the rebukes will grow harsher — and second for those who would constantly rebuke those who are growing calloused; take care lest you break instead of strengthening.

Chapter 30 transitions again from the words of Solomon that had been copied down by Hezekiah to those words of Agur (again, likely compiled by Hezekiah). We have no idea as to who Agur happened to be. Traditional Jewish writings ascribe Agur to Solomon as a sort of title — the one who girded his loins with wisdom — but most scholarship sees this as a bit of a linguistic stretch. Whether Solomon himself or another who spoke an oracle of the Lord, these are the words of Agur in this chapter, written in the form of an oracle or a burden that he had to express to the people.

Similarly, as we enter into chapter 31, we know nothing of who this King Lemuel happens to be, though again, Jewish literature often attributes Lemuel as a sort of title to Solomon, thus making the words of Proverbs 31 the words of Bathsheba...yet again, this is a stretch. Proverbs 31, though, does present a formula for "the perfect woman" in the eyes of scripture. He begins in verse 10: "a wife of strength, who can find one?" Often, when people look to these words they see this as an idealized woman that no real woman could ever measure up to. Yet, such is not the case in the Hebrew literature, for the next book of the Hebrew Canon offers us a picture of such a woman. A woman of noble character, who can find one? Boaz found one and her name was Ruth.

### Ruth

Yes, Ruth is the woman of noble character...and a Moabitess at that! Of course, the Moabites descended from the incestuous relationship that Lot had with his eldest daughter (Genesis 19:37) and thus were looked down upon by the Jewish people. Even so, Ruth denied the idols of her people and embraced the God of Israel, much like the Canaanite, Rahab, had done. In fact, it was Rahab who would become Ruth's mother-in-law for Rahab's son was Boaz.

Much is debated about the dating of Ruth. Chronologically the book takes place during the time of the judges (hence its location in our English Bibles), but Judges covers a period of about 350 years, so what is debated is which judge that Ruth takes place under. If pressed, I would argue for an early date to Ruth, sometime under the judgeship of Ehud, for that is the only time in Judges where the people of Israel would have been going back and forth into Moabite territory as they were under Moabite rule for 18 years. This also places the event in a reasonable range of when Rahab would have been living.

This book cannot be understood apart from an understanding of the Jewish Leverite Marriage laws (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). The basic principle at hand is that the land is God's inheritance to the family and can thus never be given away or taken away...thus it cannot even be sold outside of the family. If there comes a time where the land is sold, for example to pay off debts, a kinsman redeemer was required to purchase the land and return the family to it. In the case where there was not a son eligible to inherit the land (a man died before giving his wife a son), his brother or a close relative was required to take his place and provide a son for his deceased brother/relative. This was done to preserve the line, preserve the inheritance, and always protect the widow that she might have one to take care of her. In this case, Boaz fulfills the role of kinsman redeemer, taking Ruth as a wife and providing the first son as an heir to Naomi as well (see Ruth 4:14).

### Song of Solomon

Speaking of women of noble character, the shepherd girl in the

Song of Solomon (also known as the Song of Songs) is another woman of great character. What can one say about this poem? Erotic? Strange... would you say to your wife that she has a belly like a heap of wheat (7:2) and a nose like the tower of Lebanon (7:4)? If you did, would you be sleeping on the couch that night?

Because the language of this book is so radically different than anything else to be found in the Bible, for generations, scholars, theologians, pastors, and believers have struggled to understand its place in the Canon of scripture.

It would seem that in reading this, the majority of Jewish and Christian commentators have taken this as an allegory...a love poem between God and Israel (Jewish) or Jesus and the Church (Christian). This seems an odd interpretation because the hero of this poem really is the shepherd-girl who is extolled for her faithfulness (something that cannot be said about either Israel or the Church). In addition, a short survey in commentaries will demonstrate how arbitrary commentators become when they treat this as an allegory...for example, one commentator suggests that the two breasts of this woman represent Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim! Really?

I think that a better approach to understanding this book is to recognize it for what it is...an intricate love poem extolling the virtue of the woman of character...a woman of faithfulness. If we read much more into it, we end up in a great deal of speculation. Does it have historical grounding? Solomon wrote it, so most likely given his various romances. But again, much more we cannot say.

### Ecclesiastes

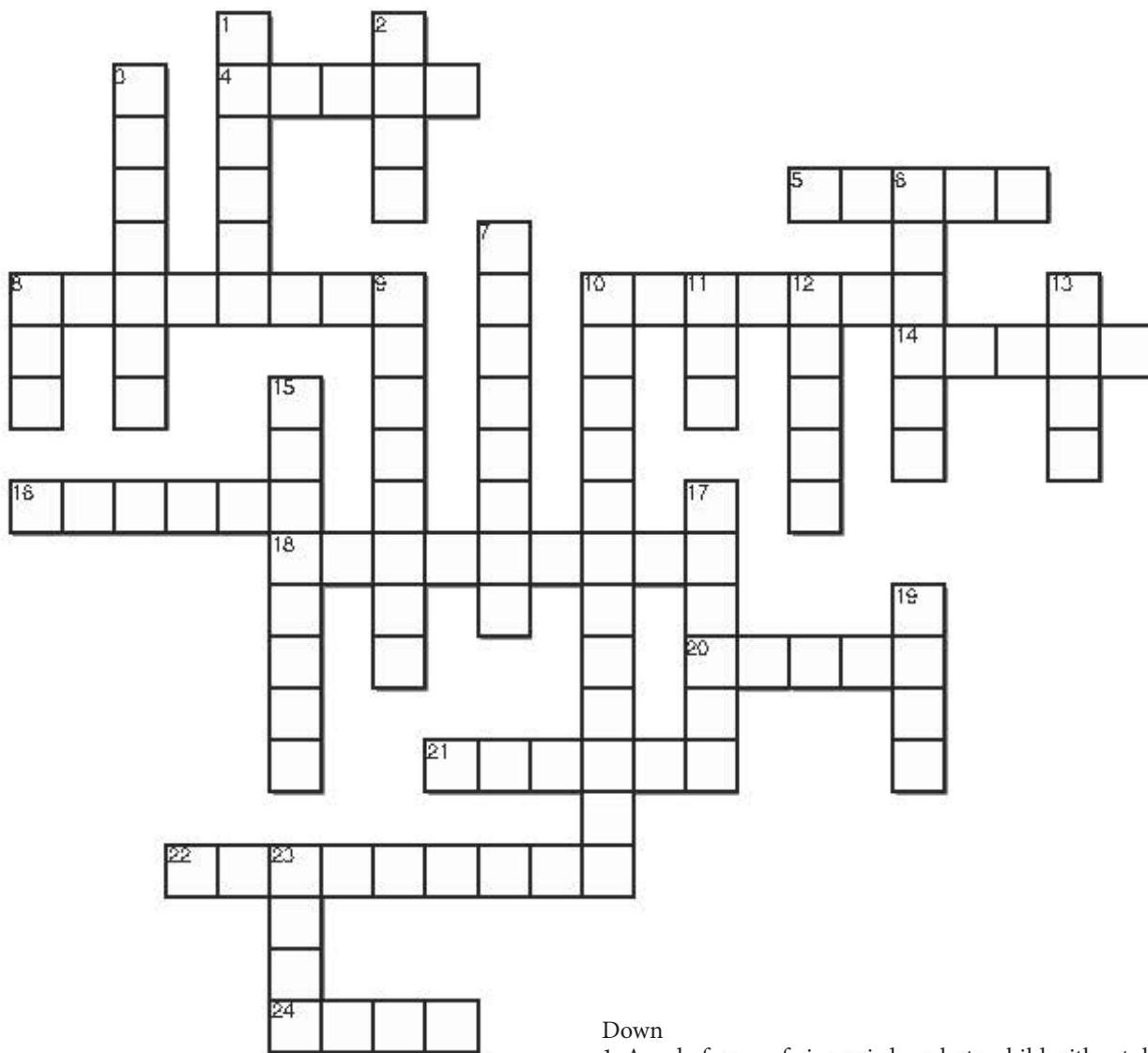
Ecclesiastes is an often mis-understood book, again written by Solomon. Many take this as a philosophy of fatalism — "all is vanity!" cries the preacher!. Instead, look at this book as an elder Solomon gazing back at his own folly...the things that he has tried and failed at. It stands as a reminder to us that no matter where we seek to look, we will not find meaning in life outside of God himself. How we often need to hear those words.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Proverbs 29:18 is often misunderstood in the English translation. Many render it that where there is no vision (i.e. knowing what must be done), the people will cast off restraint. Literally this should read: "where there is no word of revelation" or "where there is no prophetic vision." The context of the passage is that of discipline and obedience — where the Word of God is not spoken and applied, the people will live like pagans...how accurately that is displayed in the world around us today! This anticipates the language of Hosea 4:6 — "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..."
- Ruth 1 points out that the people fled Israel due to a famine, not trusting God for provision. Often famines were sent by God as punishment on the people for their idolatry...it is curious that this family left for the idolatrous nation of Moab.
- Naomi's husband and sons are clearly struck down by God (given the timing) for their idolatry, setting the stage for Naomi's return with Ruth.
- In Jewish culture, one was expected to be 30 years old before they were permitted to read the Song of Solomon.
- Song of Solomon 6:3 speaks of the confidence that the beloved has in the love of her shepherd. This is Pastor Win's personal "life verse" as it stands as a constant reminder (especially during difficult times) of the love that Christ has for him as one of his own.
- We know that Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes because he is the only "son of David" to rule Israel from Jerusalem (see chapter 1).
- In Hebrew, the word for vanity refers to emptiness or that which has no substance (like the wind and like a hollow idol that can neither walk nor talk nor respond to prayers).

## Week 35 (Proverbs 29-Ecclesiastes 8)

Complete the crossword below



## Across

4. This is the name of Ruth's sister-in-law who went back to her people (hint: not the talk-show host).
  5. This is the name of the greatest king that would descend from Boaz and Ruth.
  8. This type of 'Marriage Law' is the basis of the story of Ruth.
  10. He is the author of Ecclesiastes.
  14. This was the name of the king that would descend from Boaz and Ruth.
  16. The mother of this unknown king is also credited with advice in proverbs.
  18. This was the name of Naomi's husband.
  20. This was the name of Boaz's mother.
  21. This word is used repeatedly in Ecclesiastes referring to that which is without meaning.
  22. God has made all things \_\_\_\_\_ in its time.
  24. She is the model of the woman of noble character from Proverbs 31.

Down

1. A rod of reproof gives wisdom, but a child without discipline is a shame to this person.

2. Naomi changes her name to this to reflect her bitterness.

3. I am my beloved's and my \_\_\_\_\_ is mine...

6. This piece of footwear was used to signify that Boaz was taking the role of Kinsman Redeemer, not the first rightful one in line.

7. The author of Ecclesiastes calls himself Qohelleth or 'the

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8. Those without prophetic vision may cast off restraint but blessed is he who keeps this.

9. God places this in a man's heart.

10. This is the faithful heroine of the Song of Solomon. (2 words)

11. Moabites descended from this man.

12. All the toil of man is for his \_\_\_\_\_.

13. For everything there is a \_\_\_\_\_ and a season under heaven.

15. Most Jewish and Christian commentators take the Song of Solomon as this kind of literature.

17. Tradition holds that you need to be this old before you read the Song of Solomon.

19. This was the name of the son of Boaz and Ruth.

23. This unknown person is credited with an oracle in the book of Proverbs.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 36: ECCLESIASTES 9 – ESTHER 10 (AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 6)

### Summary:

Ecclesiastes closes with a more involved exposition of the value of wisdom. Like Proverbs, these chapters contain a great deal of imagery, but they don't contain the lists of pithy sayings that are present in the former. Yet, in Ecclesiastes, there is also one more element — justice. Wisdom without justice is no wisdom at all. Thus, folly outweighs wisdom and honor (Ecclesiastes 10:1).

Chapters 11 and 12 of Ecclesiastes are perhaps some of the most understandable chapters of this book. The summary is to work hard — cast your bread on the waters and it will return to you. In today's vernacular, we would word it this way: "What comes around, goes around." And this book closes with language that is well known to us... "the words of the wise are like goads and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings." While there is no end to the making of books, those good books that we have been given keep us grounded in truth and keep us moving forward in God's service.

"The end of the matter is to fear God and keep his commandments," is there any more practical wisdom that can be offered?

### Lamentations:

Lamentations is a book that was written by the prophet Jeremiah (see 2 Chronicles 35:25) as a response to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Thus, its language is quite heavy and it can be agonizing to read. At the same time, when suffering times of great loss, this little book can bring great comfort for it will help you articulate your prayers and hurts before God in a way that engages you in worship when you least *feel* like worshiping.

It is this book that earned the prophet Jeremiah the nick-name, "the Weeping Prophet," but to simply let the book of Lamentations rest as a sad lament over the fall of Jerusalem misses a great deal of the force and beauty of this book.

To begin with, this book is highly structured. The first, second, and fourth chapters of this book are acrostic poems, with each line beginning with a new letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The third chapter is a triple-acrostic, with each letter of the alphabet repeating three times while again moving through the alphabet — a very involved task. In addition, this book has a certain rhythm (3-2 rhythm) to it that can even be seen in good English translations. It has been said that these verses can be sung in the typical meter of American Blues music, an appropriate connection.

The fifth chapter is a bit of a surprise as you might to expect to see one more acrostic, but it is not. It is still highly structured, but breaks from the pattern set in the previous four chapters. Why this is, we are not sure. The traditional Jewish teaching is that Jeremiah wrote the first drafts of chapters 1,2, and 4 while in Jerusalem and then refined them in Egypt while also writing what is now referred to as chapter 3. It could be that chapter 5 was written later still or that this is a text that he wrote when the city fell but never went back to for the purpose of editing the language.

Anyway, the thing to also make sure that you do not miss in these verses are the glimmers of faith and hope. There is faith in that despite the horrific events that Jeremiah has witnessed, he is still crying out to the God that ordained said events. How oftentimes people cease to pray because they are angry with God over the things that are taking place...yet it is at times like

this we need to draw closest to God for he will be the source of our strength. Likewise, hope is found in these verses. The city has been destroyed and the people are in exile, but there is also a promise of a return — a new day to come. "But this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:21-23, ESV)

### Esther:

As westerners, we are used to seeing Esther alongside of the historical books...then again, the book that is paired with Esther (Daniel) is a book we are used to seeing alongside of the prophetic books. In addition, Esther is often noted as the only book of the Bible that never mentions God by name, though it is clear from the context that God's sovereign hand is working to ordain these events that transpire.

So why the book of Esther. On the a basic level, it gives the origin of the festival of Purim, which remembers the deliverance that God worked in the lives of his people during their exile. It is also an interesting reminder of how God often raises up his people to serve even wicked kings with wise council...much like God did with Daniel and Joseph.

But arguably, the most basic purpose of Esther is to teach one how a young believing woman can live faithfully in exile... hence its connection to Daniel, which teaches again how a young man is to live faithfully in exile...in both cases, even in the house or employ of a wicked king.

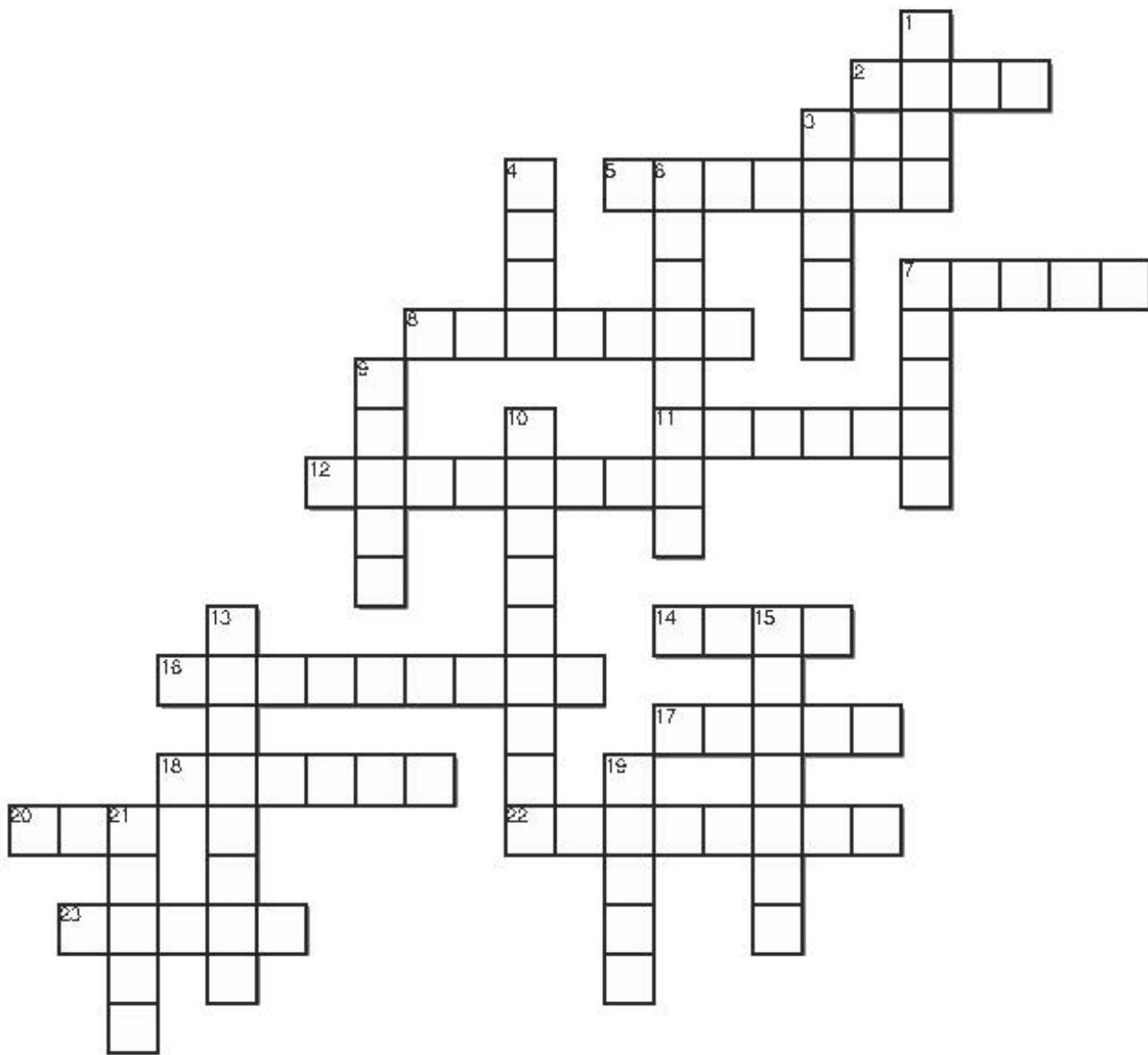
In the Hebrew tradition, when reading the book of Esther publicly, it is customary to boo, hiss, or to shake a rattle when the name of Haman comes up in the text. Not only does this engage the listener, but it also erases the name of Haman from the memory of the people in a sense.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Note, a goad (Ecclesiastes 12:11) is a long, pointed stick designed to get a stubborn animal to move forward.
- Lamentations 3:19-24 is a common scripture read both at funerals and during times of great stress and difficulty and (in my opinion) is one of the most encouraging sections of the Bible.
- Esther's original name was Hadassah, which means "joy" or can refer to a "myrtle bush." The name "Esther" means "hidden" or "secret" in Hebrew.
- Purim means "to rend" as one would rend their garments in fasting, except during the festival of Purim, the people are not allowed to mourn or fast — that takes place in the Fast of Purim which precedes the festival. The Jewish festival of Purim is lively and energetic and some equate the spirit of Purim with the spirit that accompanies the festival of Mardi Gras.
- Haman may be a Hebrew play on words that mocks the real name of this wicked man. In Persian, the name "Humayun" means "The Great One." In Hebrew, "Haman" means "the Pompous One."

**Week 36: Ecclesiastes 9-Esther 10**

Complete the crossword below

Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker**Across**

2. 'Enjoy life with the \_\_\_\_\_ whom you love...'  
 5. This is not permitted during the feast of Purim.  
 7. A little of this outweighs wisdom and honor.  
 8. 'The Lord is my \_\_\_\_\_ says my soul...'  
 11. After being chosen to be a concubine of the king, Esther had to be prepared for this many months.  
 12. This man discovered a plot amongst the king's eunuchs.  
 14. 'And who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a \_\_\_\_\_ as this.'  
 16. Many Americans hold Purim to be the Jewish equivalent to this event (2 words).  
 17. How many days did the people fast and pray before Esther went into the king?  
 18. The name of King Ahasuerus' wife before Esther.  
 20. A living one of these is better than a dead lion.  
 22. Jeremiah laments that his dancing has been turned to this.  
 23. The sound of this man's name deserves to be covered up with 'boo's and hisses.'

**Down**

1. Even in your thoughts, you are not to curse this man.  
 3. This is how high the gallows were (in cubits) that Haman was hung from.  
 4. The end of all things is to have this toward God and keep his commandments says Solomon.  
 6. Four of the five poems of Lamentations are structured like this.  
 7. Dead ones of these make the perfumer's ointment stink.  
 9. Of the writing of these there is no end.  
 10. Lamentations was written at the fall of this city.  
 13. Esther's original name.  
 15. These from God are new every morning.  
 19. This feast was celebrated annually to remember God's deliverance during the time of Esther.  
 21. The words of the wise are like these.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 37: DANIEL 1 – NEHEMIAH 2 (SEPTEMBER 7 – 13)

### **Summary:**

#### *Daniel*

Ordinarily, we think of Daniel in the context of the prophetic books but the Hebrews consider Daniel amongst the Writings and they pair him with Esther. For just as Esther teaches us how to live faithfully as a believing woman in exile and being forced to dwell in the house of a wicked king; Daniel teaches us how to do so as a believing man. And so we see Daniel a man from Judea who was exiled in the early part of God's punishment on the southern kingdom, likely 20 years before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Along with his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, he arrives in the presence of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

Thus, in the household of the king, Daniel and his friends opt to eat vegetables rather than to eat the food that would have been defiled by the king's chefs. God rewards them for their faithfulness and places them in a position of authority after Daniel reveals and interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream. This particular dream is repeated in a slightly different form (the first being the statue and the second being the beasts), each to anticipate the rise and fall of empires that will lead to the coming Messiah. The progressive portions of the statue (and beasts) represent Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome...each anticipating something greater established by Christ (as the stone that filled the whole earth and the one "like the Son of Man").

Chapter 3 brings us a change in focus from Daniel to his three faithful friends and their unwillingness to bow to the statue that king Nebuchadnezzar set up to glorify himself. Their statement to Nebuchadnezzar is a reminder of faith to us all – our God is capable of delivering us **but** if he chooses not to, we will still not bow to you, O king. Amen and Amen. The fourth person seen in the fiery furnace is considered by most to be the pre-incarnate Christ, himself.

Much more can be said about the historical accounts in Daniel's early chapters, though most are familiar to us. It should be noted, though, that Daniel changes its tone as we move into chapters 7 through 12, focusing on prophetic visions that Daniel receives as an older man. Much of this vision is echoed in the book of Revelation, making Daniel an important interpretive tool for Revelation's imagery.

A note here ought to be made about the "70 Weeks" mentioned in Daniel 9:24-27. There is a great deal of speculation as to exactly what these weeks refer to. Some count these weeks as pointing to the restoration of the people by Cyrus, others use these weeks to speak to the coming of Christ (though to do so requires some creative counting of days and weeks). The immediate mention of Cyrus in the following chapter inclines me that these weeks are reflective of the 70 years of exile that the Jews were required to spend in Babylon and the rise of Cyrus to redeem the people. The key, regardless of your interpretive technique, is to be consistent with the numbers applied.

#### *Ezra:*

Ezra and Nehemiah were originally one book meant to tell the history of the people beyond that of the exile and into the

restoration. It begins where Chronicles ends...with the decree to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple and then the city. Thus we have the account of the rebuilding (and problems along the way).

The original return was led by Zerubbabel and here is where the temple is built and dedicated. There is a later return led by Ezra himself. In addition to reestablishing the place of worship, the content of worship was also reestablished...that of the teaching of the scriptures (see Ezra 7:10) and he ended up addressing the intermarriage problem of his day.

#### *Nehemiah:*

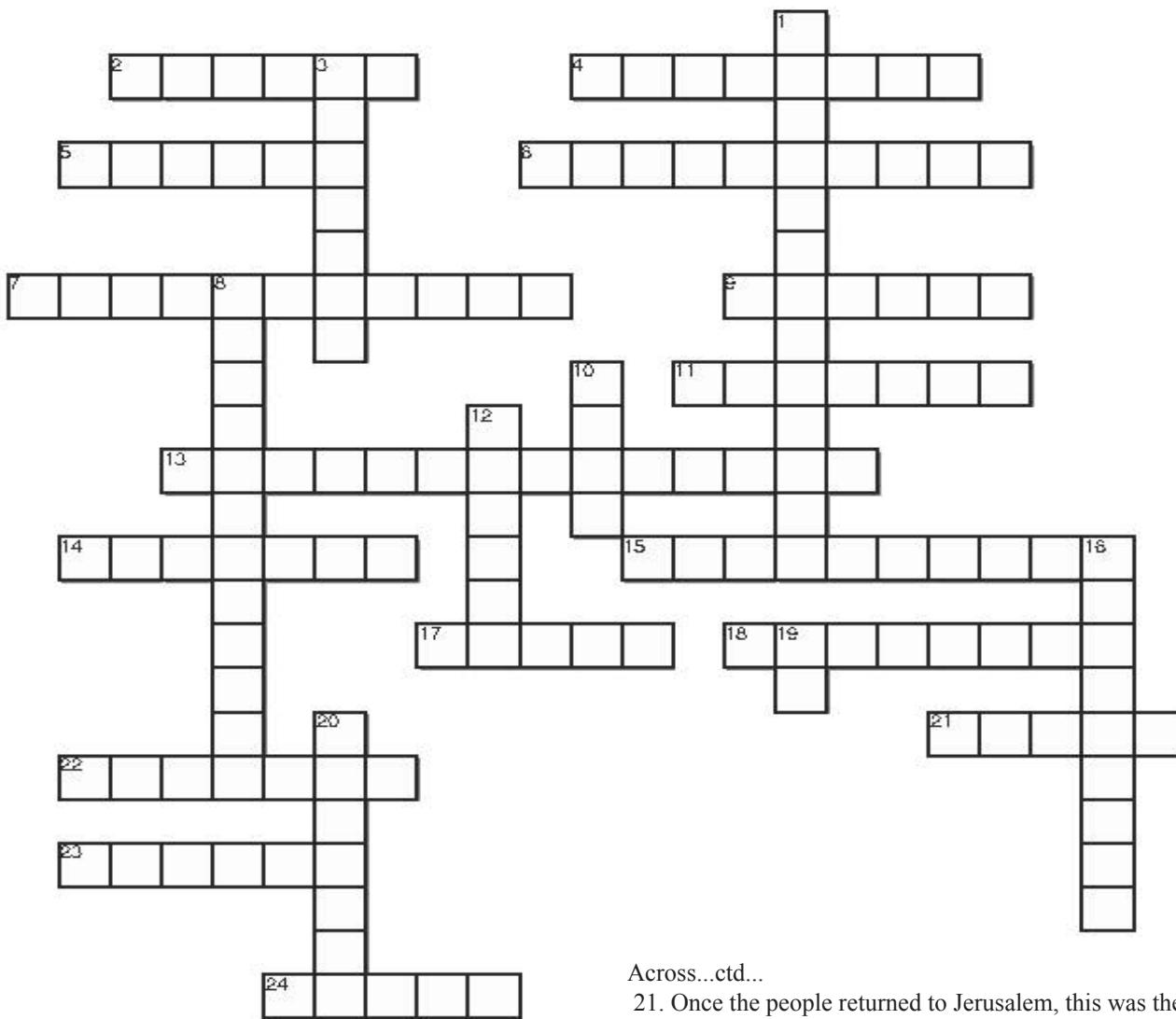
We will get to know Nehemiah more deeply next week as we dig into his book further than the introductory chapters, but let me make a few observations up front. First, note Nehemiah's prayer in the first chapter. This is something that characterizes his person and marks this book. Also, if you compare some of the elements of Nehemiah's prayer with the Lord's Prayer, you will see some connections. Second, notice how much of this book is written in the first person. These are largely Nehemiah's personal journals and that lends a degree of intimacy to these reflections that should not be overlooked.

#### **Chromatic Notes:**

- Note that though Daniel is included as part of the writings, that does not mean that he is not a prophet...Jesus proclaims him as such in Matthew 24:15.
- Interestingly, though we know Daniel by his Hebrew name, and not as Belteshazzar, we know Daniel's three friends as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego – their Babylonian names.
- Daniel was originally from a royal family (Daniel 1:3), though not one who dwelt in Jerusalem.
- There are some that appeal to Daniel 1:12 to advocate for a vegetarian diet...something that was never a prescribed part of Judaism. The emphasis that needs to be made here is that fruits and vegetables would have been the only foods available not sacrificed to a pagan god – hence their abstinence was to remain ritually pure.
- Daniel 2:4-7:28 are written in Aramaic. There are many theories that are put forth to explain this, but the most plausible is that the book was originally written entirely in Hebrew, but under the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, who tried to destroy the Jewish writings, some of this book was utterly lost and the corresponding Aramaic was inserted.
- Ezra 3:13 speaks of the weeping of those who remembered the original temple and saw what a shoddy job they had done. Indeed, it is Christ who is the greater temple that is prophesied in the scriptures, not a physical temple.
- In Ezra 4:6 we find mention of king Ahasuerus...this is the king from the account of Esther.
- Note the reference to Haggai and Zechariah in Ezekiel 5:1...these are the two prophets that we are familiar with from the Minor Prophets that we have already read.

**Week 37: Daniel 1-Nehemiah 2**

Complete the crossword below

**Across**

2. This was one of the prophets God sent to encourage the people to build the temple.
4. This was Shadrach's Hebrew name.
5. The angel Michael had to help Daniel's angelic interpreter because the king of this region was resisting him.
6. This was the king of Persia at the time Ezra was sent to teach the people.
7. This person led the first group back to Jerusalem to rebuild.
9. This was the king that threw Daniel in the den of lions.
11. It was in this fiery place that Daniel's three friends met the pre-incarnate Son of God.
13. This was the king of Babylon when Daniel was brought in as a young man.
14. This was Meshach's Hebrew name.
15. This is what Daniel and his friends ate rather than the defiled food of the king.
17. The temple was finished in the \_\_\_\_\_ year of Darius' (of Daniel's account) reign.
18. At the end of Daniel's vision of the beast, the Ancient of Days reveals one like a \_\_\_\_\_. (3 words - prefigures Christ)

**Across...ctd...**

21. Once the people returned to Jerusalem, this was the first item restored.
22. This is the name of the angel that brings the interpretation of Daniel's latter dreams.
23. At King Belshazzar's feast, he and his guests were eating with items taken from God's \_\_\_\_\_.
24. The Persian king that returned the people to Jerusalem.

**Down**

1. This was one of the most severe sins of the people during the exile.
3. This was Abednego's Hebrew name.
8. This was Daniel's Babylonian name.
10. King Belshazzar made a feast and was startled by this disembodied item.
12. This was Nehemiah's brother who brought him news of Jerusalem.
16. This Horonite was a primary opposition to Nehemiah.
19. When God humiliated Nebuchadnezzar, he was made to eat grass like this animal.
20. This is the number of weeks that were decreed about 'your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression and put an end to sin and atone for iniquity, bringing everlasting righteousness.'

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 38: NEHEMIAH 3 – I CHRONICLES 12 (SEPTEMBER 14-20)

### **Summary:**

Chapter 3 of Nehemiah commences with the building of the ten gates around Jerusalem (note that the New Jerusalem has 12 gates, one for each patriarch – Revelation 21:12). In Christian circles, there have been many reputable Bible teachers who have tried to import significance into the names of the gates...for example, the sheep gate reminding us of Jesus as shepherd and the dung gate reminding us of the filth of our sin before God. This may make for compelling preaching, but it is a bit of a stretch of the Biblical text. Thus, for example, the "Fish Gate" was so called because that was the gate merchants bringing in fish from the Sea of Galilee would use...not because Christians were to exit Jerusalem and become fishers of men. Be wary of those who would stretch the text in this way.

With passages like these, I sometimes get asked why the Bible goes to such length to tell which families built what. The answer is simple, God is honoring those who followed him faithfully and setting their remembrance before us as an example to follow him as well, in all that we do.

The following chapters of Nehemiah will be marked by two major themes: those gentiles that sought to undermine Nehemiah's influence and those Jews who did not like living under the Biblical rules. Chapter 5, for example, Nehemiah catches the wealthy loaning money with interest to fellow Jews. As a result, they are starving for lack of the ability to keep up with purchases and payments. Nehemiah rebukes the people for doing so and commands them to repent, modeling generosity for all at the same time.

Chapter 8 marks not only the completion of the wall around Jerusalem, but the dedication...accompanied by a reading of the Law (probably Genesis through Deuteronomy). But notice that it was not only read, but explained in small group discussions. Here we find the model of small groups (led by the Levites) to study the scriptures to ensure that all can understand what is being taught. There is the celebration of Tabernacles, the confession of sin and the remembrance of the covenant.

Nehemiah closes with another set of challenges...people have not been observing the Lord's Day, they have not been teaching their children Hebrew, and they have been intermarrying with non-Jews. Working on the Lord's Day is a dilemma we still face in the church today. Not knowing Hebrew meant you could not read the Torah scrolls (Aramaic was the language of the community in Nehemiah's day). And intermarrying with unbelievers meant becoming unequally yoked...again a prohibition for believers today as well. Nehemiah's final words recorded: "Remember me, O God, for good." In some ways, this is Nehemiah's testimony that he has tried his hardest to do what is right but that God

needs to make it prosper.

### *1 Chronicles*

One and two Chronicles makes up the final book of the Hebrew Bible in the Hebrew order. Like the books of Samuel and Kings, the accounts are too long to fit on a single scroll and hence are split into two books for us.

As the last book of the Old Testament (at least in Jesus' day it was), Chronicles functions both as a summary of the Old Testament history and as a bridge to the coming Messiah in the New Testament. There is some debate as to the author and the time frame of the writing of Chronicles. Some would connect the book of Chronicles with the references in Kings to the "Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" (see 1 Kings 14:19,29). Others would argue that Chronicles was formed and written as a history out of oral tradition and written fragments after the return from Babylon. While this second conclusion is plausible, it seems odd that no mention of Ezra or Nehemiah is found. Instead, Chronicles ends with the promise of Cyrus being fulfilled.

As Chronicles summarizes the Old Testament, it should be no surprise to see it begins with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden with its initial genealogy. In fact, the first nine chapters of Chronicles establish a genealogy of God's people from Adam through Saul, the first king of the United Kingdom (Israel and Judah, not Great Britain...).

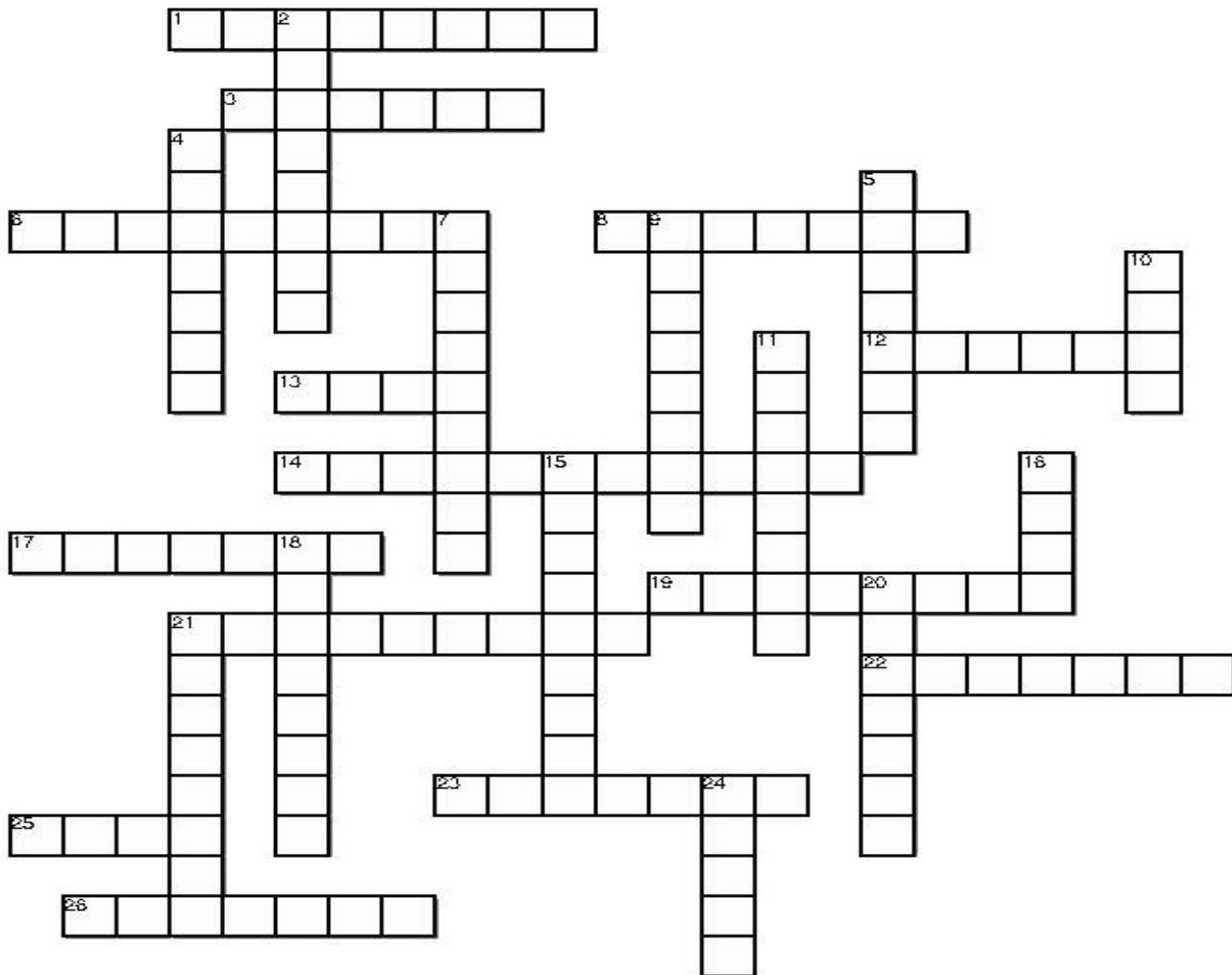
Chapters 9 through 12 tell the story of the death of Saul and the rise of David into power, with the tribes and the "Mighty Men" showing allegiance to David as God's anointed king.

### **Chromatic Notes:**

- Note the irony of the "ruler of the district of Beth-haccherem" being the one who repairs the Dung gate (a gate which leads to the rubbish dump in the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom)...those in high authority doing menial activities to serve God in His economy.
- Notice that in Nehemiah 9:38, the covenant is made and sealed by the writing in of the names of the federal heads – priests and princes. The puritans and the group known as Covenanters (that would form the RPCNA, the group behind the establishment of Geneva College) would make similar covenants with God on an individual or on a family basis, sealing their promise to God in writing as a way to signify the significance of the promise.

## Week 38: Nehemiah 3-1 Chronicles 12

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

1. The men of this tribe 'understood the times' and thus joined with David.
3. Because of threats, those building the wall had to have one of these in one hand while their tool was in the other.
6. This group of people originally held Jerusalem; David had to take the city from them before he could make it his capitol.
8. When the people settled, they were to bring their tithes to this group of people.
12. This is where David was anointed king.
13. This is the man who read from the Book of the Law of Moses at the dedication of the Temple.
14. Saul and his son were struck down by this enemy of Israel.
17. There were a group of priests that could not trace their lineage; they were tentatively allowed to serve until two stones were found. This is the name of one of those stones.
19. The Golan Heights, mentioned in the news today, originally were given to this half-tribe.
21. The Three, of the mighty men, were responsible for getting David water from this city's gate.
22. This mighty men was chief of the 30 but did not attain to the level of the three.
23. One of the sons of Abraham.
25. Chronicles begins with the lineage descending from this man.
26. At the dedication ceremony, there were 245 of these to make up the choir.

### Down

2. This housebound person tried to get Nehemiah to flee to the temple (where an ambush was waiting).
4. The mighty men of David went down into this cave with him to protect him him hiding.
5. The oldest son of Levi.
7. This adversary of Nehemiah continues to try and undermine the wall-building project.
9. This High Priest built the sheep gate in Nehemiah's Jerusalem.
10. The prince of the district of Beth-haccherem built this gate.
11. The leaders of the people sign one of these, pledging their fidelity to God and to his Law.
15. This is one of the priests who explained the law to smaller groups of people to ensure that they would understand.
16. The sons of Hassenaah built this gate as well as laying its bolts and bars.
18. The rich were taking advantage of their position and loaning money to the builders expecting this...
20. This was the name of the chief of the gatekeepers.
21. Saul descended from this son of Jacob.
24. King David's eldest brother.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 39: 1 CHRONICLES 13 – 2 CHRONICLES 7 (SEPTEMBER 21-27)

### **Summary:**

Our reading for the week begins with the familiar story of Uzzah being struck down by God for touching the Ark of the Covenant. Many people struggle with the picture of God striking a person down for a seemingly good-intentioned act, yet the Ark should never have been on an ox-cart in the first place (it was always to be carried) and was holy and meant never to be touched with human hands. Indeed, it might have fallen to the ground, but which touch would defile that which is holy more — the ground that God created or the touch of a sinful man?

What we find in the chapters that follow immediately after this is David situating all Israelite culture (government and worship) in and around Jerusalem...noting that finally David understood the proper way to transport the Ark. And David celebrated and worshiped as he brought the Ark into the city much to the consternation of his wife, Michal.

In chapter 16, we find David's song (see the 105th Psalm for a parallel) which gives thanks to God and reminds the people of the history of God's provision and protection from the armies of Egypt. Once again, remembrance is an important theme in Biblical literature. Despite David's many failings, what we see next is the heart of this king, for he is denied the privilege of building the temple (though God does so while giving David many other promises about subduing his enemies) and David does not respond in disappointment, but instead responds in worship, praising God for the mercies that God has given him. Such is a model to us all.

We find then, in chapters 18-20 a series of conflicts that David has with his surrounding enemies, slowly conquering them and securing peace for his nation. Chapter 20 deals with the pestilence that killed so many of David's citizens because David chose to take a census, something he was not to do at that time.

The final chapters of Chronicles deal with David's preparations so that Solomon could build the Temple and with David's organization of the government and Levites. David is a man who has a heart given for worship; he intends to provide Solomon with whatever possible he could need to reign successfully.

### **2 Chronicles**

The second book of Chronicles begins with the reign of King Solomon, a reign rightly begun in worship. Notice how the good Kings of Israel led the people in worship...oh, were that still the case today...

Next we find a calculation of the wealth of Solomon and more importantly, of the wealth contributed towards the building of the Temple. We also see the connections that Solomon makes use of with King Hiram of Tyre, a king that had a good relationship with David, Solomon's father. Thus, work begins and we are once again given a detailed description of the ornamentation of the Temple. While this can sometimes

be repetitive reading, it is a reminder to us of who gave, who served, and the attention that God once again gives to his worship.

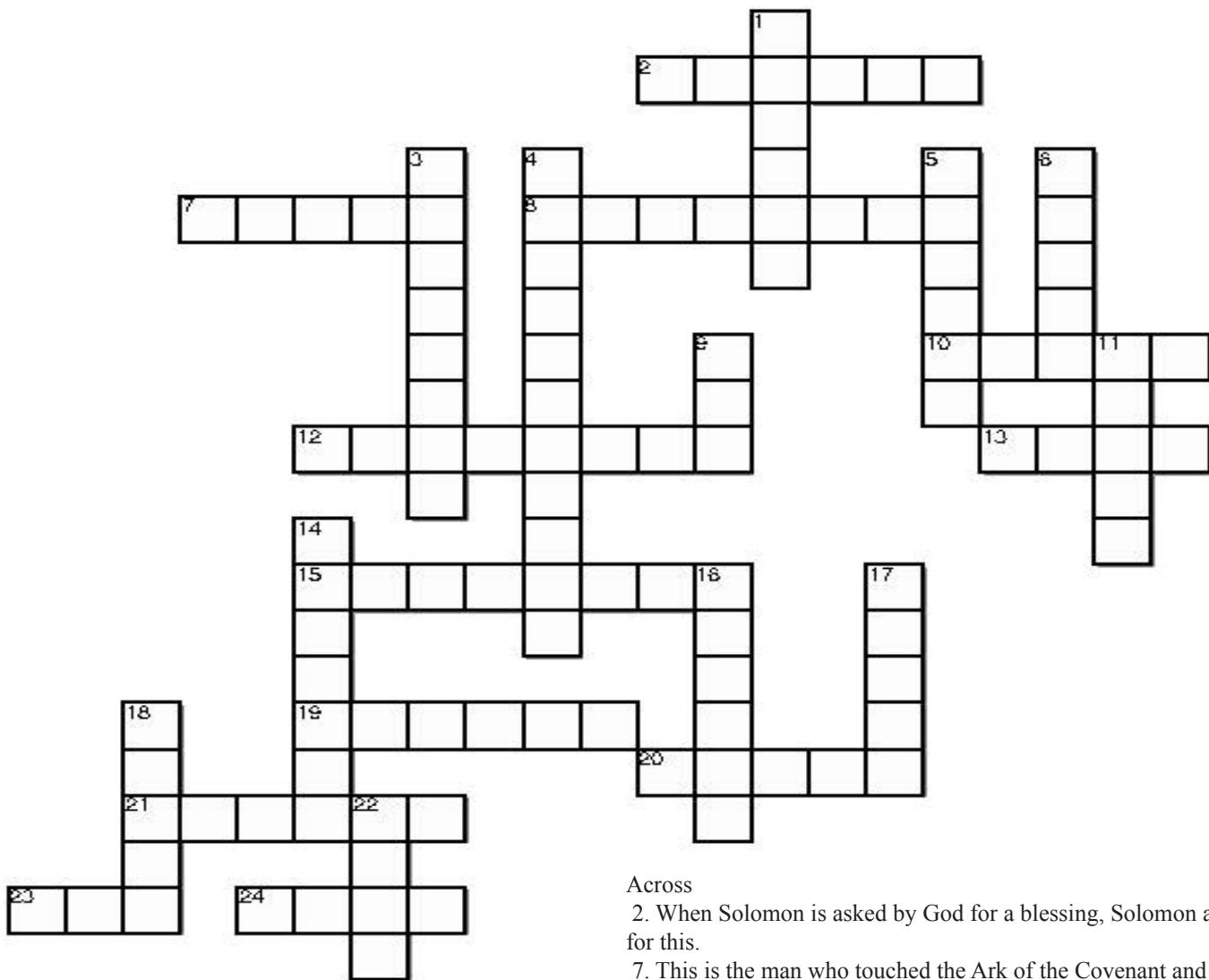
At the end of the seven years that it took to build the temple, Solomon brings the Ark in, much as his father had brought the Ark into Jerusalem, with worship and sacrifice. Then it is Solomon who offers a prayer of Dedication. As Solomon finishes his prayer, fire from heaven comes down, consumes his offering, and God moves to reinstate his covenant with the people. This is the context of the "if my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray..." promise (2 Chronicles 7:12-15). Yet, people often neglect the other half of God's covenantal promise. For the verses that follow also remind the people that if they disobey the covenant of God and turn to idols of their own making, God will wipe them off of the face of the land and they will become "a proverb and a byword" to those passing by — a warning to those who would reject God's teaching and command.

### **Chromatic Notes:**

- The account of Uzzah and the Ark is a reminder that God is particular in how he is worshipped and how his people approach him. May Uzzah's death be a warning to all that God is holy and will not tolerate our coming to him in ways that tickle our imaginations.
- The phrase, "In the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle," is found in chapter 20, verse 1. Unlike today, when battles are fought all year round, in the ancient world, kings went on military campaigns only for a season and typically did not risk going to battle so late that the soldiers missed being home for the harvest. This is because most soldiers were not "professional" soldiers like today's soldiers, they were farmers and worked other trades, coming out to war when their labors were less. It should be noted that we do not find David going with his armies on this trip... it is most likely the time when he lusts after Bathsheeba (see the parallel in 2 Kings 11).
- In chapter 21, we find a slight variance in names with the parallel text in 2 Samuel 24. In the Samuel account, David buys a threshing floor from Araunah the Jebusite and in the Chronicles account, David buys the floor from Ornan the Jebusite. These two names, in their English transliteration, may seem quite different, but in the Hebrew, there is only a two letter difference (remember, Hebrew does not write out most of its vowels). The key spelling in Hebrew of the first is 'RNYH while the latter is 'RNN. The simplest answer to this question is that Ornan is probably a shorter version of the fuller name Arunah, much like Mike is short for Michael.
- Notice that it is Solomon, not the High Priest, who offers these first offerings as well as the blessing of dedication. Such is a reminder that even in the good years the church often drifts from the moorings of God's word.

# Week 39: 1 Chronicles 13-2 Chronicles 7

Complete the crossword below



## Down

1. David's Song of thanksgiving after having brought the Ark to Jerusalem is also recorded in this book of the Bible.
3. This is how many offerings that Solomon offered at the bronze altar that Bezalel had made before the Tabernacle of the Lord.
4. David and his armies snuck up behind this enemy from behind a grove of Balsam trees.
5. When Solomon is established as King, he begins by leading worship at this place.
6. This is how many years it took to build God's temple.
9. The skilled craftsman that Hiram sent had a mother from this wayward tribe of Israel.
11. The sons of this Psalmist were appointed as Levitical singers.
14. This son of David is to build God's temple.
16. The Chronicler records that the Temple is begun on this mountain, another term for Mount Zion.
17. This is how many years David reigned over Israel.
18. Who incited David to take a census?
22. Hiram, the neighboring king who assisted David and Solomon, was king of this city.

## Across

2. When Solomon is asked by God for a blessing, Solomon asks for this.
7. This is the man who touched the Ark of the Covenant and was struck dead.
8. Hiram sends this man, skilled in working with Gold and precious metals, to Solomon.
10. After the fateful census, David builds an altar on the threshing floor of this Jebusite.
12. This is the name of David's uncle, a man of understanding, who became one of David's counselors.
13. 'If my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will \_\_\_\_\_ from heaven.'
15. After God struck David's servant dead, it was kept at this man's house temporarily.
19. This was the name of David's wife who despised his dancing before the Lord.
20. While the Levites originally put the Ark on an Ox-Cart and that brought judgment, the right way was to \_\_\_\_\_ the Ark with poles.
21. When David counted the military divisions of the people, he did not count those below this age.
23. In dedicating the Temple, Solomon reminds us that there is 'no one who does not \_\_\_\_\_' and thus we need repentance.
24. God sends this from heaven to consume Solomon's sacrifice at the temple dedication.

## CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

### WEEK 40: 2 CHRONICLES 8-31 (SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 4)

#### **Summary:**

If you have been following along through these readings, be encouraged, you are at the 3/4 mark this week! And, as we round out the three-quarter mark, we find ourselves coming within a few chapters of reaching the New Testament...so much foundation to be brought to a culmination in the Incarnation of Christ.

Even with the New Testament in our sights, our reading this week still beings with the kingship of Solomon and a listing of his accomplishments. He spent 7 years building the Temple, 13 years building his own palace, and then began rebuilding other cities, establishing a series of fortified cities throughout the empire. We also see another form of conquest being alluded to by the Chronicler...that of Solomon's conquest of other women. He marries the Pharaoh's daughter and brings her to Jerusalem and in chapter 9 we are introduced to the "Queen of the South" better known ad the Queen of Sheba. The Queen brought gifts so that she might see for herself the truth of the claim of Solomon's wealth and wisdom and Solomon returned gifts and care to her as well.

Speaking of wealth, we also discover that at the height of Solomon's reign, he had a national income of 666 talents of gold. A talent is about 110lbs in our measurements which then would equate to about 73,260lbs of Gold...that's a lot (though I am assuming you already could figure that out).

Now most of us are more familiar with the history in Samuel and Kings where you find things going back and forth between northern and southern kings after the split. In addition, where the kings are judged for bad as well as good deeds. Yet, as we move through the books of Chronicles, you find a different spirit. First of all, the southern kings are presented in a somewhat better light and second of all, after the breaking apart of the kingdoms, the northern kings are not mentioned apart from their connection with a southern king or event. This may seem strange to us, but it is not because there are any Biblical errors. The point of view is simply meant to be different...it tells more of a southern perspective from within the throneroom of the king. Recall, Samuel and Kings are included in the prophetic books and the purpose there is to demonstrate that God has been faithful despite the fact that the people have been unfaithful. Chronicles is more of a historical record, one that more intentionally presents the southern kings in a better light.

Thus, in chapters 10-11 we find the kingdom

of Solomon splitting into northern and southern at the foolish action of his son, Rehoboam, yet the text quickly moves on to Rehoboam's reign and legacy. What follows is a series of short references to the kings in Jerusalem and their rule — both good and bad — but with a more positive spin than we saw in the earlier works.

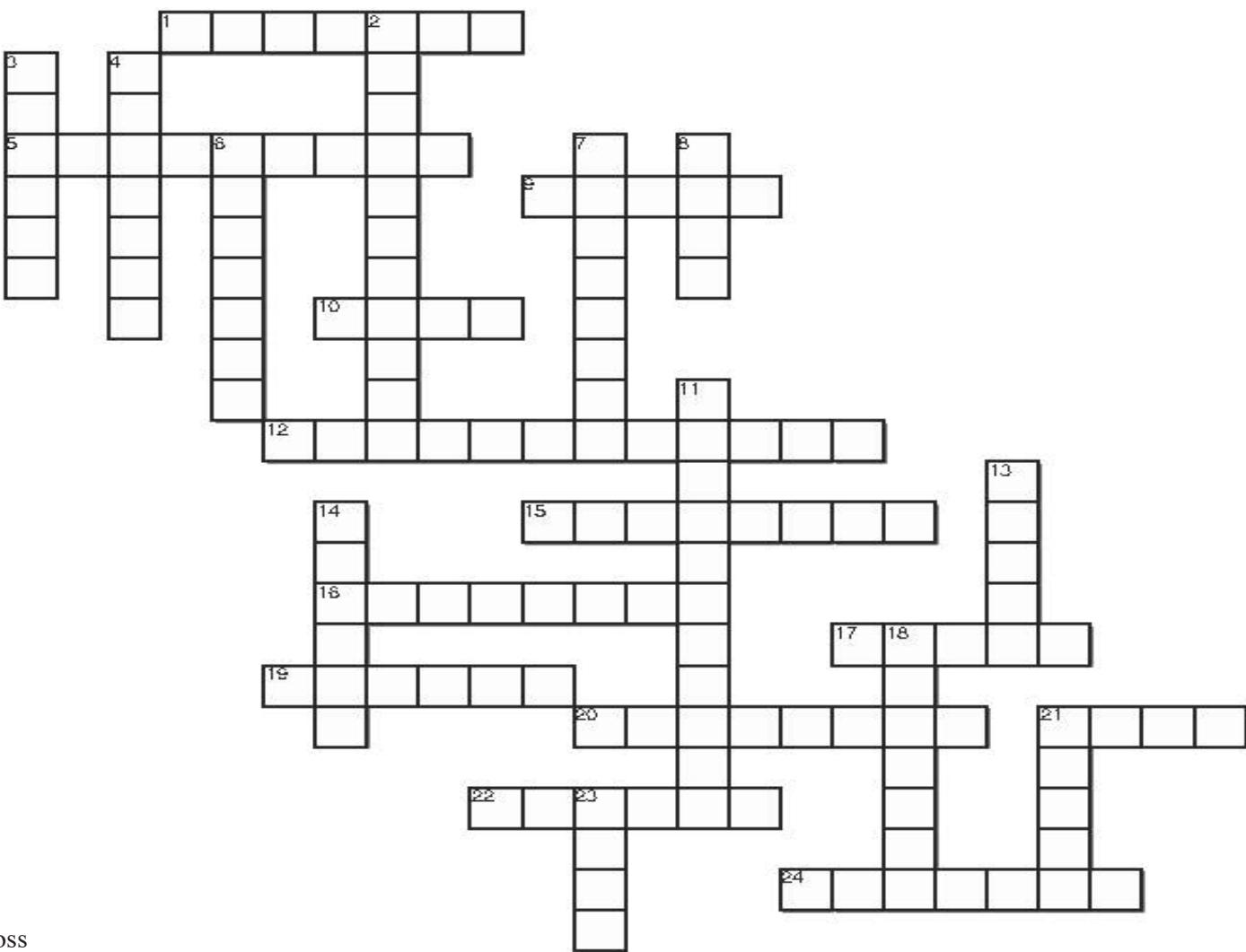
Of those whose works are recorded, probably the most impressive is that of Hezekiah, who sought to cleanse the Temple and reestablish proper worship of God through the celebration of Passover and the consecration of the priests. What is perhaps most interesting is the connection between the faithfulness of the kings and the faithfulness of the people. When our leaders are faithful, it is much easier for the people to be faithful. When our leaders are faithless and immoral then it is much easier for the people to drop into faithless and immoral practices. The reforms of Hezekiah fills then our final chapters of reading, all the way up to the invasion of Sennacherib, which we will read next week as we finish up the Old Testament.

#### **Chromatic Notes:**

- 2 Chronicles 8:8 – notice that Solomon is here employing forced labor to accomplish his building projects...how ironic that a people who once knew the oppression of being forced to labor are now employing the same rule over others...
- Note too that there is a lot of emphasis on Solomon's offering of animals on the altar...an action to be taken by the High Priest, not by the King.
- Most scholars consider Sheba to be the area around modern Ethiopia today.
- Though it may seem excessive to dwell for several chapters on Solomon's immense wealth and the gold that entered his kingdom, there is a reason for this. Solomon at his height represents Jesus as King in his Glory. Note that even Jesus' kingdom, centered in the New Jerusalem, is described as having streets paved with gold (Revelation 21:21). Thus Solomon anticipates Christ...Something greater than Solomon is found in Christ (Matthew 12:42).
- \* 2 Chronicles 13:5 — “A covenant of salt.” This is a reference that is rather unclear. Salt is a lasting earthly element, so many scholars see the reference (along with the reference in Numbers 18:19 as that of a lasting covenant. This is clearly the background to Jesus' language in Matthew 5:13.

## Week 40 (2 Chronicles 8-31)

Complete the crossword below



### Across

1. This king of Egypt raided Jerusalem and took the treasures of the temple during Rehoboam's reign.
5. Joash, though doing much good, would rise up and have this priest stoned for rebuking him in the name of the Lord.
9. This is how old Joash was when he began to reign.
10. At his height, Solomon brought in 666 talents of this.
12. This daughter of the king rescued Joash (her brother) from death by the hand of his grandmother.
15. This is the man who would lead the ten northern tribes in division from Rehoboam.
16. Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah sought to send a navy to this city... which God shipwrecked.
17. This was one of the men who conspired to assassinate Joash.
19. When Hezekiah was reinstating Passover, they had to celebrate it in this month when ordinarily it would be celebrated in the first month of the year.
20. This is the son of Solomon who ended up dividing the kingdom.
21. Abijah describes God's covenant with Rehoboam and his family a covenant of \_\_\_\_\_.
22. How many years did it take Solomon to build the Temple and his Palace.
24. This king was struck down by a terrible disease of the bowels and when he died, no one regretted it.

### Down

2. This was one of the store cities that Solomon built after completing the Temple and his palace.
3. This king had a mixed reign (good and bad) but was greatly mourned by the people (see Isaiah 6:1).
4. This prophet prophesied against King Ahab in the north.
6. The wife of Rehoboam's affection was the daughter of this son of David.
7. This was the priest who was responsible for bringing Athaliah (Joash's evil grandmother) to justice.
8. Amaziah fell into idolatry with the idols of this region.
11. The son of Asa and a man known for his 'jumping'...at least with respect to his chariot...
13. Because of Ahaz's sin, God gave the nation over into the hands of this enemy.
14. Asa even removed this relative from power because she had made an Asherah.
18. This prophet and son of Oded challenged Asa to make reforms for there had not been a teaching priest or the law in Jerusalem.
21. The queen of this southern nation traveled to see if the reports of Solomon were true.
23. These descendants of Esau revolted against Jehoram in Judah.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 41: 2 CHRONICLES 32 – MATTHEW 20 (OCTOBER 5-II)

### Summary:

The final chapters of the Hebrew Old Testament (that is, in the book of 2 Chronicles), we find related to us one more time the fall of Jerusalem, largely from a political perspective. Thus you have the invasion of Sennacherib and his taunting of the people. You find the faith of good King Hezekiah and God sending the Angel of Yahweh (see Isaiah 37:36-38) to strike down 185,000 of Sennacherib's soldiers, sending him back to his home. This reprieve was short-lived, though. We find some repentance and reformation taking place under Manasseh and Josiah (with the finding of the Book of the Law), but after the death of Josiah, Judah declined quickly. Jerusalem would fall and be destroyed with fire — its people taken into exile.

Yet, the book of Chronicles does not entirely end on a note of sadness. The final two verses give us a promise of hope. They tell of the rise of King Cyrus of Persia who conquered the Babylonians and funded the people's return and rebuilding of the Temple. This, indeed is good news. If you will recall, 1 Chronicles began in the garden of Eden with Adam's children and now it ends with a promise of restoration.

### Matthew:

We enter into the New Testament with the Gospel of Matthew. The word "Gospel" is simply a word that means "Good News." And indeed, the coming of the Messiah is good news — really good news. That said, Matthew begins with a genealogy. Why a genealogy? Two reasons. First, Matthew is answering the call that the Old Testament ends with. Who is the one who will go up for us? Certainly it was not Cyrus. It indeed will be Jesus who will ascend the hill of the Lord in our place and take us into the Holy of Holy places as our intercessor. Matthew is being careful to connect Jesus to this Messiah promise. The second reason that Matthew begins with a genealogy is because his Jewish audience will not accept any Messiah unless he meets certain credentials. First, he must descend from Abraham; second, he must descend from David. Matthew makes clear that Jesus does both.

Matthew's genealogy brings with it some questions, though. First of all, why the groups of 14? Second of all, why are there people left out? Third, why are the names somewhat different than found in Luke's genealogy? Fourth, why are these women included?

The first of these questions is perhaps the most cryptic. Many ancient Jews practiced Gematria, the practice of assigning numbers to names based on the letters therein. David's name in Hebrew adds up to 14 and some scholars think that Matthew (being an accountant by trade, so liking numbers) is playing on David's name to provide a structure here. Other Jewish writings assign three sections of Jewish history, which again may be Matthew's structural intent. We don't know for certain apart from that it provides a structure based around Abraham, David, and Jechoniah (also Jeconiah, 1 Chronicles 3:17), the final king of Judah prior to its fall who was taken into exile and replaced with puppet kings.

The second and third questions can be more easily answered and can be answered together. While Luke is most likely giving us a biological genealogy of Jesus through his mother, Mary, Matthew is likely giving us a spiritual genealogy through his earthly step-father, Joseph, and highlighting those of particular theological significance. Fourth, while women in a Jewish genealogy are unusual, they are not unheard of. More importantly, though, all of these women had rather checkered pasts and several were of gentile descent. It is meant as a reminder of God's Gospel call to all nationalities of the world, not just to Jews.

Beyond the genealogy, Matthew gives us the first of the two birth-narratives of Jesus, focusing on Joseph's part as the covenant head of the family as well as the account of the Magi. Soon we have an introduction to the Messiah by John the Baptist as well as Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The chapters that follow include the teachings of Jesus, his miracles, and many of his parables.

Chapter 17 marks a turning point in Jesus' ministry with the Transfiguration. From this point on, Jesus' focus will be on Jerusalem and his death. In fact, at this point, we find him explicitly teaching about his impending death at the hands of the Jews. Here, Jesus encounters Moses and Elijah, two of the most significant figures in Old Testament

redemptive history. Moses took the people out of their bondage in Egypt and into the wilderness and Elijah essentially did the same, though he prepared to take the Northern Kingdom out of the promised land and into the dispersion. Jesus now is sending the Gospel out of the Covenantal land and sending the church into the world (the dispersion) with the gospel.

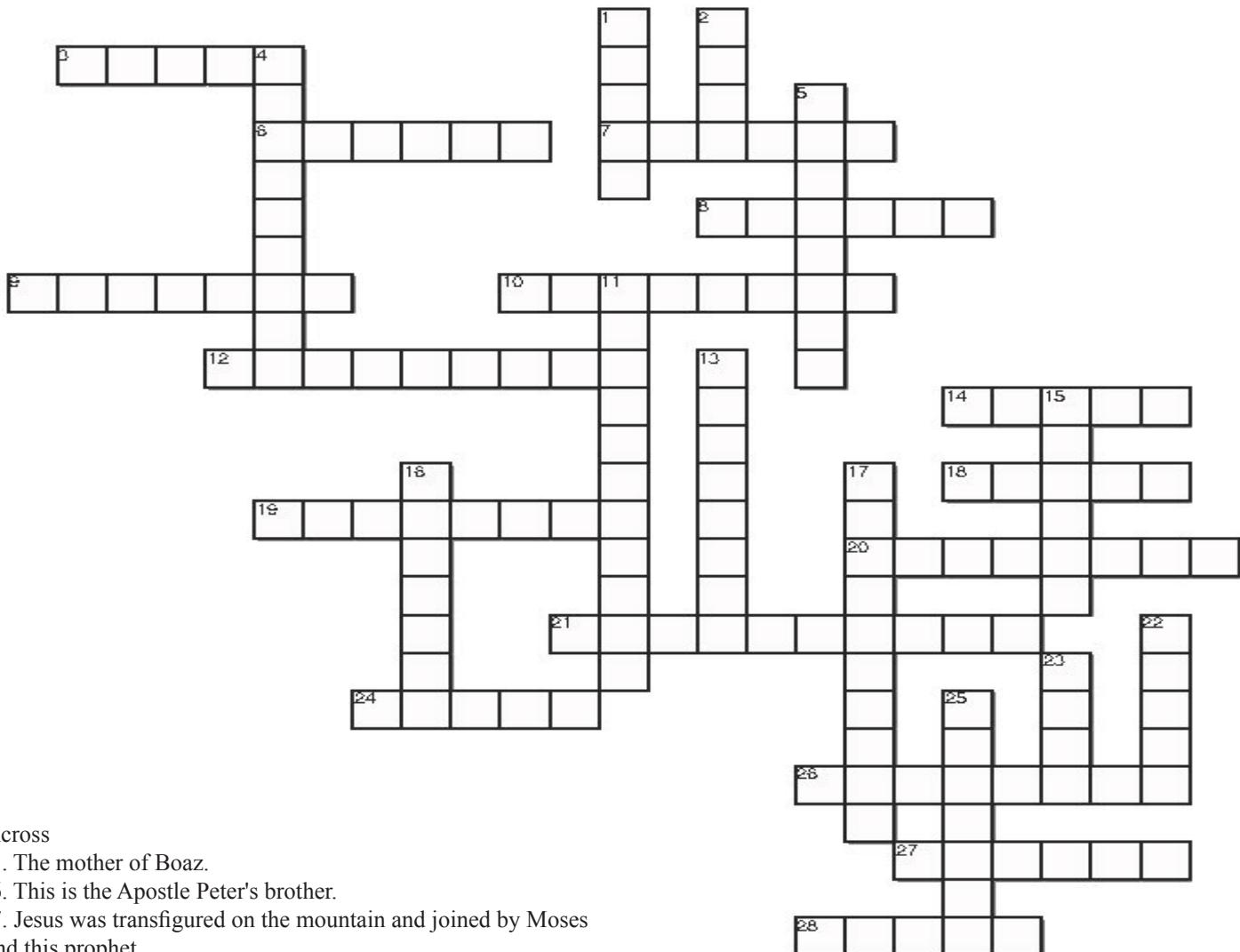
Our readings for this week take us through the first three years of Jesus' ministry — all the way up to (but not including) the Triumphal Entry. It is remarkable to me that so much depth of content is compressed into these twenty chapters.

### Chromatic Notes:

- If you recall from our earlier discussions, "The Angel of the Lord" (noting the definite article) is the Old Testament designation for the pre-incarnate Christ.
- 2 Chronicles 32:30 records the tunneling project that King Hezekiah ordered, bringing water from the Gihon spring into the city walls, forming what would become known as the Pool of Siloam.
- "The Book of the Law through Moses" referenced in 2 Chronicles 34:14 would refer to Genesis through Deuteronomy. There is a good chance that they had parts of it, but this was the law in its entirety and the people were cut to the quick by its words and repented.
- The plains of Megiddo is the basis of the word "Armageddon" which is mentioned in Revelation 16:16.
- 2 Chronicles 36:23 contains the phrase "Let him go up." This phrase is Messianic in its nature and when we see it used we should be aware that it is anticipating the one who will go up the hill of the Lord to the Temple on our behalf (see Psalm 24).
- Note that Matthew includes 5 women in Jesus' genealogy: Tamar, who was seduced by her father-in-law while masquerading as a prostitute, Rahab the Canaanite prostitute, Ruth the Moabitess, the "wife of Uriah" who committed adultery after being seduced by David (note that Bathsheba's name is not even mentioned), and Mary the virgin who bears Jesus while engaged but before her marriage had been consummated. None of these women would have been commended in a traditional Jewish context, but in God's economy, all are commended for their faith and given a place in the line of Christ.
- Note Matthew 2:11, that the Magi find Jesus in a house (no longer in a stable) and Jesus is referred to as a "child" not as an infant (the Greek here would imply a toddler) — in other words, they were not there when the Shepherds were... but much later.
- Note Matthew 2:16, that Herod sent soldiers to kill babies 2 years old and younger...this is based on the estimated age of the Christ-child from the time the Magi arrived in Jerusalem. Again, Jesus was older, probably between 2-3 years old.
- Chapters 5-7 constitute what is typically called, "The Sermon on the Mount." Here we have Jesus' sermon on the Ten Commandments where he explains the spirit behind the law, not just the letter of the law.
- In Matthew 13:10-17, Jesus teaches his Apostles the reason he speaks in parables. Jesus' reasoning is not that parables are nice, simple stories that help the people understand spiritual truth, instead just the opposite. Jesus says that his purpose in teaching in parables is that those who are spiritually blind would remain spiritually blind and those who had the gift of faith would understand and come to him.
- Matthew 16:18 records the first use of the word "church" in the Bible. Here it refers to that institutional body of believers that are built upon the rock of Peter's testimony that Jesus is the Lord.
- Sometimes people ask me whether we will know each other in heaven. At the transfiguration, it is clear that Peter, James, and John did not need to be introduced to Moses and Elijah, but instinctively knew who they were (spiritual discernment). It can be argued on this basis that we, too, will have such spiritual discernment when in heaven.

## Week 41 (2 Chronicles 32-Matthew 20)

Complete the crossword below



### Across

3. The mother of Boaz.
6. This is the Apostle Peter's brother.
7. Jesus was transfigured on the mountain and joined by Moses and this prophet.
8. When asked about why he teaches in Parables, Jesus quoted this Old Testament prophet.
9. The mother of the sons of this man asked if her sons could sit on Jesus' right and left hand in glory.
10. This feast was celebrated in the time of Josiah for the first time in a great while.
12. In Capernaum, Jesus ran into a Roman who had remarkable faith. What position did he hold?
14. Jesus was tempted by this fiend in the wilderness.
18. The prophesied king of Persia who would return the people from their exile in Babylon.
19. The faithful King of Judah when Assyria attacked.
20. 'A virgin shall bear a son and they shall call his name: \_\_\_\_\_'
21. It was in this year of Josiah's reign that the Book of the Law was rediscovered.
24. An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given them but the sign of \_\_\_\_\_.
26. Matthew breaks the genealogies of Jesus into three groups of this number.
27. Manasseh committed wicked acts, burning his children in the Valley of the Son of \_\_\_\_\_.
28. Jesus teaches that it is easier for a rich man to enter heaven than for this animal to pass through the eye of a needle.

### Down

1. Matthew records that only Jesus and this one disciple are required to pay the temple tax (indicating that the others were under 18 years of age).
2. This group of men from the east came with gifts, searching for the baby Messiah.
4. While sins against Jesus will be forgiven, this against the Holy Spirit will not.
5. 'He shall be called a \_\_\_\_\_!'
11. This Assyrian king attacked Jerusalem and the Angel of the Lord slaughtered his troops.
13. In addition to the people, this 'weeping prophet' also offered a lament at the death of Josiah.
15. Don't take an oath by heaven because it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
16. Josiah died in battle on this plain.
17. When asked why his disciples do not fast, Jesus responded by saying how can they fast while the \_\_\_\_\_ is still with them?
22. Fearing the possibility of being besieged, Hezekiah had the end of this spring closed off and tunneled it into the city.
23. John baptized with water; Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and \_\_\_\_\_.
25. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus tells us we must do this or God will not forgive us.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 42: MATTHEW 21 – MARK 16 (OCTOBER 12–18)

### **Summary:**

We pick up this week with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Notice how many Old Testament prophecies that Matthew connects this event with, there is no mistaking the reality that God has superintended all things and that Jesus' ministry has been leading up to this week. Notice too, that Matthew still has 8 chapters left that he dedicates to this week...that is more than 1/4 of the book as a whole. Clearly, the importance of this week should be obvious.

Two themes characterize the events of this week: Jesus' teaching on the coming judgment upon the Jewish officials for their apostasy and unfaithfulness and those same officials testing Jesus and trying to trap him in his own words so that they can justify his arrest. The Jewish officials know that they have been caught seeking their own power and not using power for the glory of God and thus they try and destroy the one who is making their unfaithfulness clear. First they try and discredit him with the people and when that doesn't work, they seek to have him killed. Sadly, how little things have changed...

You will notice that Matthew includes a great deal of Jesus' parables here. Remember, parables are meant to teach those who are spiritually awakened but also meant to keep the spiritually dead, well, spiritually dead. Most of these parables also very clearly condemn the Jewish authorities...Jesus is pulling no punches. One of the most powerful condemnations of the Pharisees and Scribes (those who taught the law) is found in Matthew 23 in a passage that is sometimes labeled "the Seven Woes." This is a prelude to what we call the Olivet Discourse where Jesus teaches about two upcoming events...the coming fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD and his return (which has yet to happen). Many get bogged down in this discourse, trying to map out times and seasons for these events to take place, yet Jesus reminds his audience that no one will know the day or the hour that the Son of Man will return (Matthew 24:36-44) and thus we are to be ready (verses 45-51).

Matthew, like the other three Gospel writers, relates then the arrest, false trial, and execution of Jesus for our sins. One of the most profound statements made in this context was made by a Roman Centurion who proclaimed, after watching the events of Jesus' death, that he was indeed the Son of God.

Matthew closes with what we know as the Great Commission...the command to the church to do one thing: make disciples of the people of the nations. It is a recapitulation of the Dominion Mandate given to Adam and Eve back in creation (Genesis 1:26-30).

### **Mark:**

Scholars consider Mark to be the earliest of the Gospels to have been written, potentially as early as 50 AD. As you compare both Matthew and Luke with Mark, it becomes clear that both of them used Mark as a resource when writing their own Gospels; Luke even admits to having done research in his introduction.

The thing that makes Mark quite distinct is not that it was written first, though. Nor is it even the brevity of Mark's account in contrast to three other, longer Gospel accounts. While Mark

tends to focus less on Jesus' parables and teachings, he brings out a lot more of Jesus' actions and presents Jesus as a man on a mission, "immediately" moving from place to place to do God's will (the word "immediately" shows up repeatedly in Mark).

While more than a quarter of Matthew is dedicated to the final "Passion Week" of Christ, more than a third is dedicated in the book of Mark, again emphasizing the significance of Jesus' going to the cross for the sins of his people. More so than the other Gospel writers, Mark even gives us the chronology of days that pass, helping us to narrow down with a great deal of precision the things that our Lord did on each of these days.

There is a great deal of debate surrounding the closing chapter of Mark. The oldest Biblical manuscripts end at Mark 16:8, which of course leaves one hanging a bit. Most modern scholars thus would agree that verses 9-20 of Mark 16 were a later addition not written by Mark himself (who though not an Apostle, did serve as Peter's secretary in Jerusalem and did travel with Paul and Barnabas on several missionary journeys).

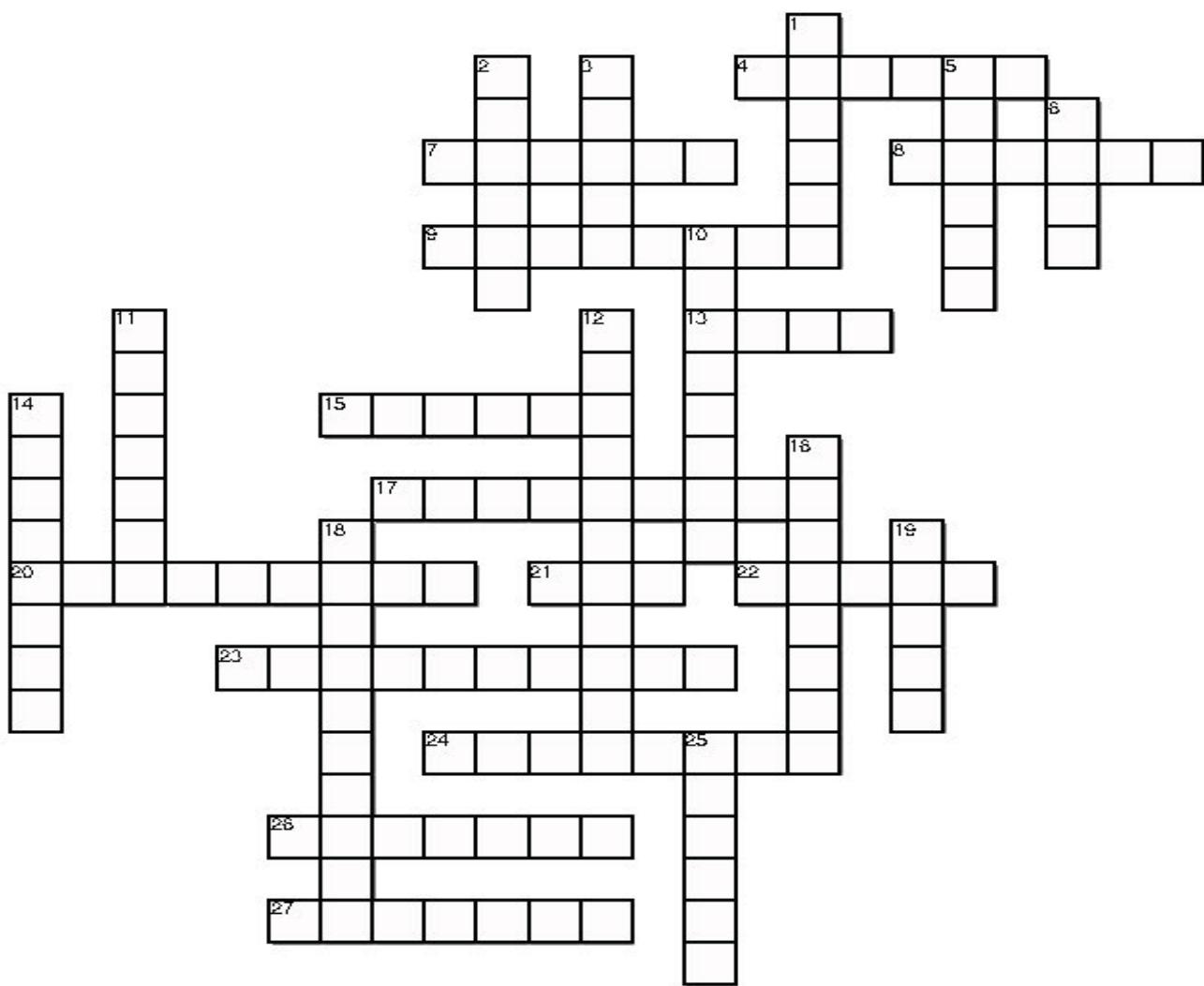
So, does that mean that verses 9-20 are not God's inspired word? Again, that gets debated. The final verses do show up in some older manuscripts, just not the oldest. There really is nothing found within the text that is over the top or novel (save perhaps the snake handling...though God protected the Apostle Paul when he was bitten by the Asp). So, push come to shove, while I would agree that it is likely not from Mark's own hand, it is part of the scriptures and should be read and studied as with all the scriptures.

### **Chromatic Notes:**

- Notice the language of "woe" in chapter 23. The Hebrew word for "woe" is "hoi", from which we get the Yiddish expression "hoi vey" — "woe is me!"
- Note that this Roman's testimony of Jesus is not necessarily a profession of faith but may have just been a testimony of awe at who Jesus is. There was a belief amongst the Roman culture that there were children of the deities that walk amongst us and who do great things. His testimony may very well me just that, saying Jesus is one of such.
- In Aramaic, Barabbas means "Son of the father". How ironic that the Son of God the Father should die while this false Barabbas is let free.
- Note that in the Greek, the Great Commission begins with a participle, and should read "Going, therefore." In other words, Jesus is not commanding to go — the going is assumed — he is commanding us to make disciples as we are already going.
- People often ask about Jesus' family; Mark goes as far as to record the names of his brothers (James, Joses, Judas, and Simon) and mentions his sisters, though not by name (see Mark 6:3). Notice, too, that here Jesus is referred to as "the carpenter" not "the son of the carpenter." This is a reminder that Jesus did learn and ply his father's trade until he turned 30 years old and began his ministry.

## Week 42 (Matthew 21-Mark 16)

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

4. This man, from Arimathea, collected Jesus' body and laid it into the tomb.
7. 'Even the dogs under the table eat the children's \_\_\_\_\_.'
8. 'He is not God of the dead but God of the \_\_\_\_\_.'
9. Jesus was executed during this Jewish festival.
13. Jesus calls this tax collector, according to Mark -- another name for Matthew himself.
15. This Old Testament prophet spoke of the Abomination and the Desolation.
17. According to the longer ending of Mark, Jesus first appears to this Mary.
20. This is the town from which Jesus gets the donkey to ride into Jerusalem for his Triumphal Entry.
21. It is this kind of tree that Jesus cursed.
22. When Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, the people called him 'Son of \_\_\_\_\_.'
23. This is the garden in which Jesus was arrested.
24. Jesus calls 12 of his disciples aside and appoints them as \_\_\_\_\_.
26. Jesus calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow him alongside of this sea.
27. The Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who gave a \_\_\_\_\_ feast for his son...'

### Down

1. The field bought with Judas' blood-money was bought from someone who plied this trade.
2. It was in this River that Jesus was baptized.
3. The name of one of Jesus' brothers. (hint: he writes a book after the resurrection)
5. The name of Herod's brother (from whom he stole Herodias).
6. This is one of the things that the Pharisees tithed.
10. 'Wherever the corpse is, there the \_\_\_\_\_ will gather.'
11. 'If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and \_\_\_\_\_ of all.'
12. Along with the angels, these were present with Jesus after his temptation in the wilderness. (2 words)
14. This is the name of the man who was released instead of Jesus.
16. This is the coin they brought to Jesus when challenging him on paying taxes to Caesar.
18. Matthew records two occurrences of this natural event, one at the death of Jesus and one at the Resurrection of Jesus.
19. Jesus was at this leper's house when he was anointed by the woman to prepare him for burial.
25. This is the name of the demons that inhabited a man in the region of the Gerasenes.

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 43: LUKE 1-22 (OCTOBER 19-25)

### Summary:

As we move from the Gospel of Mark to the Gospel of Luke we arrive at one with a somewhat different flavor. Luke, being a gentile, is writing with the intent of providing a chronological account of the life of Jesus, not so much a theological one. At the same time, there are two themes that are prominent within Luke's Gospel: first that of Jesus' care for the poor and hurting (the theme of justice) and second, the promise that Jesus is a Messiah not just for the Jews, but for all kinds of people, both Jew and Gentile. It should also be noted that Luke's Gospel is not meant to stand on its own, but was written as a two-part work with the Book of Acts being the continuation of the Gospel.

Like Matthew, Luke begins with Jesus' birth narrative, though he includes the birth of John the Baptist for obvious reasons. While Matthew's focus is more on Joseph and his role, Luke's focus is on Mary and her role in the birth of our Lord. You will notice, too, Luke's attention to those people who are poor and outcast as he records the account of the first witnesses of the birth of Jesus: the Shepherds. Note that while the Magi were not present at the manger when Jesus was born, the shepherds were.

Luke also records the circumcision of Jesus as well as his dedication at the Temple, a dedication witnessed by two old saints: Simeon and Anna. Once again we will see Jesus at the Temple, but this time at age 12 as he is confounding the priests. Unlike Matthew, who gives Jesus' genealogy up front, Luke waits until just before recording Jesus' baptism and entrance into public ministry. And, Luke traces Jesus' genealogy back to Adam, a reminder again that Jesus is the Savior for all lineages of people, Jew and Gentile alike.

In chapter 4 of Luke, we find Jesus back at his home town and finding himself quite unwelcome. Note that they reject Jesus not because he claims to be the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah, but because he refuses to become a circus act and work healings in their presence. Much like Elisha before him, Jesus points out, God would rather give blessings to the Gentiles than to a people that reject him.

When we arrive at chapter 6, we find an account of Jesus' preaching that sounds very similar to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (yet here he is recorded in going to a "level place.") Scholars have debated this at length with some claiming these as the same account and others claiming that this is a different sermon altogether than the Sermon on the Mount. The bottom line is that a traveling preacher had no reason not to preach essentially the same message more than once to different groups in different places, yet nuance the sermon differently to address the needs of the audience. That seems to be the best answer to what we find here.

What we find in the chapters that follow the "Sermon on the Plain" are a series of healings and shorter teachings, many of which we also find in Matthew and Mark's account. We do have several little accounts that are unique to Luke, one of them being the Samaritan Village that rejects them (Luke 9:51-56). It is interesting that James and John, who are also nicknamed, "The Sons of Thunder," are the ones asking Jesus to call down fire upon the town for rejecting them, yet Jesus models the instructions of knocking the dust off of his shoes and moves on. Speaking of dust off of sandals; while the other Gospel writers (as well as Luke) record the sending out of the 12 in pairs; we find Luke also recording the sending out of 72 in pairs, a reminder to us that the sending out was part of the normative practice of Jesus, not a one time activity.

One of the most familiar pairs of accounts recorded by Luke are found in Luke 10. The first is the Parable of the Good Samaritan and the second being the account of Mary and Martha — Martha with her industrious mindset and Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus. Both of these are recalled together and illustrate what is taught before — the Samaritan demonstrating what

it means to love your neighbor as yourself and Mary's actions telling us what it means to love the Lord with all of heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Come Luke 15-16 we find a series of parables about "Lost things" — the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son, and the lost manager. Notice something, in all of these accounts, the item (or person) lost belonged to the master in the first place. Thus, these are not parables about evangelism per say, but parables about those who have背slidden in their faith. It is also a reminder that the elect always belonged to God, even before they realize it in their conversion.

Another account we only find in Luke is that of Zacchaeus. Though we might be surprised to see Luke highlighting the salvation of a rich man (as much of Luke's focus is on ministry to the poor), this account leads to justice, for in his conversion, Zacchaeus agrees to pay back everything that he has falsely taken from others four-fold (which was greater than the Law required) and then to give half of his wealth to the poor. Justice was done by this grateful man.

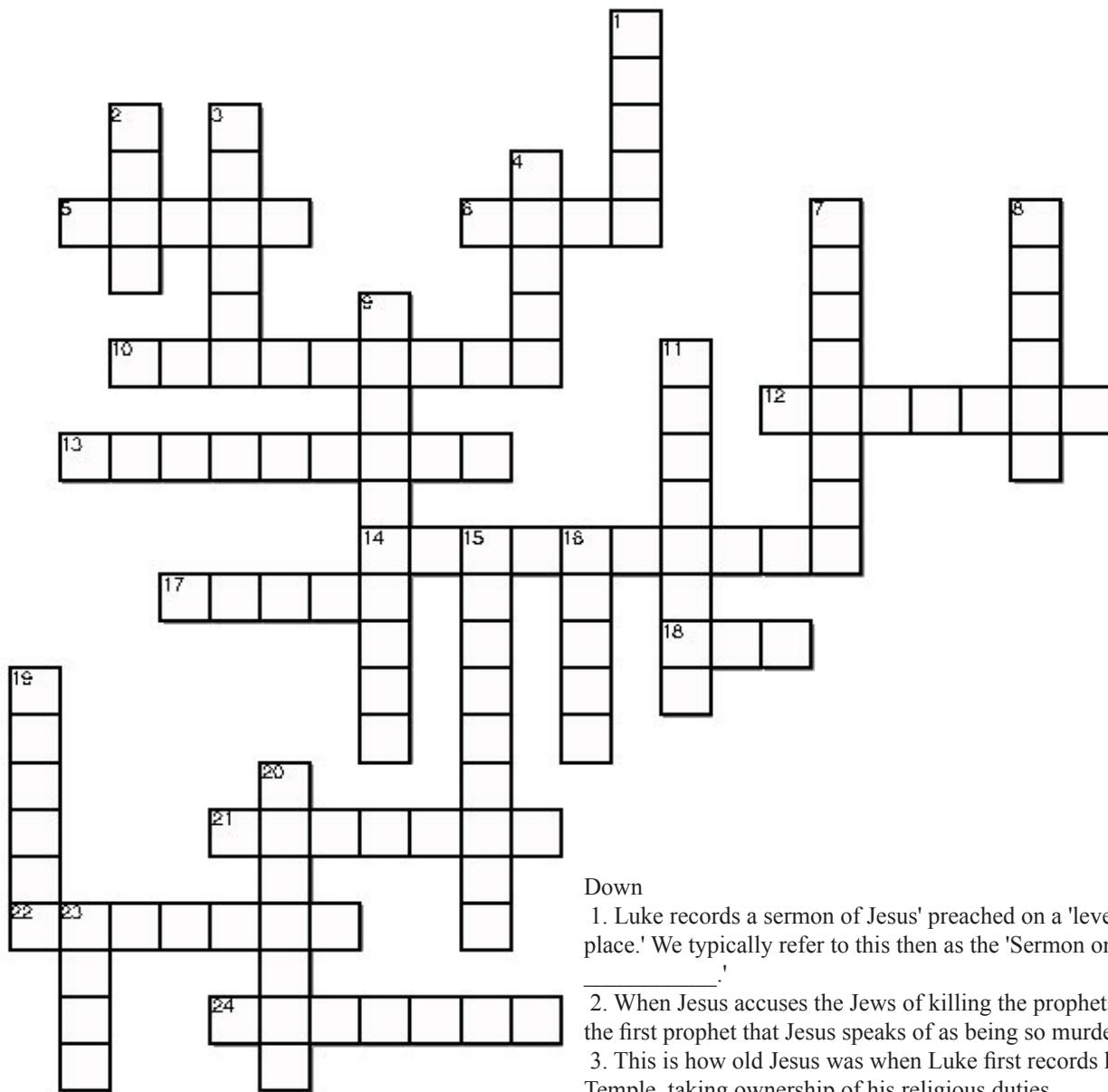
Reading through chapter 22 of Luke leads us all of the way through Gethsemane, Jesus' arrest, and into the false trials of our Lord.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Luke is typically seen as the "Luke the Physician" that traveled with the Apostle Paul (Colossians 4:14 — note also the many first person references that Luke makes when speaking of Paul's travels, Acts 16:11). This makes Luke, probably the only Gentile author of the scriptures.
- Luke addresses his works to a man named, "Theophilus," which means "lover of God." Much debate is had as to just who this man is; one such argument is that Theophilus is Paul's "defense attorney in his trial in Rome. That would make the two books of Luke and Acts records by Luke to explain to Theophilus why Paul was innocent of said charges. It is speculation, but a curious argument.
- In Jewish society, shepherds were looked down upon as uncultured and unreliable. Is it not interesting that God often uses the analogy of the shepherds with his people as well as raising up David as their greatest king, who worked as a shepherd while a young man.
- Note that the offering that Joseph and Mary offer for Jesus (the birds) is an offering that would have been given by the poor, a reminder of Jesus' estate at birth and growing up.
- As we noted with Matthew's genealogy, there are some variations between his and Luke's. The best solution is that Luke's genealogy is a biological genealogy through Jesus' mother, Mary and Matthew gives us a theological or spiritual genealogy through his father, Joseph.
- The age of 12 is the age when young boys were responsible for keeping the Law on their own — this is the source of the Bar-Mitzvah, which means "Son of the Law."
- Note on the account of Mary and Martha, Martha is not rebuked for doing the housekeeping work that needs be done when you are hosting 13 men as your guests (remember, Jesus had his disciples with him). Martha is rebuked because someone (Jesus) greater than hospitality was present. How often we, like Martha, get our priorities turned around.
- Note that the parable of the "Dishonest Manager" or the "Steward of Unrighteousness" found in Luke 16 is one of the most difficult parables in all of scripture to interpret and thus people's interpretations vary widely as they tackle this parable.
- By law, for fraud, Zacchaeus would likely have been required to pay double restitution (Exodus 22:7-9).

## Week 43 (Luke 1-22)

Complete the crossword below



### Across

5. After the calling of the first disciples, Luke records Jesus healing this kind of man -- a reminder to us that the Gospel is for all kinds of people, even the unclean.
6. Jesus heals a widow's son in this town.
10. These were the first evangelists at the birth of Christ.
12. 'Leave the dead to bury the dead; as for you, proclaim the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.'
13. Jesus meets this short-statured rich man and dines with him in his home.
14. To whom did Luke address his Gospel and the book of Acts?
17. Don't do this; your Father who is in heaven loves you and knows your needs.
18. This is the Lamp of the body.
21. This is the name of the Angel who announced to Mary that she would bear Jesus.
22. 'The Son of Man is Lord of the \_\_\_\_\_.'
24. The Good Samaritan finds the wounded traveler on the road to this town.

### Down

1. Luke records a sermon of Jesus' preached on a 'level place.' We typically refer to this then as the 'Sermon on the \_\_\_\_\_.'
2. When Jesus accuses the Jews of killing the prophets, this is the first prophet that Jesus speaks of as being so murdered.
3. This is how old Jesus was when Luke first records him in the Temple, taking ownership of his religious duties.
4. The name of one of the brothers who wanted to call down fire on a Samaritan town for rejecting them.
7. When this group came to John the Baptist, he told them not to extort money from people and be content with wages.
8. This ancient priest blessed the baby Jesus at the Temple.
9. Not only does Luke record the sending out of the twelve disciples, he records Jesus sending out this group as well (2 words).
11. Simon, who was hosting Jesus when the woman came and anointed his feet, was of this group of people.
15. This is the name of Mary's cousin, who gives birth to John the Baptist.
16. Luke records, early in the ministry, the calling of Simon to ministry with a little fishing excursion. We know Simon better by another name, though. What is that name?
19. Prior to Jesus' arrest, Peter notes that they have two of these.
20. Levi is another name for this Apostle.
23. The genealogy in Luke goes all of the way back to this 'Son of God.'

# CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

## WEEK 44: LUKE 23-JOHN 21 (OCTOBER 26-NOVEMBER 1)

### Summary:

As we complete the book of Luke, we are once again presented with the trial and death of our Lord. As I have mentioned elsewhere, notice that none of the Gospels focus on the gruesome details of the crucifixion (in contrast to the way many modern preachers present it), but the focus is on what Jesus is doing and why. And while the physical torment would have been horrendous, it paled in comparison to the weight of God's wrath that Jesus took for the sins of believers.

While much of the information in terms of the death of Jesus is not unique to Luke, his Gospel does add some important elements in terms of the post-resurrection appearances of our Lord. We find Jesus meeting with two disciples on the road to Emmaus and walking alongside of them — even breaking bread with them. And we also find Jesus appearing to the Apostles. In each of these cases, Jesus makes it clear that all of the writings of what we would call the Old Testament are meant to point to Christ and to Him alone (see Luke 24:27, 44).

### John

The fourth Gospel was written by the Apostle John and most scholarship would place the writing of this, fourth Gospel, as taking place fairly late, likely in the mid-80s AD. As a result, we find ourselves with a very different Gospel on our hands. While the first three Gospels (also called the "Synoptic Gospels") were focused primarily on offering a synopsis of Jesus' life and teachings to their respective audiences. John, on the other hand, contains a great deal more theology and while John doesn't contain any of Jesus' parables, John contains a great deal of Jesus' words of teaching and instruction.

John's introduction is rooted in creation and is a near quotation of Genesis 1:1, reminding us that Jesus is the pre-existent Son, not a created being. The pivotal part of the prologue, though, is found in verses 11-13 which speaks of Jesus' mission: "he came to his own and his own people did not receive him...but all that did receive him, he gave eternal life." Therein lies the heart of the Gospel.

John 2-4 roughly covers a period of time contained in the first year of Jesus' ministry, a period of time that the other Gospels do not cover. The Wedding at Cana contains the first recorded miracle, the turning of water into wine...a work of Jesus that promises a greater wedding feast to come (the Wedding Feast of the Lamb).

When we get to the end of John 2, we find an account of Jesus clearing the temple. Many have debated whether this is the same account as the Synoptic Gospel writers give, but just located at the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry and not at the end. A better reading of the Gospel texts is to see this as a separate event from the one during Passion Week that Matthew, Mark, and Luke record — a kind of set of book-ends to Jesus' public earthly ministry.

Chapters 3-4 contain essentially two conversations that Jesus has. The first, with Nicodemus, the leader of the Sanhedron, a man with respect in the eyes of the church and community. The second is essentially the polar opposite, and is a conversation with an outcast Samaritan Woman. Interestingly, it is the woman who responds in faith to Jesus' conversation; Nicodemus goes away still trying to make sense of Jesus (though we find out at Jesus' death that Nicodemus had become a secret disciple of Jesus).

What we find taking place after these conversations is a series of healings and an account of the authority that speaks as to who Jesus is. We also see Jesus present at a number of the Jewish festivals during this time, a reminder that Jesus kept the law to the letter while we lived on this earth, fulfilling for those who put their trust in Him.

A noticeable shift in the narrative takes place as we arrive at chapter 11 and the account of the death of his friend, Lazarus. The event of Lazarus' death and raising is an anticipation of what will happen to

Jesus when he turns to Jerusalem at the Passover feast.

Chapter 12 brings us to the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem for the Passover and again, we find John recording some events that none of the other Gospel writers record. We find some gentiles coming to follow Jesus (a reminder that the Gospel is for all people groups, not just the Jews).

Probably the most profound distinction of John is found in the instructions we find Jesus giving to his Apostles during the Last Supper. The majority of chapter 14 and then nearly all of chapters 14-17 contain Jesus' teachings in the Upper Room on the night he was betrayed. Chapter 17 is a prayer that Jesus prays for his Disciples and for those who will come to faith because of the testimony of the Apostles. Then, Jesus leads the Apostles to Gethsemane, where he is arrested and taken for trial. John records the crucifixion, death, and the Resurrection of our Lord and then some of the latter visitations. Chapter 21 contains the visit that includes the reinstatement of Peter, for three times Jesus asks Peter if he loves him and three times Peter responds in the affirmative — once for each of his denials.

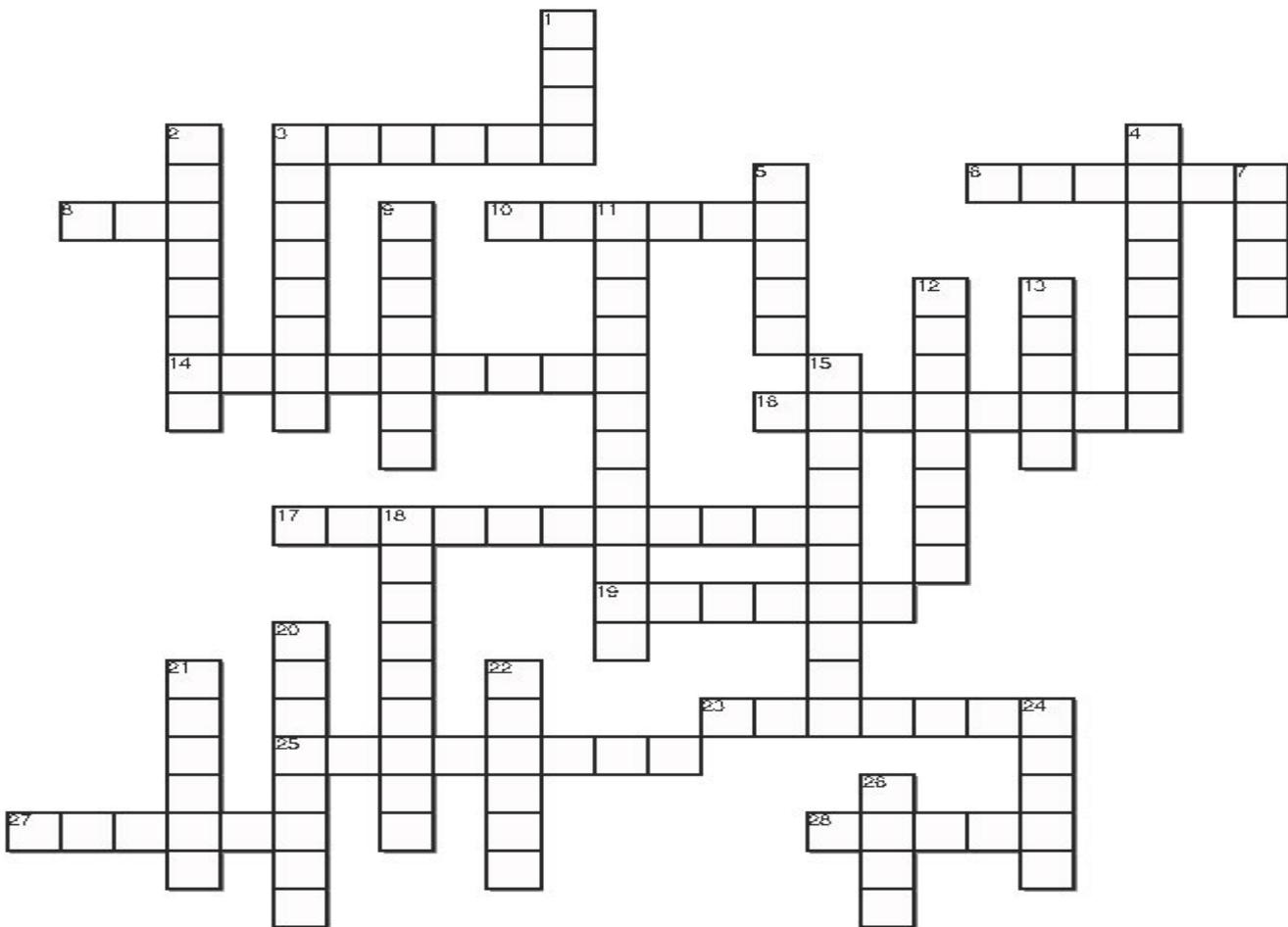
### Chromatic Notes:

- In Luke 24:44, Jesus speaks of the "Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms." This is the traditional three-fold division of the Hebrew scriptures that we know as the Old Testament. While this teaches us that Jesus used the Hebrew form of the Scriptures, and not the LXX, which was a Greek translation popular in Jesus' day, it also shows us that Jesus did not recognize the books we know as the Apocrypha as scripture. These books existed during Jesus' day yet he makes no reference to them in this phrase (in fact, Jesus never mentions them, ever).
- John 1:14 speaks of God in the flesh dwelling "amongst" us. The Greek word for "dwelling" found here is the same word that is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament to speak of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Thus, John is saying that as before, God is tabernacling with his people, this time in the flesh...something greater than the Tabernacle is here.
- Note: John 1:18. Jesus is the one who makes the Father known — all revelation is rooted in Jesus.
- John 2: note that wine (in the Jewish culture) is a sign of end times fulfillment when the scriptures speak of the mountains dripping with wine (see Amos 9:13). The purification jars are also filled completely as a reminder that there is nothing that can be added either to Jesus' purification of his own or to the glory of heaven. From beginning to end, it is all about Jesus.
- John 6:53-58 is a passage that many Catholics claim teaches the transubstantiation of the elements in Communion (that they change form into the literal blood and body of Jesus). Yet, such takes these metaphors out of their context, reading a more modern doctrine of Rome (one developed in the 8th century AD) backwards into the text. This practice is called "isogenesis" and is a sure way to lead into error.
- John 7:53-8:11 (the Woman Caught in Adultery) is probably a later addition to the text. In fact, in some of the ancient manuscripts, this text is part of Luke's account, not John's
- John 10:22 — "The Feast of Dedication" is also known as Hanukkah. It is the remembrance of the time after the Maccabean revolt where the temple was needing to be rededicated and purified, yet they were low on oil for the lamp. God worked a miracle at the time, providing oil so the temple could be dedicated.
- John relates to us the purpose of his Gospel: "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name." (John 20:31)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Week 44: Luke 23-John 21

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

### Across

3. 'No one can come to me unless it is granted by my \_\_\_\_\_.'  
6. The Garden of Gethsemane is just across this valley from Jerusalem and on the Mount of Olives.  
8. The Father judges no one but has given all judgment over to the \_\_\_\_\_.  
10. This is the town near which Jesus met the Samaritan woman.  
14. Joseph, a godly man, requested Jesus' body be released for burial...where was he from?  
16. This was the name of the man whom the people \_\_\_\_\_ had Pilate free instead of Jesus.  
17. Jesus is the vine and the Father is the \_\_\_\_\_.  
19. The name of the Apostle who needed to see Jesus' wounds for himself before he would believe.  
23. This was one of the disciples that Jesus spoke with on the road to Emmaus.  
25. Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedron and part of this group.  
27. There is a man from this region that is drafted to carry Jesus' cross part of the trip to Calvary.  
28. 'Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.'

### Down

1. This is how many days Lazarus had been dead when he raised him.  
2. This is another name for the Feast of Dedication.  
3. How long did the Jews say that it took to build the temple in Jesus' day.  
4. The three-fold division of the Hebrew scriptures is 1) the Law, 2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) the Psalms (or the writings)  
5. 'God is Spirit and those who worship him do so in Spirit and in \_\_\_\_\_.'  
7. This is the plant from which the ointment Mary used to anoint Jesus was made.  
9. Lazarus and his sisters lived in this town.  
11. 'If you love me, you will keep my \_\_\_\_\_.'  
12. Jesus says to one of the thieves on the cross, 'today you will be with me in \_\_\_\_\_.'  
13. Jesus said to Peter after the Resurrection: 'Feed my \_\_\_\_\_.'  
15. When John speaks of Jesus dwelling with men (chapter 1), he uses the Greek word that refers to this from the Old Testament.  
18. When Jesus met this man, he referred to him as 'one in whom there is no deceit.'  
20. 'I am the good \_\_\_\_\_; I know my own and my own know me.'  
21. One of Jesus' relatives was managing the feast in connection to the Wedding in Cana...which relative was it?  
22. When the Greeks wanted to see Jesus, they sought out this Apostle first.  
24. The pool of Bethesda, in which people thought they could be healed, was near this gate.  
26. In the beginning was the \_\_\_\_\_.

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 45: Acts 1-24 (November 2-8)

### Summary:

The Book of Acts — or the "Acts of the Apostles" as it is usually titled — is part 2 of Luke's account of the Gospel, this part focusing on the spread of the Gospel to the known world through the Apostles. This was a divine sending and mission and was empowered by God the Holy Spirit himself. The book begins with the disciples still meeting with Jesus and training under his instruction and ends in a rather open-ended manner, with Paul already in Rome and laboring there though under house arrest.

Chapter 1 records both the Ascension of Jesus into heaven and to sit at the right hand of his Father plus the preparation of the followers (the 120 who remained in faith) for the time of Pentecost — predominantly a time of prayer and mutual encouragement. There is a curious account of Peter suggesting that they chose a replacement for Judas, the requirements being that the replacement be one who had been present at the baptism of Jesus all of the way through the resurrection. There is some debate as to whether this Matthias who is chosen is really to be numbered as an Apostle (he never is mentioned again) or whether he is simply one to fill the number until the Apostle Paul is called by God. Either way, straws are drawn and he is numbered with the Apostles.

Chapter 2 contains both the descent of the Spirit in Pentecost and the first sermon by Peter. Note, that this descent of the Spirit does not indicate the first time these Apostles are "born again" or given spiritual life. Throughout the Old Testament we find accounts of the Spirit rushing on someone with power (e.g., Judges 14:6, 19; Judges 15:14; 1 Samuel 11:6; 1 Samuel 16:13); such is what took place in the Upper Room. This, of course, spills out into the street and though some challenge Peter and the Apostles, as a result of the preaching of Peter, three-thousand people came to faith. Here was the birth of the Christian church...a church not unique or something new, but being revealed in a remnant of the Jewish people.

Acts 3-7, then, focuses on the ministry of the early church in Jerusalem (the first stage of the commission). Preaching and teaching is taking place and people are coming to faith. God is blessing the work that these first Christians are doing.

With the death of Stephen, persecution arises (and we are introduced to Saul, who will later become better known as Paul the Apostle). And as persecution arises, the believers flee Jerusalem but do not do so in fear. They take the message of the Gospel with them, preaching it to all that would listen...first in Judah and then in Samaria and eventually to the world (note the structure again of the book).

One of the most significant chapters is chapter 9, where Saul is converted. We see Saul's conversion recounted in the book of Acts three times (and once more in Galatians and 2 Corinthians respectively). This is not a focus on the man, but a reminder that our testimony and experience is important and is often a tool to demonstrate to a lost world what it is God is doing in our lives. Right after the conversion of Saul is also the account of Peter taking the Gospel to the Roman Centurion by the name of Cornelius...again, a branching out of the Gospel from Jerusalem to the whole of the world...the Gospel is not just for the Jews, but for Jew and Gentile alike to the praise of our God.

What we find in the concluding chapters of Acts is nearly a complete shift of focus from the first Apostles to the Apostolic journeys of the Apostle Paul...again, note the theme of the Gospel going out to the ends of the earth. There is a brief interlude first in Acts 15 with the Council of Jerusalem and then again in Acts 21-22 with the arrest of Paul (noting here that at this point, God uses

ordinary means, not angelic means, to deliver Paul from the Jews who would kill him — again, the Gospel is for all people, not just the Jews.

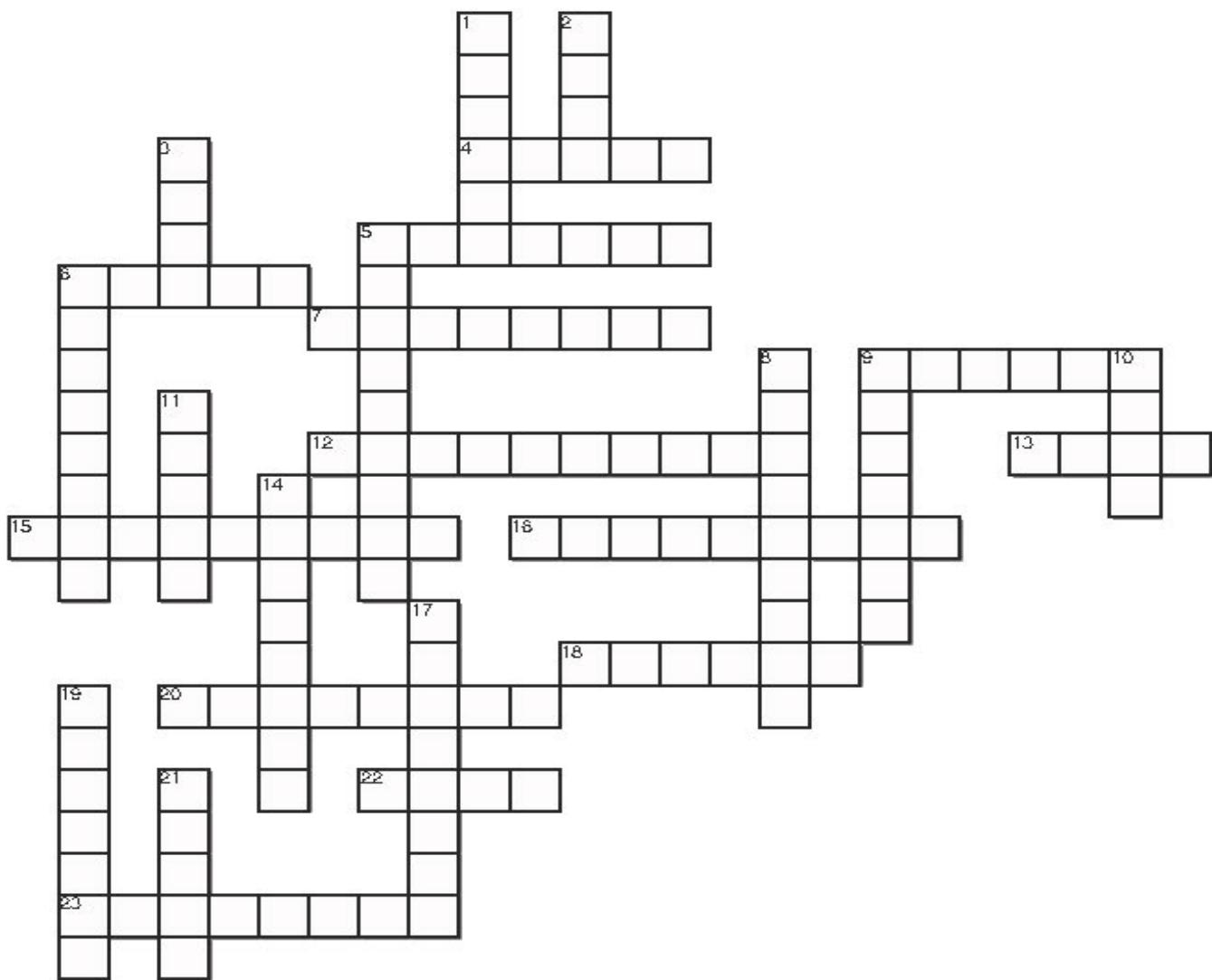
Acts closes with Paul finally in Rome and under house arrest, having appealed his case to Caesar (something that was the right of a Roman Citizen). Luke leaves the book rather open ended, clearly because he is finishing it before the trial of Paul and partly because the Gospel is open-ended...we have work yet to do and as the church grows through the world, the work of the book of Acts essentially continues generation after generation.

### Chromatic Notes:

- The structure of the Book of Acts is found laid out in verse 8 -- "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and throughout the earth." What you then see in the book of Acts is a spiraling outward of the Gospel.
- Whether we like it or not, drawing straws is a form of gambling, trusting in God's providence to provide an answer that you cannot discern on your own. While not advocated as a norm, God blesses this practice at least here in Acts 1. "The Lot is cast into the lap but its every decision is of the Lord." Proverbs 16:33.
- Note that the celebration of Pentecost is not a distinctly Christian holiday, but was a Jewish harvest celebration, set 50 days from Passover. Thus people from all over were in Jerusalem to celebrate the harvest festival...a festival that looked to the new life (of the fields) that came forth in the Spring.
- We should note, as we examine Acts 2:42-47, this is not the start of a commune where everyone shares everything equally and where compliance is coerced. Instead, this is a picture of Christian generosity where people share as there is need.
- A principle of public disobedience arises in Acts 5:29. Peter is commanded by the civil government not to preach in the name of Jesus. The response? We must obey God rather than man. While in ordinary situations, the scriptures command us to submit to the authorities that God permits to be over us, where obedience to those authorities would cause us to sin, we must obey God first.
- Interestingly, in Acts 6, we have the institution of the office of Deacon. The idea is not new and in the Jewish culture, retired priests were considered deacons, those who trained new priests and were caregivers in the community. Here, the need arises because of contentions between Greek and Jewish elements of this church...see, folks, tensions in the church are not unique to us...people are fallen and sinful. The bottom line is that the office of Deacon is an office of seeing justice done and while the Apostles might have gotten caught up in this feud, they recognized that their calling was first one of prayer and teaching the Word; hence the need for Deacons to be called to serve in this way...and note, Deacons preached as well...in fact, it was Stephen's preaching, not his work of service, that got him killed for his faith.
- It should be noted in Acts 15 we see a beginning to the process of leadership changing over from the Apostles to the Elders or Overseers of the churches. As the original Apostles passed into glory through the first century, the extraordinary office of the Apostle comes to an end and the ordinary office of Elder takes its place. Here in this counsel we see Elders and Apostles ruling together, not with the Apostles dictating this or that.
- The man who fell from the window because he fell asleep is named Eutychus...a name that means "Good Fortune" in Greek. God's providence has a humorous edge to it...

**Week 45: Acts**

Complete the crossword below

**Across**

4. 'What God has made \_\_\_\_\_, do not call common...'
5. Philip was transported to evangelize an Eunuch from the court of this Ethiopian Queen.
6. When Paul and Barnabas separate, this man travels with Paul.
7. This is the wife of the Governor, Felix, who liked to listen to Paul preach.
9. This prophet sought to warn Paul about returning to Jerusalem.
12. Paul meets up with Apollos, an eloquent Jewish teacher from this city.
13. The Jerusalem Council decided that there should only be this many restrictions on the practice of Gentile believers...
15. Paul preaches in this ancient Athenian stadium.
16. 'There is \_\_\_\_\_ in no one else...'
18. This was the name of the Centurion that was so helpful to Paul when the boat shipwrecked on their trip to Rome.
20. 'This promise is for you and your \_\_\_\_\_ and for all who are far off...'
22. Paul and Barnabas separate and go their own ways over a disagreement on whether to take this Gospel writer with them.
23. This man fell asleep while listening to Paul preach and fell from a window; thankfully Paul raised him from the dead.

**Down**

1. This office is formed because Greek widows were not getting enough provision.
2. Who is the author of the Book of Acts?
3. When Peter preached the sermon at Pentecost, what prophet did he say was being fulfilled?
5. This Roman Centurion called Peter to preach to him and his household.
6. This was the name of the woman who was struck dead because she covered up her husband's lie to the Apostles.
8. Peter is recorded as healing a lame man at this gate.
9. Jews from this city and from the city of Iconium dogged Paul and Barnabas even seeing to it that Paul was stoned in Lystra.
10. This man presided at Stephen's martyrdom and would become the most vocal advocate of Christianity in the first century.
11. The Apostle James is murdered by this Jewish king.
14. What was the name of the man elected by drawing straws to replace Judas?
17. This man's name means 'Son of Encouragement'
19. The first Christian martyr.
21. How many days did Jesus stay with and teach his Apostles between the time of his Resurrection and his Ascension?

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 46: Acts 25 – 1 Corinthians 4 (November 9-15)

### Summary:

As we enter into chapter 25, we find a change of leadership as Felix is succeeded by Festus and the Jews appealed to the new leadership to bring Paul up on charges again. To keep himself from being returned to Jerusalem where odds were good that he would never reach trial, Paul leverages his Roman citizenship and appeals to Caesar to try his case. Such was a privilege given only to Roman citizens.

Paul's journey to Rome is anything but easy as he will eventually set sail accompanied by a Centurion named Julius as his keeper. They got caught in bad weather seeking to make for port and ended up running aground on a reef just off the island of Malta. Even so, those that stayed together with Paul and the Centurion, according to God's promise, were preserved and eventually Paul would arrive in Rome. What is interesting is the way that the book of Acts comes to a close. It is interesting because there really is no closure but the book is left open-ended with the encouraging words that the Gospel was going out even in Caesar's household. The ending is a reminder that the Gospel and the Great Commission does not end with the ending of the book of Acts or even with the death of Paul...it is ongoing and we are a part of it even today. Though Paul is chained, the word of God cannot be chained. Though the Apostles are mortal, the Gospel is eternal.

### Romans:

Romans is arguably the most thorough theological writing in the New Testament and we find in it Paul's systematic approach to developing the doctrine of Salvation for the Christian faith. Some have argued that Paul wrote this letter as a tool to introduce himself to the Christians in Rome and as such is far more thorough than he was in his other books. If such is the case, this places the writing of Romans before Paul's final arrest. What we do know is that Paul wrote this letter when he was being hosted by Gaius (Romans 16:23), a Macedonian (Acts 19:29), which means Paul most likely was in the city of Corinth (Gaius was known by the Corinthians and Paul spent a great deal of time in this city ministering) shortly before his trip to Jerusalem to take the support from the Gentile Christians (Acts 15:25). In addition, Erastus, who is referred to as the "city treasurer" here, lived in Corinth (2 Timothy 4:20).

We also know that Paul used a scribe or a secretary (called an "amanuensis" in the ancient Greek culture) to write this letter (Romans 16:22) with Paul dictating. That probably dates this letter as having been written in the mid-50s AD.

After his introductions, Paul provides us with the theme of the book: "the righteous shall live by faith" (Romans 1:16-17). This, of course, is quoted from Habakkuk 2:4. Everything that flows out from this point on in Romans is a development of that statement, beginning with the development of the idea that we (by nature) are not righteous and thus do not live by faith but live in rebellion from God and from the Law. Thus we are judged and rightly condemned by a righteous God. No one is righteous, no not one (Romans 3:10).

Paul then goes on to point out that as we are not righteous and cannot earn God's favor (we have all fallen short of the glory of God), that righteousness is imputed to us through faith. Thus, Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness (Romans 4:3).

Yet how does this faith come to us and why? Why would a just God give faith to his people when we deserve wrath? Paul goes on to point out that just as sin entered into the world through the wickedness of one man, so one man (the Son of God) also entered into the world as a man to pay the penalty for the transgression of those for whom he died, thus making a righteous exchange (Romans 5:12-17).

Having established that righteousness is through faith in Jesus Christ alone, Paul goes on to ask how now shall we live? Should we go on sinning so that grace would be even more abundant? "May it never be said!" Paul writes (Romans 6:1-2). As

heirs with Christ we are called to live with a nature consistent with Christ, not our old nature. The problem is that the "old man," our old natures, raise their ugly heads and we cannot live faithfully in our own strength. So who will save me from this body of death? Jesus! (Romans 7:24-25). And it is Jesus who ensures that those he calls to faith, he preserves in faith until the very end...it is not possible for the genuine believer to "fall away" because we are held by Christ, not our works. Thus, "for those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed into the image of his Son" and those he predestined, he also called, and those he called he also justified and those he justified he also glorified" a perfect "chain" wrought by God and unbreakable by human or devilish hands.

As Reformed Christians, Romans 9 is often one of those chapters we look to, that teaches God's absolute sovereignty over both salvation and eternal condemnation. It speaks of "True Israel" being those who have faith in Jesus, not of those who can trace lineage back to Abraham (Romans 9:6-8), it reminds us that God does not love all people indiscriminately (Romans 9:13), but loves his elect and prepares them for glory while at the same time prepares the reprobate for destruction as a demonstration of his power (Romans 9:19-24).

Paul continues his words of instruction, that we understand not only the eternal outworking of God's plan (Romans 11) but also of our responsibility to strive in the power of the Holy Spirit to live a godly life (Romans 12-15:13). The later half of Romans 15 along with Romans 16 is an extended greeting to those in the Roman church as well as an expression of Paul's desire to visit with them (something that will be taking place relatively quickly). And as Paul closes, indeed may glory be to the only wise God and the father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### 1 Corinthians:

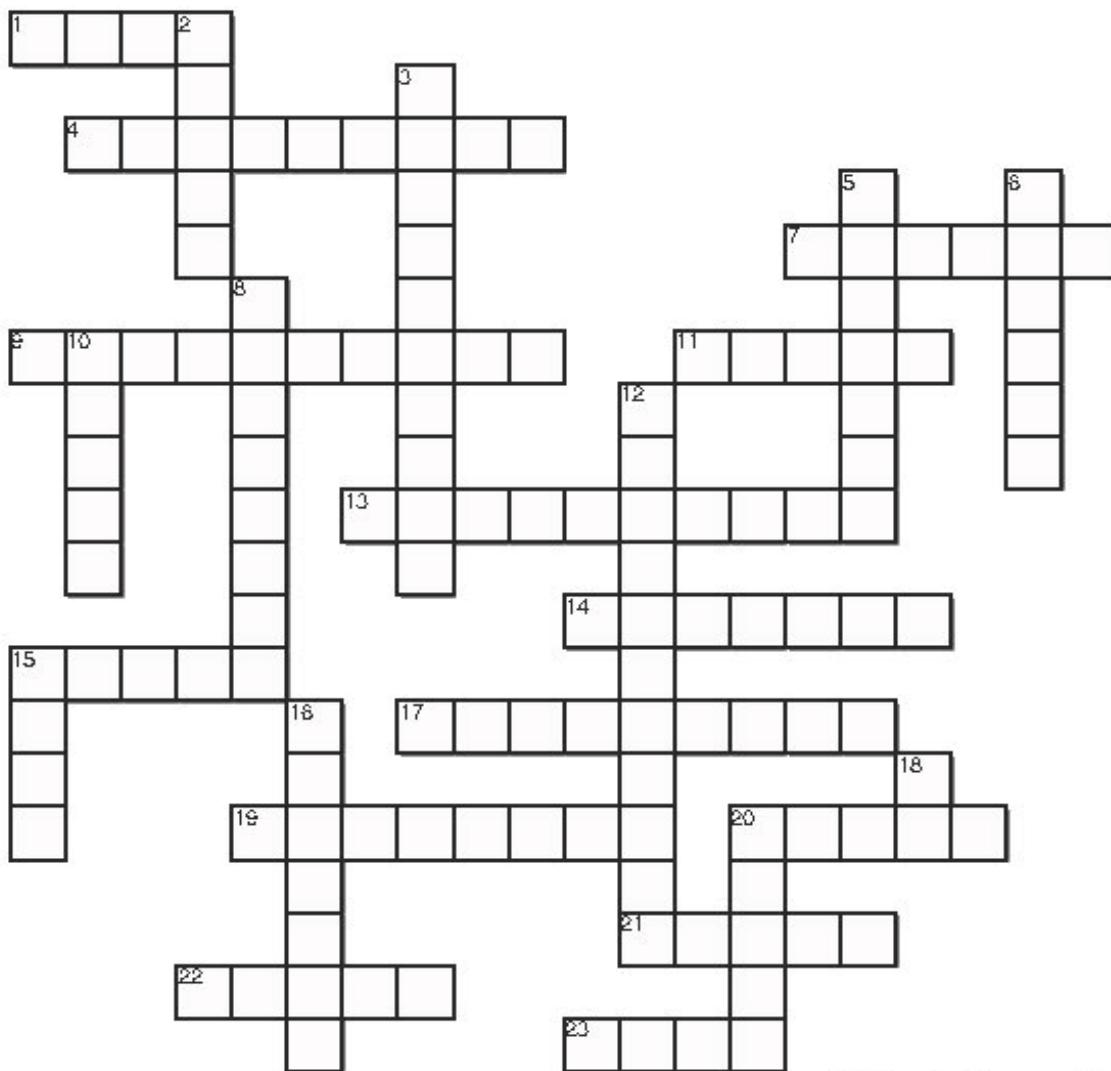
We arrive at the beginning of 1 Corinthians, a letter written earlier than Romans (as Paul was likely staying with the Corinthians while he wrote Romans). That places the book likely in the early 50s AD. Sadly, this church which Paul had founded earlier had fallen into infighting and division and Paul's letter is designed to address these problems. What probably is the most significant thing to make note of in these earliest chapters is that Paul begins with the disunity that the people have fallen into as well as the solution to disunity — proclaiming Christ crucified! If we keep our eyes focused on the work to do then we will not fall into fighting over what is taking place within our walls.

### Chromatic Notes:

- In Acts 27 we receive a very accurate description of a Greek/Roman ship design with double rudders in the rear (verse 40) and ropes that could be used to tighten down the boards of the hull to help keep out the water (verse 17). This is just one more reminder as to the eye-witness account of Luke as he is writing this.
- Historically, Romans has been one of the most influential books of the New Testament. St. Augustine was converted by the Book of Romans as was Martin Luther. Wesley was converted through hearing Luther's preface to the book of Romans being read. It is a deep and rich book and many pastors preach it across many years, taking time to go a verse or two at a time through the text.
- The Puritan writer, William Perkins, referred to Romans 8:29-30 as "The Golden Chain."
- One evangelism tool that many people use is called "The Romans Road" and is taken from the words of the book of Romans. It follows this progression: Romans 3:11, 3:23, 5:12, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9-13.
- Note that the Rufus mentioned in Romans 16:13 may be the son of Simon the Cyrene who was compelled to carry the cross for Jesus on his walk to Golgotha (see Matthew 15:21).

# Week 46 (Acts 24-1 Corinthians 4)

Complete the crossword below



Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

## Across

- Paul refers to Jesus as the 'Second \_\_\_\_\_.'
- As Paul writes the letter to the Romans, he is getting ready to travel to this city.
- This is the king that takes over after Felix.
- The word for a secretary in the ancient Greek world.
- 'The Righteous shall live by \_\_\_\_\_.'
- In Christ, then, we are 'more than \_\_\_\_\_.'
- This was the name of king Agrippa's wife.
- 'David speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from \_\_\_\_\_.'
- 'None is \_\_\_\_\_, no not one.'
- This was the most significant problem in the Corinthian church.
- Paul calls us to outdo one another in showing this.
- 'The wages of sin is \_\_\_\_\_.'
- 'Confess with your \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus is Lord'
- 'How beautiful are the \_\_\_\_\_ of those who preach the good news.'

## Down

- 'So it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has \_\_\_\_\_.'
- Paul describes Gentile believers as a wild \_\_\_\_\_ being grafted into the tree (2 words).
- The name of the man who penned the letter of Romans for Paul.
- Paul sails to Rome being guarded by a Centurion with this name.
- Because the invisible attributes of God are visible in nature, unbelievers do this with their inherent knowledge of God.
- The ship Paul is on runs aground on a reef off of this island.
- 'Those who he \_\_\_\_\_ he also called.'
- 'We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ.'
- This is one of the people that Paul baptized in Corinth.
- Can those who are in the flesh please God?
- True circumcision is a matter of this organ.

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 47: 1 Corinthians 5 – 2 Corinthians 13 (November 16-22)

### Summary:

As Paul moves from 1 Corinthians 4 to 1 Corinthians 5, he begins addressing other problems that have been plaguing the Corinthian church. Chapters 1-4 were focused on the problem of Unity to those problems that have been caused from a lack of unity. As I regularly remind people, ideas have consequences and when a church falls into the mindset that anything goes, they will fall into division and sin and the Corinthian church is a prime example of that.

Paul begins, then, by addressing the sexual immorality within the church, in this case, a man sleeping with his father's wife. The solution that Paul puts forward is first to remove the offending person from the body and second to teach the church as a whole the significance of being sexually pure.

In Chapter 6, Paul then addresses the lawsuits that have become common amongst a believing body undergoing such strife. Like sexual immorality, the people were behaving like the world behaved and not in such a way that was distinct from the world. That leads Paul into addressing the next problem of this church...whether or not to marry. Should believers remain single so they can preach without distraction or should they marry and not fall into the temptation to sin. The short answer to the matter is that Paul teaches that it is better to remain single so you can totally devote yourself to the Gospel, but this is to be seen as a more exceptional case. The norm is that people who would be tempted to lust would get married and raise covenant families. In fact, he will go on in 1 Corinthians 9:5 that even Peter (referred to here as Cephas) and a number of the other Apostles had wives who accompanied them on their missionary travels. Such was even the same of Jesus' brothers.

As we move into 1 Corinthians 10-14, though, Paul changes gears somewhat and begins building a theology that will point them to unity. He thus focuses on our covenantal union as one body, modesty in dress and lifestyle (chapter 10), the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (chapter 11), the gifting work of the Spirit (chapter 12), the "more excellent way" of love (chapter 13), and that all things are for the building up of the body (chapter 14).

In Chapter 15, Paul brings his theological discussion to a climax in the Resurrection of Christ. All things, he argues, hinges on this great reality. If we lose the resurrection, we of all people are most to be pitied (1 Corinthians 15:19). Chapter 16 closes out with Paul's greetings to friends in the church.

### 2 Corinthians

One might think that after receiving such a letter as 1 Corinthians from Paul that everything would be resolved and the church could move on in faith...but then again, such a view would be a bit naive. The reality is that we in our day have access to all of Paul's letters along with the full and complete canon of scripture, and we fall into some of the same traps. So while we might recognize the error and folly of the Corinthian church, let us sense it in our own church as well before we condemn them too harshly.

It would seem that there were actually several letters of Paul to this church that were written between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians from the references that Paul makes to previous times he has written to them. Yet, the Spirit has preserved for us that which is needful for us to know and those letters to the Corinthian church that have been lost are not of essential importance. The biggest challenge that Paul is facing with those in this church is that there had been some coming into the church, claiming to be Apostles and claiming that Paul was not really an Apostle. These false Apostles have basically taught that Paul must not be an Apostle because of all the trials he has been facing in his life — essentially the prosperity mentality is what they are exalting...if God honors your ministry you will experience all sorts of blessings and your church will grow. The "prosperity gospel" is really no gospel at all, so Paul moves into this letter by arguing first what the fruit of the Gospel looks like and second that his sufferings are allowed by God so that Paul would always rest his trust in God's strength, not his own.

In terms of the fruit of the Gospel...or otherwise tests of what the genuine Gospel of Jesus Christ looks to promote, Paul begins by insisting

that all things must point us to Christ. If something does not point us to Christ, it has no place in the life of the Church. The second aspect of the true Gospel that Paul highlights is that of a heavenly perspective over an earthly one. He follows with a discussion of the importance of the Gospel being held up as the gospel of reconciliation and thus if we are genuinely living our lives as believers we will be humble, repentant, and will seek to repair broken relationships here as God has repaired our relationship with himself through Jesus.

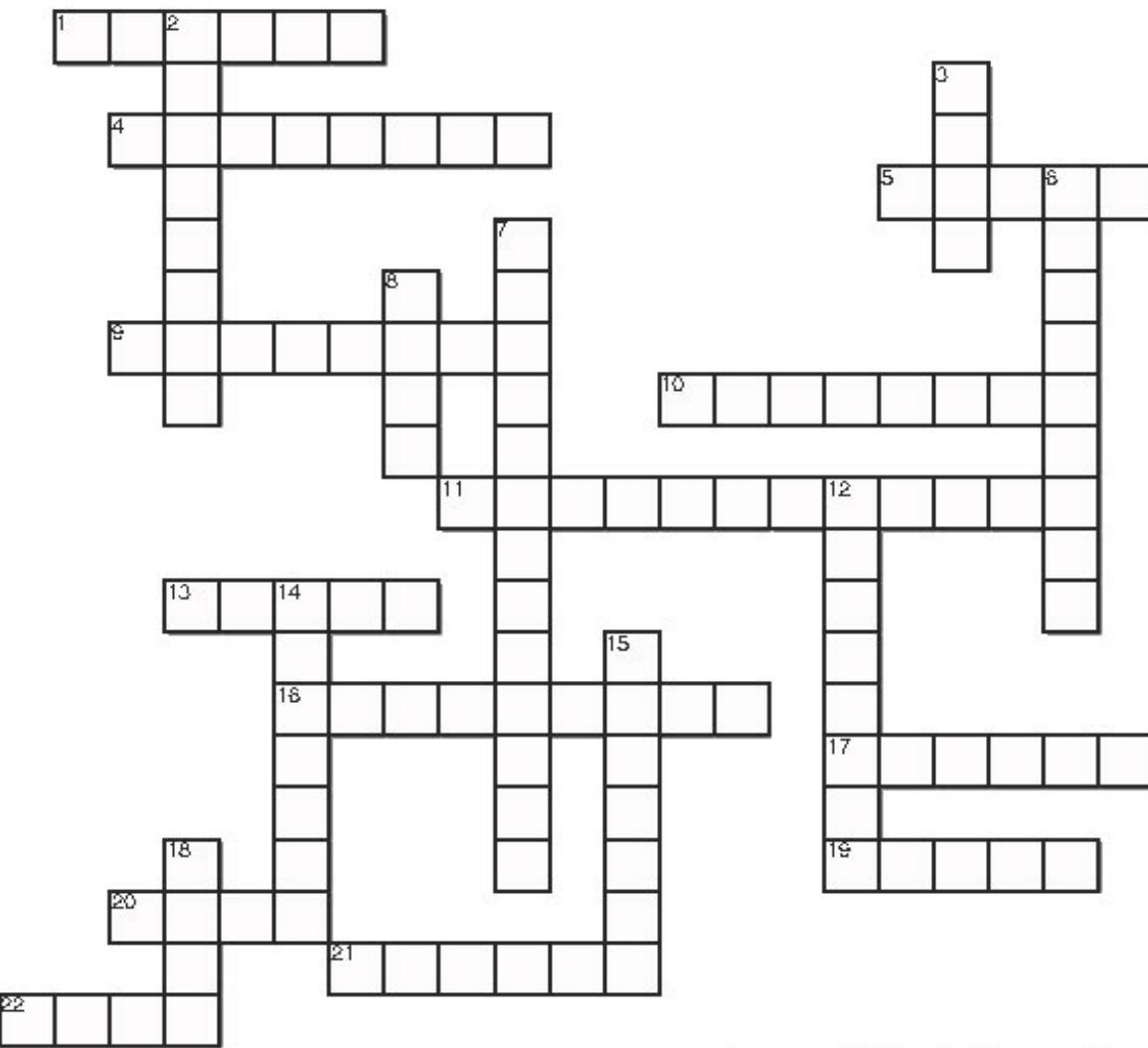
As we then move into chapter 7 and move through the end of the book, Paul defends his own ministry with an account of the work he has done in the midst of the Corinthian church and even of his own sufferings in ministry. He then closes with an admonition that he is traveling to Corinth for a third visit and if there are charges that the church still holds against him, then they must bring them forth with 2-3 witnesses (an appeal to Jewish law). At the same time, he commands the church to examine their own hearts and to discern who has been leading them astray. 2 Corinthians closes with one of the more well known New Testament benedictions...a reminder of the role of reconciliation as well as of our submission to the Triune God.

### Chromatic Notes:

- Note 1 Corinthians 5:2. This man could not have been removed if he was not a member of the body...a reminder to us that churches exercised membership from the earliest days and that they also exercised discipline within their ranks as well. Thus, this man is delivered over to Satan in the hopes that the body may be preserved from sinful influence and that the man, having received discipline, would repent and return to the body.
- Note 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 — a reminder to us that we will stand alongside of Jesus in the final judgment of the world and even of the fallen angels. Why then do Christians need to appeal to civil courts?
- 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 is one of the passages that we appeal to when it comes to baptizing children where only one parent is a believer.
- 1 Corinthians 8:9 is the check and balance to Christian liberty. Am I being a stumbling block for others by my freedom? If I am, I should restrain myself.
- 1 Corinthians 9:8-10 is the basis for ministers and evangelists being supported by the churches they serve...we do not muzzle an ox when it is treading grain...
- 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 is a reminder that baptism is about placing someone under the covenant mediatorship of their mediator (in our case, Christ), not simply a ritual we might perform.
- 1 Corinthians 11:17-34: Note that the idea of the Lord's table is not an invention of the New Testament era, but is something that also has its roots back in the Old. See Malachi 1:7 and Ezekiel 4:22 for example.
- 1 Corinthians 13 is one of those great chapters we read at weddings and at other times in our lives. It is a reminder that agape love is the uniting bond of Christian maturity (see also Colossians 3:14).
- 1 Corinthians 14:21; Paul connects tongues to God's prophesy in Isaiah 28:11-12 that the Gospel will be preached in foreign tongues in Jerusalem as a testimony against the Jews. 1 Corinthians 14:26 is likely one of the most important principles for church and family life...let all things be done for the purpose of building up...
- 1 Corinthians 16:2 — note that Paul instructs the church to take up the collection on the first day of the week...an indicator that they were meeting on Sundays for worship.
- 2 Corinthians 5:21 — this is one of the most significant theological verses in 2 Corinthians...Jesus became sin that we might receive righteousness...there is an exchange taking place. We refer to this as "imputation" for our sin was imputed to Christ's account and Christ's righteousness was imputed to us.
- 2 Corinthians 6:7 — Paul speaks of weapons in the right and left hand...here he is employing gladiatorial language, a reminder of the age in which he lived.

# Week 47 (1 Corinthians 5-2 Corinthians 13)

Complete the crossword below



## Across

- If you are tempted beyond your ability to resist, God will provide you a way of \_\_\_\_\_.
- God tells Paul that His power is made perfect in Paul's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 'we are the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.'
- 'Let all things be done for \_\_\_\_\_ up.'
- The Jews passing through the Red Sea were \_\_\_\_\_ into Moses.
- In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul asserts that for the Christian everything rests upon the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus.
- The immoral man that Paul rebukes is to be given over to whom?
- Though our afflictions may seem great, Paul writes that they are \_\_\_\_\_ in comparison to the eternal weight of glory.
- In the end times, believers will judge men and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Paul lifts up this associate as an example to the Corinthian church.
- There are varieties of gifts but we are all members of one \_\_\_\_\_.
- Do not \_\_\_\_\_ an ox while he is treading grain.
- I would rather speak \_\_\_\_\_ words with my mind than 10,000 words in a tongue.'

Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker

## Down

- 'God loves a \_\_\_\_\_ giver.'
- Food is meant for the stomach, but the body is meant for the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Paul had to change his plans, but had hoped to visit the Corinthian church on way back from this region.
- We are given weapons of \_\_\_\_\_ in the right hand and in the left.
- Paul rebukes a man for being immoral with his father's \_\_\_\_\_.
- When Jesus took the cup, he called it the blood of the new \_\_\_\_\_.
- Paul promises to send this associate to the Corinthians ahead of him.
- We are called to destroy arguments and knowledge against God, taking every thought \_\_\_\_\_ to obey Christ.
- This is the uniting bond of Christian maturity.

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 48: Galatians – Colossians (November 23–29)

### Summary:

#### Galatians:

Galatians is considered by most scholars to be the earliest of Paul's letters, written to the group of churches in the region of Galatia, which is in the central portion of modern day Turkey, churches that Paul planted on his first missionary journey and again visited on his third journey through the region. That dates this letter in the late 40's A.D.

Two things stand out as being very significant about the letter to the Galatians. First, Paul gives us a little more of his testimony and information about his trip to meet with the Apostles. Secondly, the church in Galatia has been led astray by "Judaizers" and some of Paul's strongest language is employed in this letter to deal with those who would lead these churches astray. It should also be noted that much of the language of Galatians should remind us of the book of Romans. Some have gone as far as to argue that the book of Romans was written as an expansion of the book of Galatians.

Paul begins by chastising the people for listening to false teachers. He said those who teach a Gospel different than the he preached should be counted accursed...even it that person be an angel. With as many "varieties" of error that are being taught as orthodox today, Galatians is an extremely important book to listen to.

The heart of Galatians is found in chapter 3 where Paul essentially lays out the principle of salvation by grace and not by works. In brief, Paul lays out the argument that:

1. Abraham was saved by faith alone and not works
2. Those who trust in Christ are the true descendants of Abraham
3. Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross was an exchange of his righteousness for the sins of those with faith
4. The purpose of the Old Covenant law was to point people toward Christ

Ultimately Paul moves on to stress (as he brings this letter to a close, that if we are redeemed by Grace, we ought to also live like it for the flesh and its desires have been nailed to the cross.

#### Ephesians:

The next three books we will read this week are all part of what are sometimes called "Paul's Prison Epistles." These were written around 60 AD, after Paul had arrived as a prisoner in Rome. While Romans forms Paul's most complete systematic theology, Ephesians forms Paul's practical theology and is often used in the context of counseling.

Paul begins Ephesians with an emphasis on the sovereignty of God in salvation, electing his own from before the foundation of the earth. The heart of Ephesians can be found in chapter 2 and chapter 4. In the former, Paul lays out the principle that as we were all once sinners but redeemed by God's grace (not of our own works), we should walk in faithful living, no longer as strangers to the things of God. Similarly, in chapter 4, Paul describes the role of the church as that body that God has given that is called and intended to lead and guide us in spiritual maturity...a body grows in an orderly way and thus the leadership of the church is called to guide and direct that growth.

Chapters 5 and 6 establish a theology of relationships with a focus on the family. We are to walk in love and not in immorality, wives are to submit to their husband's spiritual authority and husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. Likewise, children are to submit to the authority of their parents and parents are to raise

up children in the fear of the Lord and in the instruction of his word. Even servants and slaves are to be submissive though Masters are not to lord their powers over the slaves either. Ephesians comes to a close with the well-known language of the Armor of God — in this case instructions as to our relationship with and attitudes toward the enemy.

#### Philippians:

Essentially, Philippians is a thank-you letter directed to a church that had provided Paul with assistance during his time in prison. While Galatians is perhaps the harshest of Paul's letters, Philippians is easily the most affectionate with Paul longing to be with the people of this church. There are many memorable statements that Paul makes in this letter, one arguably written toward the end of his imprisonment:

- *"for me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (1:21)*
- *"in humility count others more significant than yourselves" (2:3)*
- *"At the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." (2:10-11)*
- *"whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ" (3:7)*
- *"I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as dung, in order that I may gain Christ" (3:8)*
- *"Our citizenship is in heaven..." (3:20)*
- *"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice." (4:4)*
- *"The peace of God which passes all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (4:7)*
- *"Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (4:8-9)*
- *"I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (4:13)*

#### Colossians:

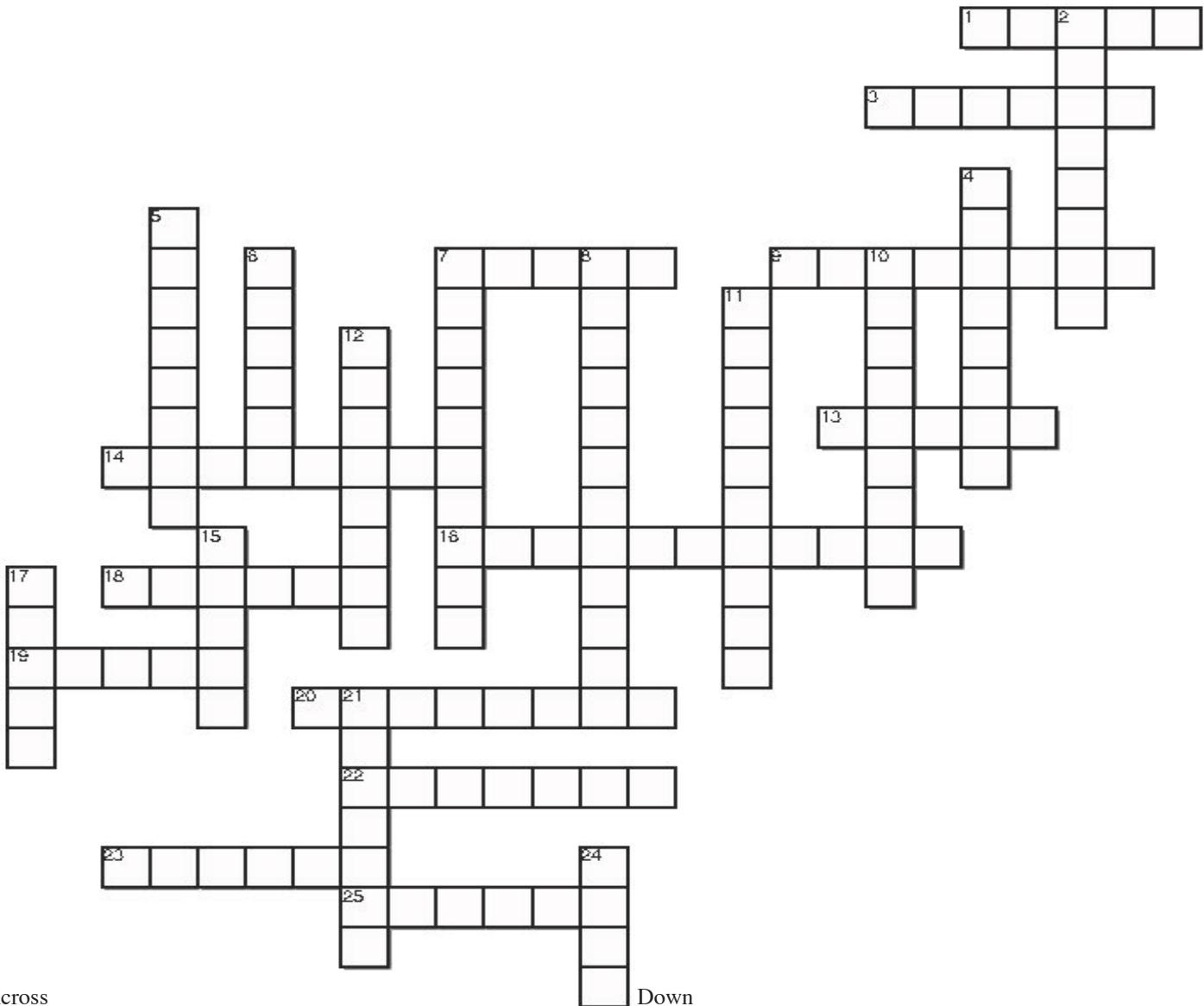
We close this week out with Colossians, a book written with a focus on Christ being first and preeminent amongst all of the cosmos. Everything that is has its existence through Christ and everything that is reconciled is reconciled through the work of Christ on the cross. From beginning to end, everything is to be about Christ — our lives, our churches, our theology, our worship, etc... Whatever we do, in word or in deed, we must do in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Colossians 3:17).

#### Chromatic Notes:

- Galatians 3:16 — Paul points out the term "offspring" used in the covenantal language with Abraham (Genesis 17) is singular and thus the object in view was Christ. This is again a reminder, as Paul points out in Romans 9:6-8, believers in Jesus Christ are the true Israel. Thus, those who are Christ's are Abraham's offspring and heirs (Galatians 3:29).
- Ephesians 1:11 is one of the passages that I cite the most in discussions about God's sovereignty...God orders all things according to the council of his will.
- Philippians 4:13 — "I can do all things through him that strengthens me" is likely one of the most mis-quoted verses of the Bible. In context, Paul is not writing about being able to shoot basketballs or perform feats; Paul is writing that he has learned how to be content in every situation for he rests on the strength of Christ.

## Week 48 (Galatians-Colossians)

Complete the crossword below



### Across

1. Being found in human form, Jesus humbled himself even to this point:
3. Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians are called \_\_\_\_\_ Epistles.
7. The more familiar name of Cephas, whom Paul had to correct face to face.
9. Paul writes that if anyone preaches a different Gospel than he, let that person be \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Paul writes in Galatians that Hagar represents this mountain.
14. 'The mystery is that the \_\_\_\_\_ are fellow heirs'
16. 'In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been \_\_\_\_\_ according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the council of his will.'
18. Where is the Christian's citizenship?
19. Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the invisible God.
20. We must put on the whole armor of God because we fight against cosmic powers over this 'present \_\_\_\_\_'.
22. Paul describes his works as dung...but this 'more sensible' word is often used.
23. 'Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the \_\_\_\_\_.'
25. This is where Paul traveled to before he came to Damascus and then Jerusalem.

### Down

2. The household of God is built on the foundation of the \_\_\_\_\_ and the prophets.
4. This is the first person to befriend Paul in Jerusalem.
5. After the Colossians were done reading their letter, they were supposed to pass it along to the Christians of this city.
6. When the Old Testament was talking about the 'offspring' in the covenants, of whom were they speaking?
7. 'See that you are not taken captive by \_\_\_\_\_ or human tradition.'
8. This person brought the gift from the Philippian church to Paul.
10. 'Those who belong to Christ Jesus have \_\_\_\_\_ the flesh with its passions and desires.'
11. 'God chose us in him before the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world.'
12. Pastors and other church leaders are given the primary job of \_\_\_\_\_ up the church body to prepare them for ministry.
15. Paul records meeting with \_\_\_\_\_, Cephas, and John in Jerusalem.
17. In Ephesians, Paul writes, 'By grace you have been saved through \_\_\_\_\_.'
21. 'Those of Faith are sons of \_\_\_\_\_.'
24. 'To live is Christ and to die is \_\_\_\_\_'

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 49: 1 Thessalonians – 2 Timothy (November 30 – December 6)

### Summary:

#### 1 Thessalonians

Paul established a church in the city of Thessalonica during his second missionary journey (see Acts 17:1-9), but here he encountered intense persecution by the Jewish leaders who sought to run him out. Though he did leave the city, the church that remained flourished even under persecution. And thus Paul largely writes this letter to encourage them as well as to give them some instructions as to how to continue on in faith.

Chapter 4 really holds the heart of this letter...Paul begins by exhorting them to holy living, commanding them to avoid sexual immorality, wronging brothers or sisters in Christ, and showing brotherly love towards all. Paul then goes on to encourage the believers in the city with the reminder that those who have died in Christ have not been forgotten, but will also be raised up on the last day.

#### 2 Thessalonians

Shortly after the first letter is sent to the church in Thessalonica, he receives word from those who had delivered the first letter that the people in the church are still confused about the immediacy of Christ's return. It seems that some, believing that Jesus is to return in weeks or months, have ceased to work and are using the impending return of Christ as an excuse for laziness. Thus, Paul addresses this second letter in the hopes of clarifying his position on the return of Jesus.

Thus, we see Paul clarifying that at the return of Jesus, believers will be redeemed and the wicked condemned (1:5-10), that the Thessalonians (and by extension, us as well) should live our lives in a Godly manner and in faith in the meantime (1:11-12), the coming of the "Man of Lawlessness" — a personification of the evil one — has been restrained until God's chosen timing whereby the wicked are deluded (2:1-12), and thus we should stand firm in the faith (2:13-17) and be diligent in our labors (3:1-15).

#### 1 Timothy

Two of Paul's most practical and instructive letters were written to his young assistant, Timothy. Written later in Paul's life, we find young Timothy having been sent to Ephesus to help lead this persecuted church. In these letters we also see the beginning of the framework of the ongoing church, established on the leadership of Overseers (also referred to as Elders) and Deacons. Paul is handing off much of his Apostolic responsibility to those who are faithful leaders in the church.

This first letter contains a number of major themes, though in brief. In chapter 1 we find Paul summarizing again the Gospel of salvation and then in chapter 2 encouraging prayer for all sorts of people so that believers may live in peace with men and women living out their lives peacefully and in accordance with God's design. Paul continues with a series of requirements for those seeking office as Elder or Deacon. Chapter 4 reminds Timothy that some will leave the faith (he has already mentioned Hymenaeus and Alexander) and then gives instruction on giving honor where honor is due, particularly to those who labor in preaching and teaching (5:17-19). Paul comes back to the theme of false teachers and the danger that they bring and then closes with the commendation to remain firm in the faith and not to waver, guarding the deposit (of faith) that he had been given.

#### 2 Timothy

Many scholars consider this to be the last letter that Paul writes before his execution as he speaks of being "poured out" (4:6) and having fought the good fight (4:7). He also hopes that Timothy will be able to bring his book and an extra cloak and visit with him before he dies...note the urgency of these words..."Do your best to come to me soon." Paul also is very clear about naming those people who have done harm to him and give a reminder that vengeance belongs in the hands of the Lord.

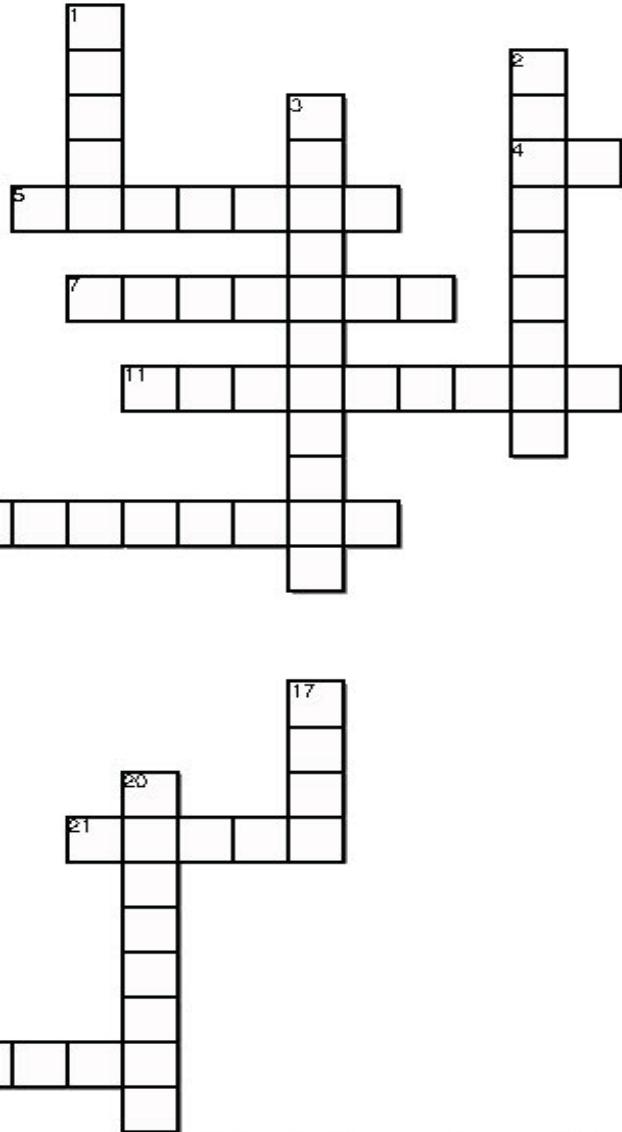
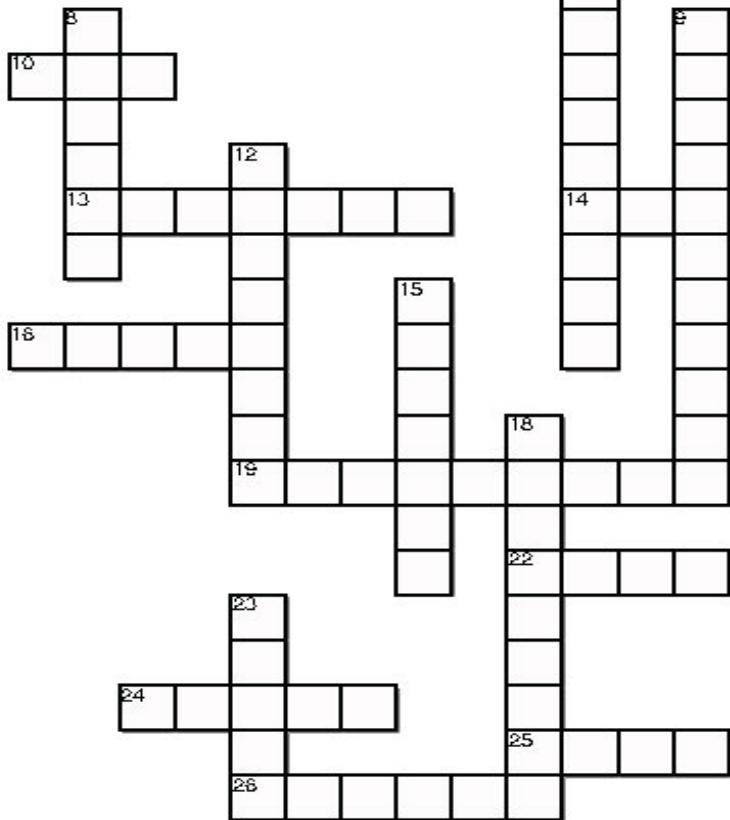
Two major themes run through the entirety of this letter: First, the overwhelming importance of the Word of God. Nothing could be more valuable to us and it is the source not only of our theology, but of all our teaching and good works (see especially 3:14-17). The second major theme is that those who abandon the Word of God do so at their own peril for when they do so, they are adversaries not of Paul or Timothy, but they are adversaries of God.

#### Chromatic Notes:

- Note that the term for "sexual immorality" is "pornea," from which we get the term, "pornographic." In Greek it refers to a variety of immoral practices, not just adultery. This includes any sexual activity outside of the context of a covenantal marriage.
- Note the reference in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 — "falling asleep" was a common idiom in ancient Greece that referred to death, not some sort of "soul sleep" that some people would argue for.
- Note that in the Latin translation of 1 Thessalonians 4:13, the word "rapio" appears, a word from which we get the English term "rapture." This term literally means to be "caught up with..." and refers to the ancient tradition of the people running out of their homes (and city) at the return of a great king, only to follow him back into the city celebrating. There is no indication of some sort of "secret" rapture.
- Many in our culture today have embraced a dispensational view of the end times (think the *Left Behind* series) that has a sort of 2-part return of Christ, the first time with a "secret rapture" to remove the church and then to reestablish the worship of the Jews in the temple. 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 is an excellent refutation of this view, though, for Paul clearly states that in the day that Jesus returns, he will enter into judgment over the wicked as well as delivering his afflicted people.
- The "Man of Lawlessness" (2 Thessalonians 2:3) is again one who is often taken out of context. Clearly this is anyone or thing that has the ability to lead astray and lead some down a path of destruction.
- Many have used 2 Thessalonians 3:10 as an excuse not to offer benevolences to the poor. Such would be a misinterpretation of Paul's intent (for Paul himself gathered a benevolence from the gentile churches to assist the weary churches in Jerusalem!). What Paul is speaking to are those sluggards who are able to work but would rather live off of the good benevolence of those in the church. Paul's solution is that the rumbling of their bellies will disavow the lazy people of their laziness.
- 2 Timothy 2:11 is one of those places in scripture that we go when arguing Paul's design for male leadership in the church.
- Note the language of Paul's requirements for Elder and Deacon. No human can live up to all of these perfectly, but the real question is are we striving toward that end?

**Week 49: 1 Thessalonians - 2 Timothy**

Complete the crossword below

Created on [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) Crossword Maker**Across**

4. You shall not muzzle this when he treads the grain.
5. When Jesus returns, he will do so with a cry of command, the voice of an archangel and the sound of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.'
7. Paul reports of having sent this apprentice to encourage the church in Thessalonica.
10. If a man is lazy, let him not \_\_\_\_\_.
11. This is one of the people who made a shipwreck of their faith.
13. This is the city where Timothy was sent to help this struggling church.
14. While many had abandoned Paul at the end of his life, this man remained faithful.
16. Strive to be a worker unashamed, being rightly able to handle the word of \_\_\_\_\_.
19. Paul writes that women should adorn themselves with this rather than with a bunch of jewelry (2 words).
21. An overseer must not be a lover of this.
22. This person alone is staying with Paul at the end of his life.
24. Deacons must hold to this mystery with a clear conscience.
25. This person accompanied Paul and addressed the Thessalonian church along with the Apostle Paul.
26. 'Give \_\_\_\_\_ in all circumstances.'

**Down**

1. God gave us not a spirit of fear but of \_\_\_\_\_ and love and self-control.
2. This companion of Paul was left at Miletus because he was ill.
3. 'All Scripture is \_\_\_\_\_ by God (2 words).
6. Thessalonica was a capitol city in this Roman province.
8. It is this hard-working person who ought to have the first share of the crops.
9. The Man of \_\_\_\_\_ personifies the coming Evil One.
12. Those who labor in this are worthy of double honor.
15. 'Walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own \_\_\_\_\_ and glory.'
17. Do this without ceasing.
18. 'For while bodily training is of some value, \_\_\_\_\_ is of value in every way...'
20. 'For God has not called us for impurity, but for \_\_\_\_\_.'
23. Pray even for kings so that we may live a peaceful and \_\_\_\_\_ life.

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 50: Titus – 1 Peter (December 7–13)

Summary:

Titus

There is a significant gap in terms of what we know about the life of Paul from the end of the book of Acts (probably around AD 62) and his death (probably around AD 66) when the historians of the early church record his martyrdom under the Ceasar Nero. It is in this period of time, it seems, that Paul sent Titus to the island of Crete to help organize this floundering church. This is also about the same time that 2 Timothy is written, which ought not be surprising as these two letters cover very similar themes.

The overarching theme of Titus is the importance of preserving true doctrine in the church. How is this done? By electing Godly leadership who will be faithful to the doctrine (1:5-16), by teaching sound doctrine (chapter 2), and by always live faithfully as a church body...wise counsel for all churches of every age, not just those stubborn Cretans.

Philemon:

Philemon is a letter of request, written by Paul and addressed to Philemon while Paul is in chains in Rome, probably around AD 60-61. It is a request on behalf of Onesimus, who had been one of Philemon's slaves, but who had escaped, come to faith in Jesus Christ and had become a valuable assistant to Paul. Paul, though, is not willing to see an injustice done to Philemon, so sends Onesimus back to his master to request release with a promise from Paul to offer any compensation that was necessary. Many people dislike this letter from Paul because Paul does not condemn the practice of slavery but instead treats it as a civil institution. At the same time, one must recognize that slavery in Paul's day was a very different thing than what was practiced in America where slavery was very much a matter of skin color and slaves were often treated as expendable pieces of property. In Paul's day, slavery was a means to get out of debt and even to become upwardly mobile if you were fortunate enough to be a slave for someone of wealth and influence. Slaves could also earn money to purchase their freedom and were not necessarily slaves for life in those days.

Hebrews:

There is a great deal of mystery and debate over who exactly wrote the Letter to the Hebrews. Traditionally it was ascribed to Paul, though the style of the letter is distinctly different from any of his other letters. Thus, people have often gone to great lengths in speculating the authorship of the letter. Some say it was Luke, some say John or another Apostle. Some say it was Matthias, some say Barnabas, some even say it was Mary. What we can say for sure, though, is that the author was highly educated in rabbinic Judaism and probably had some association with the Jews in Alexandria because many of the themes that this letter addresses are clearly designed to address the errors of Alexandrian Judaism. With that in mind, were I going to have to articulate an opinion, I would have to say, "Apollos," but definitely not in a dogmatic way.

If you were ever asked to summarize the Book of Hebrews in a phrase, it would be: Jesus is better... Jesus is better than an angel, he is better than the temple priesthood, he is better than the temple itself, he is better than Moses, and he is better than any of the idolatrous gods of the people...He is better. More fully, Hebrews provides us with a Christ-centered view of the Old Testament with the reminder that these Old Testament events all pointed themselves to Christ.

If you were to outline this book, you would see it fall into two major parts: first, Jesus being worthy of faith and worship because of his superiority and his work. Chapters 1 and 2 testify to Christ's glory, chapter 3 as to Jesus' mediatorship and prophethood, chapters 4-7 on his priesthood, chapter 8 as to the Covenant, chapter 9 in terms of the Temple, chapter 10 on the sacrifice.

Part 2 begins in chapter 11 with the Biblical definition of faith and focuses on what it means to live out our lives in light of the work of Christ. Chapter 12 continues that theme with speaking of the nature of genuine faith and the Kingdom of God and chapter 13 closes with an exhortation to live in a way consistent with the Gospel we proclaim.

James

James is one of those books that people tend to have either a love or hate reaction to. It is very "in your face" and practical about issues of living out your faith in church life (with lots of examples of living it badly) and that appeals to many of us while offending others. Few are ambivalent about James. Martin Luther objected to the book so much that he called it a "right straw epistle" essentially suggesting that it would be ready to burn and he did not consider James' emphasis on Works consistent with Paul's emphasis on grace. Of course, James' audience was different and was struggling with different issues, so a different (and complimentary) emphasis is taught.

There is some discussion as to which James this particular James happens to be. The most reasonable answer to this question is that this James is the brother of Jesus mentioned in Mark 6:3, 1 Corinthians 15:7, and Galatians 1:19. Though this James did not follow Jesus during his ministry, he came to faith after witnessing the resurrection of his older brother, Jesus. He would also become a leader in Jerusalem as Paul attests, noting that his language of addressing churches in the diaspora is very reflective of an address from a Jewish leader to Jewish converts. The heart of his letter can be found in chapter 3, verses 13-18...pursue wisdom from above and live by it, not by demonic wisdom of this world.

1 Peter

The Letters of Peter are amongst my favorites to preach and teach because they are about as practical as can be without sacrificing spiritual richness...remember, Peter was a fisherman, not a highly educated scholar like Paul...yet notice how thorough a knowledge of scripture this fisherman had...

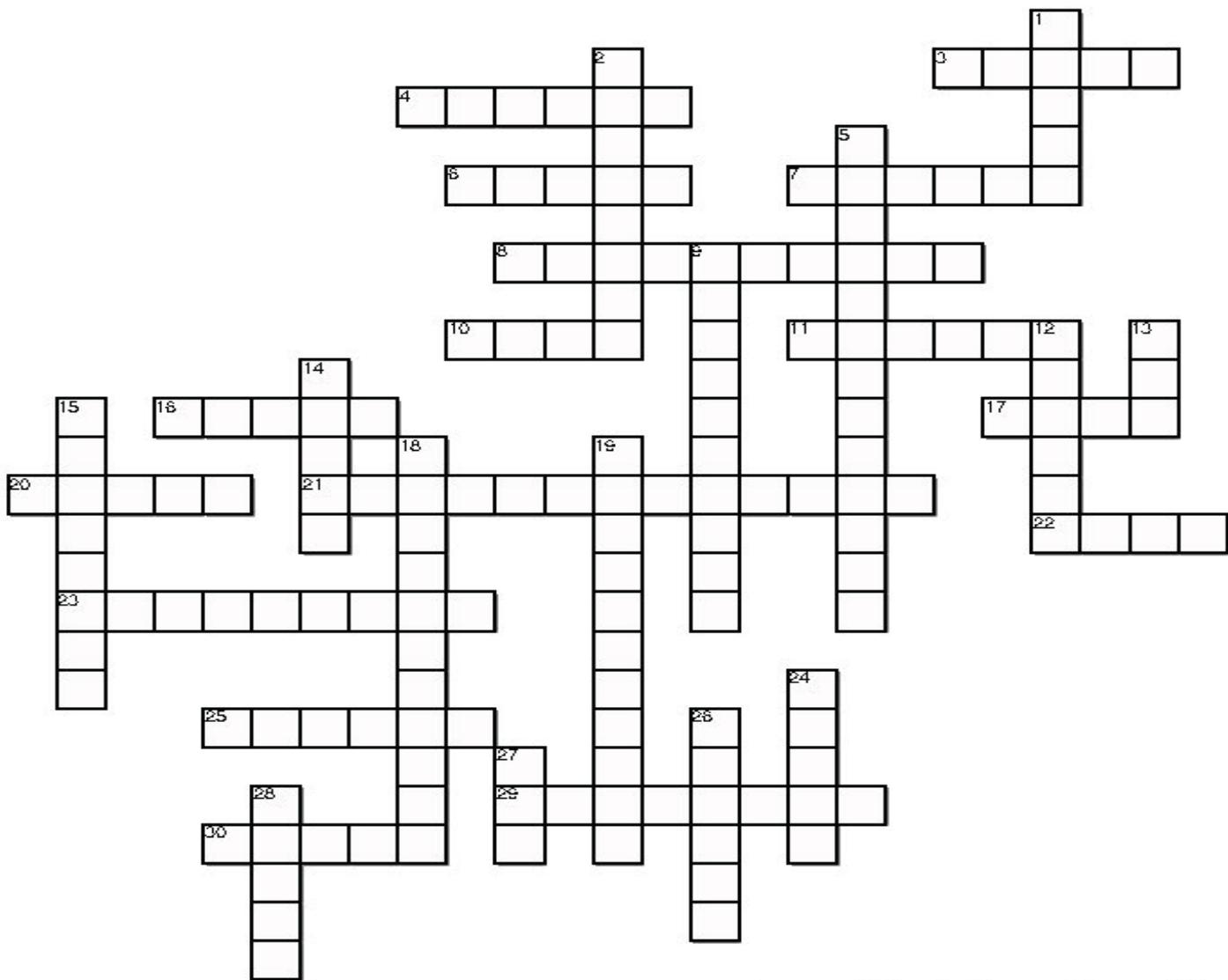
Tradition also places Peter in Rome about the time that Paul was there and it places Peter's death also under the reign of Nero, meaning that the letters of Peter were likely written between 62 and 67 AD. Peter's call in this first letter is a call to holiness for we have been made priests of the most living God.

Chromatic Notes:

- Though Titus is not mentioned in the Book of Acts, he is frequently mentioned as one of Paul's companions and co-workers in the Gospel in the Epistles (see 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:6,13-14; 8:6,16,23; 12:18; Galatians 2:1,3; 2 Timothy 4:10).
- By the way, to call someone a "Cretan" in slang comes from the ancient Greek tradition that Cretans (that is from the island of Crete) could not be trusted.
- Note in Titus 1:5, it speaks of "appointing" Elders in every town. In Greek, the idea of an appointment also carries with it the idea of a vote of confirmation by those believers in the church. Note too that in verse 7, these Elders are referred to as "Overseers"; a reminder that the two terms are interchangeable in the Bible.
- Hebrews 1:3 literally reads: "Being the radiance of the Glory of God" and is a reminder of Genesis 1:3 as a reminder that Jesus is the light that God shined upon his creation.
- 1 Peter 3:15 speaks of the responsibility of EVERY Christian being able to make a defense of the faith we have. The term used is the root of the word "apologetics" and is a legal term for a reasoned defense of something. We are called to essentially be defense attorneys for the faith we share...but we are to do so in a meek and humble way.

## Week 50 (Titus-1 Peter)

Complete the crossword below



### Across

3. 'And without \_\_\_\_ it is impossible to please him'
4. In Hebrews 13, the author of Hebrews reminds us especially to remember those who are where?
6. This is the island where Titus was sent and minister.
7. If anyone is sick, James says they should call for whom to come and pray over them?
8. Believers are described by Peter as a Royal \_\_\_\_\_.  
10. This physician turned gospel-writer is with Paul when he writes the letter to Philemon.
11. This is a small member of the body that boasts of great things and does great damage.
16. Husbands, you are to make sure that you don't hinder the prayers of this group of people.
17. Peter writes that the devil prowls about like this kind of animal.
20. Titus has the job of appointing (by vote) people to fulfill this office.
21. The scriptures are 'living and active' and sharper than one of these. (3 words)
22. 'Be \_\_\_\_\_ as I am holy.'
23. This is the city where Paul was hoping to meet up with Titus.
25. According to Hebrews 2, Jesus came to help the offspring of Abraham, not \_\_\_\_\_.
29. This was the name of Philemon's run-away slave.
30. Jesus is the radiance of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

### Down

1. The old proverb goes: 'Cretans are always \_\_\_\_\_, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons.'
2. Titus' job is also to teach sound \_\_\_\_\_.
5. If the sprinkling of defiled people with animal blood cleansed the flesh (according to Hebrews 9) how much more with the \_\_\_\_\_ cleanse us from dead works? (3 words)
9. Christians are to be this way towards rulers and authorities.
12. James speaks of this Old Testament prophet as an example of fervent prayer.
13. Moses is faithful in God's house as a servant but Jesus is faithful as a \_\_\_\_\_.
14. When sin is fully grown it brings forth this.
15. Peter's secretary who penned his first letter for him.
18. We are to show this to one another without grumbling about it.
19. Jesus is not of the priestly line of Aaron, but is of the order of \_\_\_\_\_.
24. James is the younger half-brother of whom?
26. Abraham was justified by faith but was also called the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
27. 'Count it all \_\_\_\_\_ when you meet trials of different kinds'
28. We are surrounded by a great \_\_\_\_\_ of witnesses.

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 51: 2 Peter – Revelation 5 (December 14-20)

### Summary:

#### 2 Peter

Just as 2 Timothy is Paul's "Swan Song," likely the last letter he wrote before his execution, 2 Peter is likely the Apostle Peter's last letter to the churches prior to being executed in Rome. The tradition around Peter's death is that his friends arranged for an escape from Rome so he would not be captured and arrested, but as he was leaving the city he saw a vision of Christ asking him the question, "Peter, will you deny me again?" This time, tradition has it, Peter went back and was subsequently arrested, sentenced to death as a Christian, but Peter pleaded to be crucified upside down because he was not worthy to die in the same way as Jesus. Such is the tradition recorded by the early church historians. Regardless, as Peter writes this letter he is expecting that soon his life in this world will be at its end (2 Peter 1:12-15).

Peter focuses on three basic principles in this letter. The first is the importance to build upon the faith that God has instilled in us. We would call this "sanctification," Peter words it, "Making your calling and election sure." The basic idea, though is that Christians are not given the option to be stagnant in our faith, but we are expected to grow and mature by adding to our salvation things like virtue, knowledge, self control, etc...

Then Peter warns the people about the dangers that come with false teachers who are only masquerading as Christians in the hopes of having their bellies filled by others. There were false shepherds in Old Testament times; there were false shepherds in New Testament times. Finally, Peter addresses the end times with a brief promise of the remaking of the Heavens and the earth free from sin.

#### 1 John

While John wrote his Gospel so that people would believe that Jesus was the Christ (John 20:31), he wrote his first epistle to assure believers of eternal life (1 John 5:13). Thus, in this letter are a series of sets of checks or indicators that reflect whether or not a person is genuinely a believer in Jesus Christ. The purpose of these checks is primarily so that people could examine their own lives and thus have assurance of salvation if they genuinely are a believer, but they also give some helps to pastors and church leaders to determine whether the profession of faith held by people in their congregations is genuine. Ultimately, only God can judge the heart, but these are important tools for us to be able to discern good fruit from bad...or as John would say...tools by which we might "test every spirit."

The words "light", "love", and "life" show up in this little letter 66 times, an indication of how important these ideas are to John: light being an analogy for truth; love being the way we are to interact with other believers as Jesus demonstrated for us; and life being that which is found in Jesus and in Jesus alone.

#### 2-3 John

The Second and third letters of John are both short, personal letters to individuals that contain important themes that are useful for the church as well...the theme primarily being that of hospitality toward believers but of not supporting the work of false teachers. The heart of these letters: "Do not imitate what is evil but imitate what is good" (3 John 11).

#### Jude

Jude's letter seems to be very much a contemporary of Peter's second letter as both cover very similar themes (particularly with respect to 2 Peter 2). Though, I would suggest that 2 Peter was written first and Jude would follow. It is believed that Jude is the brother of James, both of who are the younger half-brothers of Jesus. Neither came to faith until after their brother's resurrection from the dead.

#### Revelation

This was the very last book of the New Testament to be written and likely dates around 95 AD (though some date it much earlier). At this

point, John was an old man, he had served as an Elder in Ephesus for some time, but was in exile on the prison-island of Patmos. Here, John is given a prophetic vision with the purpose of encouraging the church, some of whom had grown weary under persecution and others of whom had compromised essential aspects of faith to ease persecution.

While it is a prophetic book, it is also written in the form of an Apocalypse, which is a thematic type of literature, highly structured and highly symbolic, that essentially is designed to remind people that while things are bad right now, Christ wins in the end.

Chapters 2 & 3 contain a series of letters from Jesus to seven churches in Asia Minor. The basic format for these letters is that Jesus offers a greeting, a praise, a criticism, an exhortation, and a closing. What is interesting about these 7 letters is that 2 churches receive no praise and 2 churches receive no criticism. All of this centers on the amount of persecution that these churches are facing...the two of the seven who have faced the greatest persecution receive no criticism and those who are comfortable and free from persecution receive no praise. There can be no question about the fact that God uses persecution to refine his church.

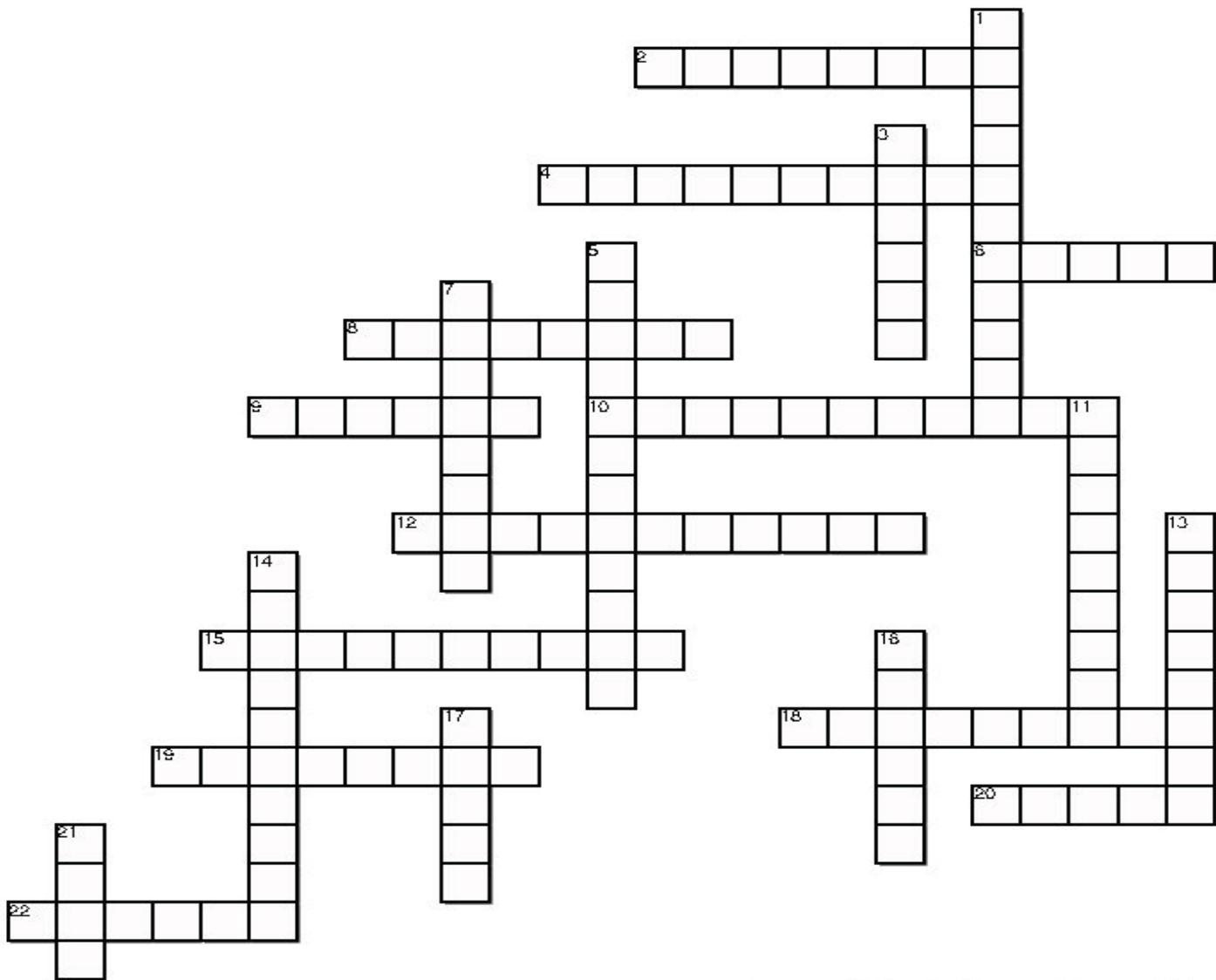
Chapters 4-5 change our location from the sad picture of worship on earth to the beautiful picture of perfected worship in heaven where Christ is exalted above all things.

#### Chromatic Notes:

- 2 Peter 1:17 — a reference to the Transfiguration, after that, Peter will insist that the scriptures are "more sure" or "more reliable" because they are written down by the direction of the Holy Spirit, not simply observed by fallible human beings.
- 2 Peter 2:5 — an echo from 1 Peter 3:19-20...Noah is the one through whom Christ was preached in Noah's day.
- 2 Peter 2:22 — an allusion to Jeremiah 48:26
- 2 Peter 3:16 — Note that Peter refers to the writings of Paul as scripture.
- 1 John 1:9 — note that the word "confess" in Greek, literally means, "to say the same thing as" — in other words, when we confess our sins to God, we are not to make excuses for them, but instead are to say the same thing about our sin as God would say about our sin.
- 1 John 2:1 — the term we render as "advocate" is the Greek word "Paraclete," which does not refer to an officer of the court hired to defend you in a trial, but it refers to (in Roman culture) an older brother or Uncle who has a vested interest in your welfare and also has standing in the eyes of the Judge who will intercede for you not on the basis of your character, but on the basis of his own. Jesus is our Paraclete before the judgment seat of the Father.
- Jude references two Jewish gnostic documents, *The Assumption of Moses* and *The Apocalypse of Enoch*. This does not attribute inspiration to these documents, only that under inspiration, Jude incorporated some of their language.
- Jude 17 — note the reference to "predictions of the Apostles" that "scoffers" would come. The only other Apostolic writing that speaks of scoffers in that way is 2 Peter 3:3, thus indicating that Jude was aware of 2 Peter already when he wrote his letter.
- Note that the book of Revelation is the only book of the Bible that contains blessings for those who would read it at its beginning and at its end (Revelation 1:3; 22:7).
- Note the language of "Living Creatures" around the throne...these are Cherubim (from which we get the word "Cherub") and we find another description of them in Ezekiel 1-2; 9-10. Note that Cherubim are the most commonly mentioned "type" of angel, spoken of 69 times in the Bible (Seraphim are only mentioned twice...see Isaiah 6).
- In formal church liturgy, the phrase "Holy, Holy, Holy" is referred to as the "Trisagion"; the whole of Revelation 4:8 is referred to as the "Sanctus."

## Week 51 (2 Peter-Revelation 5)

Complete the crossword below



## Across

2. This church, Jesus says, will be spat out of Jesus' mouth.
  4. The Book of Revelation was written as this type of literature.
  6. John witnessed a scroll being present, but it had seven of these closing it up.
  8. Revelation contains one of these at the beginning and at the end, for those who read and follow it.
  9. The false teachers of whom Jude writes fall into this Old Testament false prophet's error.
  10. These people once were amongst the faithful but denied the Lordship or humanity of Jesus.
  12. One of the heretical groups that plagued the Ephesian church.
  15. Who 'carried along' the prophets as they wrote scripture? (2 Words)
  18. Though many of our Bibles use the term 'advocate,' John uses this Roman title to refer to Jesus in 1 John 2:1.
  19. In building on our faith, Peter writes that it is to help make this 'sure'.
  20. This is to whom John addressed his third letter.
  22. The Island that John was imprisoned on.

Down

1. 'Sin is \_\_\_\_\_.'
  3. 'Test every \_\_\_\_\_.'
  5. The church in this city is receiving a great deal of persecution but those who persevere will be like pillars in God's temple.
  7. The 'Living Creatures' are this kind of angel.
  11. Peter refers to Paul's writings as this.
  13. 'God is light and there is no \_\_\_\_\_ in him.'
  14. This person, John wrote, liked to put himself first and not acknowledge authority.
  16. This is the first characteristic that Peter says we ought to strive to add to our faith.
  17. Peter writes that those who profess faith and return to their sins are like dogs going back to this.
  21. Peter refers to this person as a 'herald of righteousness.'

# Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

## Week 52: Revelation 6 – 18 (December 21-27)

### **Summary:**

As we bring the year to a close, we are slowing down on our reading a bit partly because lives get so busy this time of the year and partly because Revelation can be such a difficult book to read and understand. In fact, when it comes to commentaries on the book of Revelation, it seems that no two commentators structure it exactly the same.

That said, the most important thing to wrestle with when it comes to Revelation is structure. While it is a letter and a prophetic book, it is also a piece of Apocalyptic literature, which we discussed last week, and Apocalypses are traditionally highly structured pieces of literature...this book, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, is no different. For generations, pastors, commentators, and theologians have been wrestling with this wonderful book that both begins and ends with a blessing to those who will read it and obey its teachings. Many are quite dogmatic as well, but when there is this much debate over the history of the church, being dogmatic here is more an act of pride than of Biblical certainty.

We have already looked at the first five chapters of Revelation. As I look at the book, I see a seven-part structure — of which these first five chapters form the first two parts. Chapter 1 is a triple-introduction, complete with the language of a letter, an apocalypse, and a prophetic call, not unlike the call of Isaiah. Chapters 2-5 form the second section of the book of Revelation, describing pictures of worship first on earth (dysfunctional) and in heaven (perfection).

At the end of chapter 5, the scrolls are presented and the Lamb of God who is the Lion of Judah (Christ) is presented as the only one worthy to open the seals. Thus, as we move into chapter 6, we enter into the third section of the book of Revelation — a section revolving around the opening of these seven seals.

The seals themselves are variously characterized, beginning with the language of four horsemen and ending with the silence from heaven. What is consistent about these seven seals is that they are all connected with the effects of the fall on society: conquest, ravages of war, economic abuse and collapse, famine and pestilence that brings death, martyrdom, the fear of death, and silence from God.

What you will find as these seven seals are opened is that there is a kind of interlude that is located between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals. This interlude focuses largely in two parts, the first being the presenting of the 144,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel before the throne of Christ and the second being the countless gentiles being brought. There are lots of ways that this imagery is approached, but the most straight-forward picture (to me) is that these are descriptions of the predominantly Jewish church (in the Old Testament) and the predominantly gentile church (in the New Testament — and beyond). The first being a fixed number and the second being a yet un-numbered group. As I interpret Revelation, then, these reflect the finished age where God's people came to faith through faith in the coming Messiah (a completed number because the Messiah has come) and the as yet unfinished (in John's day and in our own) bringing into the church the number of elect from the nations. All history hinges upon the cross of Jesus Christ, and so does this first cycle of prophetic "seal-openings." Assuming such to be the case, the seals represent the effects of the fall beginning as far back as Genesis 3 with an interlude reflecting the time of Christ — and when the Apostolic age comes to an end, there indeed is silence from Heaven: Revelation is complete.

As the 8th seal is opened in Revelation 8:1, 8:2 begins the fourth cycle of Revelation. Much like the first cycle of seven seals, in this second cycle we have a series of seven trumpets being blown as we move through chapters 8-11. The first thing that one notices as they start looking into these trumpets is that there is an intensification in the severity of the judgments and a third of various things are found to be destroyed. Unlike the first series which focused mostly on the effects of the fall on society, this cycle seems to focus more on the effects of the fall on the natural world: storms, seas drying up, meteors, etc...

Like the first cycle, though, there is an interlude between the sixth and the seventh trumpets. This interlude is structured around two sets of images. The first is a measuring of the Temple, something that should take our minds back to the command of God to Ezekiel to do the same. Like the first interlude, there is a portion of the temple (the courts of the Jews) that was a fixed number and a portion (the courts of the gentiles) that was left unmeasured.

The second part of the interlude focuses on two witnesses. The imagery here is rooted back in Zechariah 4:14 with the two branches feeding the lampstand. Here, though, we have two lampstands and if one looks back to Revelation 1, we are told that the lampstands represent the church. As a result, there are a number of debates as to how this applies. Some would see this as the Jewish and the Christian church once again, though it would be hard to insert the defined/undefined balance into the language. Some suggest that this is the two-natures of Christ (for the church is described as the body of Christ). Either way, the witnesses are persecuted but unconquered, very much like the church of Jesus Christ.

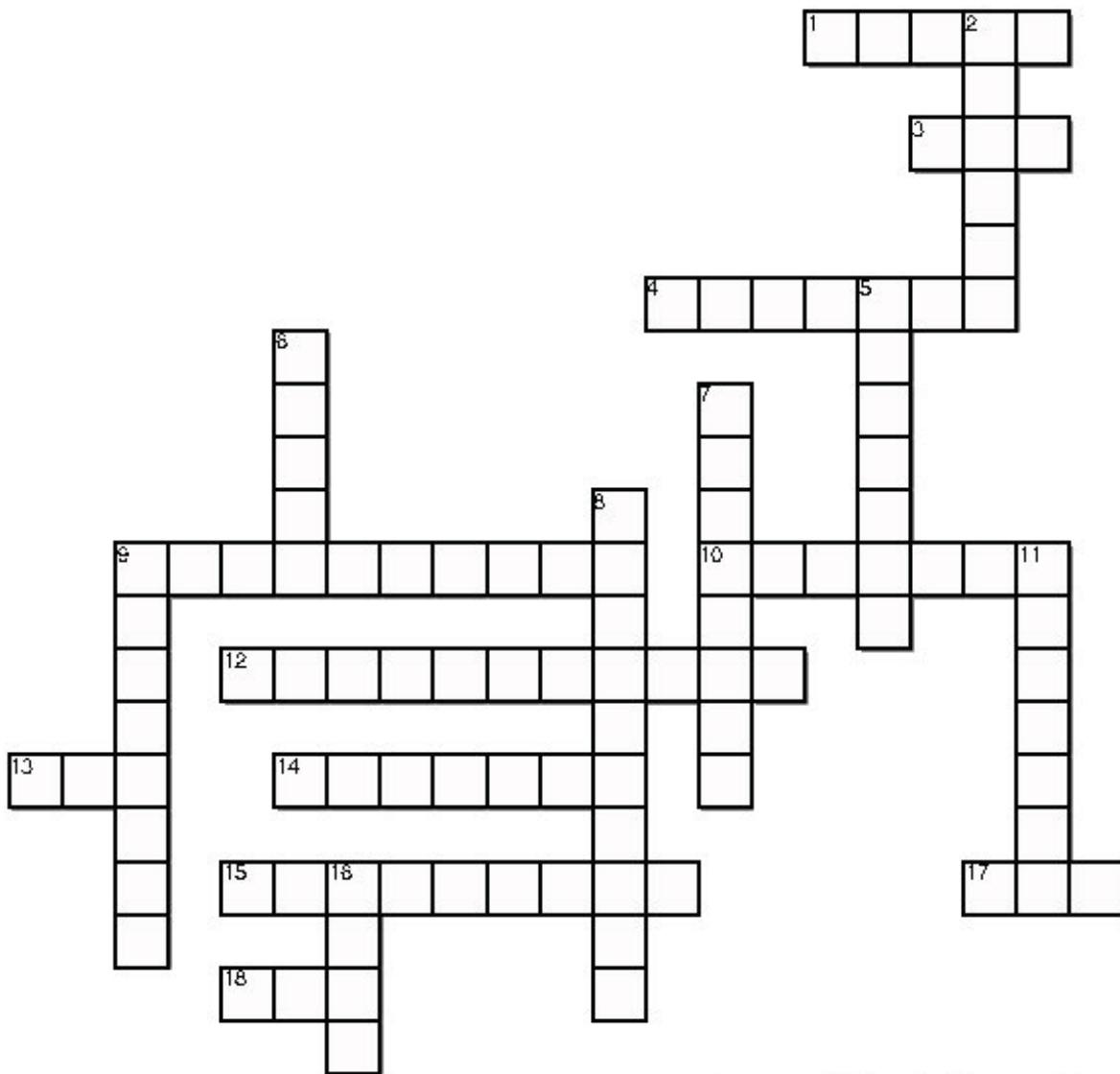
When we hit chapter 12, we seem to have a change of gear. There is one more cycle of seven judgments (bowl judgments) in chapters 15-16, but this series of seven also does not seem to have an interlude as did the first two cycles. Did John totally break out of his pattern? Probably not, given the level of complexity of this book. Thus, I would suggest it fair to argue that John changed his structure around to make a point...in fact, if we think that way, we might suggest that it is the seven bowls that form the interlude to this fifth division or cycle in the book of Revelation.

What is the consistent theme of the interlude? The division of history instituted by the cross. Revelation 12, then, falls neatly into that pattern, for it begins with the struggle of the Serpent against God, seeking to destroy the coming Messiah and when unable to do so, he attacks the people of the Messiah. The two beasts that follow reflect the means by which the Serpent seeks to destroy — beasts modeled after the beast imagery in Daniel, thus representing institutions or governments. There have been many who have suggested what institutions that might be represented... some have said Rome, some have said the Pope, some have even said Islam. What we do know is that these institutions are lasting and stand against the true Church.

Chapters 17-18, then would represent the other side of the interlude of God's judgment...the destruction of the beast, the prostitute, and Babylon (in the Bible, symbolic of any place of wickedness in which the church must dwell. That leaves two final sections of Revelation, but we will make notes on them for next week.

## Week 52 (Revelation 6-18)

Complete the crossword below



### Across

1. The angels at the four corners of the earth were holding back these.
3. In the counting of the 144,000 from the 12 tribes, this tribe is not represented.
4. 'Fallen, Fallen is \_\_\_\_\_.'
9. This wicked woman is portrayed riding on a scarlet beast.
10. This group of people was privileged to reside under the altar.
12. Those coming in with the white robes are described as coming out of a great \_\_\_\_\_.
13. A great eagle cries out this word three times!
14. John is told to measure the temple, much like this Old Testament prophet before him.
15. The mighty angel, in signifying the destruction of Babylon, throws this down into the sea.
17. This was the color of the second horse of the apocalypse.
18. The beast's number, 666, is described as the number of this...

### Down

2. Satan is described as this fierce creature.
5. At the fifth trumpet blast, creatures like this animal swarm the earth from the bottomless pit.
6. The third cycle of judgments portrays angels pouring out God's wrath from these.
7. This was the name of the 'great star that fell from heaven.'
8. This is one of the things that the pale horse brought.
9. This Old Testament book is structured around a comparison between the harlot and sister wisdom, a theme that John picks up on in Revelation 17.
11. The seventh seal brings this from heaven.
16. The giant angel with the little scroll had his right foot in the sea and his left foot on the \_\_\_\_\_.

## Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

### Week 53: Revelation 19 – 22 (December 28-31)

#### **Summary:**

Congratulations! If you have been following along with the reading plan, you are arriving at the end of the Bible in a year's time. According to Barna polls, only about 20% of Americans have ever read all of the Bible through, cover to cover, even once. That said, I hope that this was both a good experience and that it is making you hungry to keep reading your Bible through again.

If you weren't able to keep up with all of your reading, then don't despair, we are at the beginning of a new year, one more chance to make a run at it. If you are a person who has made an intentional habit of reading the Bible once a year, something that a number of you have done for years, given our conversations, please keep up the good work and continue to encourage those in your sphere of influence to read and digest the Word of God... as Paul wrote to Timothy, "It will prepare you for every good work..." (2 Timothy 3:17).

#### **Next Year?**

Not wanting to totally mix things up, as we still have a half-week to finish up our readings, I will introduce the 2015 Bible Challenge next week; it will focus on the Gospels, have a little less reading to do on a daily basis, but the readings will be a bit deeper and you will be jumping around a bit more. Also, we won't be reading through the entire Bible next year, only parts of it, but I will explain that in the introduction next week.

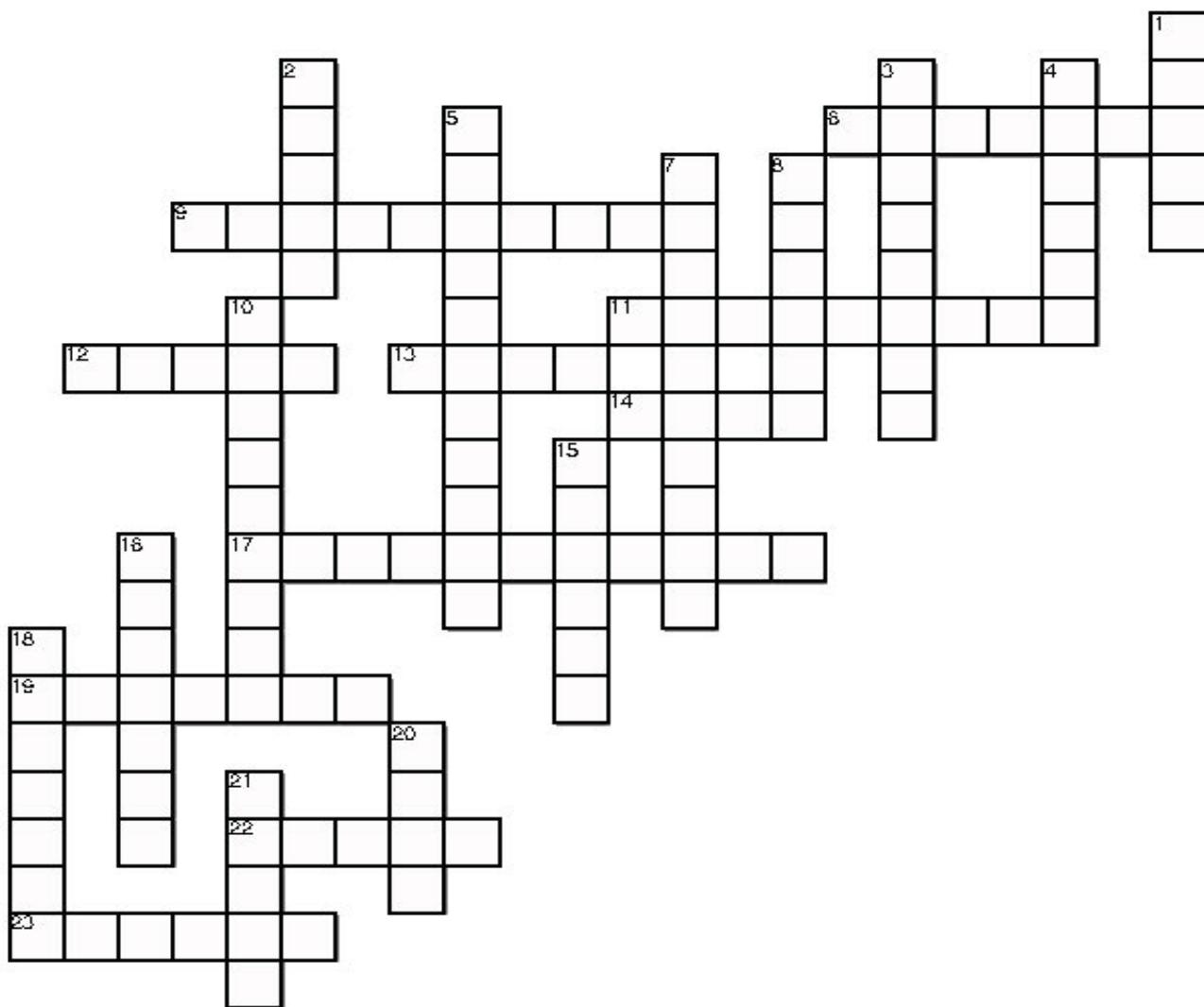
Thus, for now, get ready to put 2014 behind you and look toward what God will do in this new year.

God Bless you,

Win

# Bible in a Year Wrap Up

Complete the crossword below



## Across

6. The First book in the Bible.
9. What kind of literature is the book of Revelation?
11. From what Old Testament book was Jesus quoting when he said: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'
12. In what book do you find the words: 'He has told you, O Man, what is good...o justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.'
13. How many divisions are there in the book of Psalms?
14. She slew Sisera with a tent peg.
17. This is the second of the places that the Ten Commandments can be found.
19. This person's primary job was to be a mouthpiece for God.
22. The One friend of Job that at least made some sense.
23. She was married to a Persian King.

## Down

1. Who wrote Genesis-Deuteronomy?
2. This is a term that refers to the Books that are authoritative for the church: based on the Hebrew word for a measuring reed.
3. This prophet was called to service while he was still a youth.
4. The third division in the Hebrew Bible is called 'The Writings' but it is also known by the name of its first book.
5. Jesus was of the priesthood of this Old Testament Figure.
7. The Sixty-Sixth Book in the Bible.
8. Jesus' favorite title for himself, 'Son of Man' is taken from this Old Testament book (prophetic).
10. This was Deborah's husband.
15. This is one of the two places the Ten Commandments can be found.
16. Who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes?
18. This is a Biblical word that refers to a letter.
20. Who wrote the book of Revelation?
21. We know for sure that this Apostle was married.