

The Bigger Story – Follow

Week Sixteen: On the Road

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ² And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. ⁵ And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” ⁸ And they remembered his words, ⁹ and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, ¹¹ but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹² But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened. Luke 24:1-12

Notes & Discussion Questions on Isaiah 25

Isaiah 25 begins praising God for what He has done (verse 1), for His righteous judgement (2-3), for His goodness to the weak (4-5)

- Knowing God makes us want to praise Him – **Discuss worship**
- Knowing God means we have confidence in His fairness, His judgement and provision.

Next, God is praised for what He will do:

- Verse 6: Prepare a feast (see Revelation 19:9)
- Verse 7-8: Destroy evil (see 2 Corinthians 3:15-16)
- Verse 8: Swallow up death, forever! (see 1 Corinthians 15:54)

What is the reaction to knowing these things about God? Who He is, what He has done, His characteristics and what He will do in the future and is doing now...

- Verse 9: Proclaim Him as Our God, wait on the Lord and know Him as Savior... **What does this look like?**
- Remember: The Lord resolves all things (verses 10-12) and Jesus will rule the nations with authority and righteousness (Psalm 2:8-12)

Notes & Discussion Questions on Psalm 2

Verses 1-3: Nations have no reason or benefit from raging against God, but join to do so, opposing both God and Jesus, His Anointed. **Why? What type of bondage does being in opposition to bring?**

Verses 4-6: God’s response: to laugh, from heaven, where He reigns. What does this response indicate? He will “hold them in derision” but also “shall speak to them”. He is not inactive, before He acts against the defiant, He speaks to them... **Discuss the mercy of God.**

Verses 7-9: The Decree of the Son: Jesus is declaring the decree that God the Father spoke to Him, emphasizing His identify in the Father (see Hebrews 1:5) and His position as holding the nations as an inheritance, exercising power over them.

Verses 10-12: The Decree to the nations about the Son: A warning from Jesus to: “Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling” ...to wisely surrender to God...this is where joy and blessings are found.

This Week’s Readings

Judges 3-5
Luke 12

Judges 6

Judges 7-8
Luke 13

Judges 9-10
Luke 14

Judges 11-13
Luke 15

Judges 14-15

Where are you on the road with Jesus?

Isaiah 25:1, 6-9, Psalm 2, Acts 13:27-33, Luke 24:1-12, 13-35

Where is He on the road with you?

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Notes & Discussion Questions: on Luke 24:13-35

Previously, the women, after seeing the empty tomb, “remembered His words” and then tell the apostles (verses 4-11) then Peter and John observe the empty tomb. John believed ([John 20:8](#)) and Peter analyzed ([Luke 24:12](#)). ***Is there a difference in these responses? In seeing facts but forgetting the Words of Jesus*** (see [John 20:9](#)). You can know the evidence that Jesus rose from the dead, but unless you know His Words, it won’t make sense. Unless you know *Him*. ***Where are you on the road with Jesus? Discuss.***

"When two saints are talking together, Jesus is very likely to come and make the third one in the company. Talk of him and you will soon talk with him." Charles Spurgeon

Verses 14-24: Jesus probably walked with them silently for a while, before allowing them to explain what they talked about. ***How is this significant?***

What they knew:

- His name and where He was from
- He was a Prophet, He was mighty in deed and word
- He promised to redeem Israel
- He was crucified, Others had said He rose from the dead

What didn't they know? How was their hope misguided? How can we guard against a misguided hope?

Even when they didn’t know it was Jesus, even when they didn’t believe He was risen from the dead, their heart still burned because of the ministry of God’s Word and of Jesus, the Living Word of God. God’s Word can have this same effect on our heart, even when we don’t know that it is Jesus doing that work.

Have you experienced something similar?

Verse 26: Jesus explained why the Messiah had to suffer ([Isaiah 50:5-7](#), [53:3-5](#), [Daniel 9:26](#), [Zechariah 12:10](#)), He “expounded” the Scripture, let the text speak for itself... throughout the Old Testament, a consistent divine purpose is revealed, a plan that pointed to Jesus and the cross. ***Discuss.***

Verse 35: Jesus was known to them in the breaking of bread – perhaps in the blessing He gave, the ownership and leadership displayed, by seeing the pierced hands that gave bread.

Jesus may be right in front of you...and your eyes could be restrained from seeing Him. ***Discuss seeing and believing, heart and head knowledge.*** He wants us to believe, to have reasoned, through-out faith, not emotional, easy believism, but believe with our hearts AND minds. We should pray that God will give us eyes to see Jesus, heart and heads to believe Him.

Notes & Discussion Questions: on Acts 13:27-33

[Acts 13](#) is Paul’s first missionary journey (here preaching at Pisidian Antioch). [Verses 16-23:](#) Explains how all in history (from the patriarchs to the prophets and all in between) leads to Jesus while [verses 24-29](#) uses John the Baptists and the Jewish rules to contract how people receive and reject Jesus. ***How does this impact our understanding of society? History? Current events? Our response to Jesus?***

[Verse 29:](#) Paul describes the cross as a tree, calling on the idea from [Deuteronomy 21:22-23](#) (cursed is those who hang on a tree) to explain how Jesus was cursed so we wouldn’t be ([Galatians 3:13](#)), even more so, that we would be blessed. [Verses 30:](#) “But God raised Him from the dead” shows how God is so much greater, than man, than sin, than death... ***Discuss.***

[Verses 30-37:](#) Facts/events simply stated, eyewitness account also included. Because of this true event, “Good news”...the fulfillment of the promises of God. Jesus is the holy, unique, begotten Son of God.

Follow: Next Week’s Readings

Judges 16-18	Judges 19	Judges 20-21	Ruth 1-4	1 Sam. 1-2	1 Sam. 3-5
Luke 16	Luke 17	Luke 18		Luke 19	

The Bigger Story – Follow

Week Seventeen: Into All the World

Notes & Discussion Questions on Mark 16:1-8

Mark 16:1: “Brought spices”: These had to be prepared ahead of time, indicating the women worked on the Sabbath to prepare them... *Discuss what this may indicate.*

Mark 16:3: Their wondering regarding the stone and preparation of the spices indicates they had no wishful thinking of Jesus’ resurrection. They did not expect it to happen. *Discuss* the various expectations and reactions to the death of Jesus and the empty tomb. *How do these multiple narratives give testimony to the truth of the resurrection?*

The angel contrasts what Jesus was (crucified) and what He is: risen, resurrected! (Romans 1:4).

Mark 16:6: “See the place where they laid Him”

- The tomb, now empty, shows us: the Father did not forsake Jesus
- The tomb, now empty, shows us: death has been conquered
- The tomb, now empty, shows us: we have a living Savior: Jesus!

What else do we see and learn with regards to the empty tomb?

Mark 16:7: A message to relay: **Go and tell!** We are invited to meet with Jesus, to go and tell!

- Jesus’ invitations are filled with grace. The disciples had completely failed Jesus...but He invited, sought them, meet with them anyway.
- His invitations are always *fulfilled*. He does what He says. We can count on His promises. He said that He would meet them in Galilee and He did (John 21:1).
- His invitation reveal Himself.

How do we respond to the empty tomb?

Mark 16:8: *What were the women’s reactions?* “Trembled and were amazed” In Greek ‘ecstasy,’ or seized with trembling and ecstasy. “They said nothing to anyone” does not mean they didn’t “go and tell” (they did: Mark 16:11 and Luke 24:9) but that they didn’t discuss it among themselves, didn’t try to figure it out or match their stories. They went to make a report to the disciples as the angel told them. *What does this indicate? What is your response to the empty tomb? To “go and tell”? What does this look like?*

Notes & Discussion Questions on Mark 16:9-18 & 1 John 1:1-9

Discuss reasons for disbelief. *Discuss* the Great Commission, to the eleven and all followers of Jesus. “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” This is a command, not a suggestion. *What does this mean for believers? To the church and us today?*

- Salvation rests on belief. Baptism is the picture of the new life not the means of securing it.

Read 1 John 1:1-9 and *discuss* fellowship. The center of relationship: Jesus Christ, the fullness of joy. Fellowship (“koinonia”) communion, a common life, a living, sharing, loving relationship with another.

- We can have this relationship with Jesus...only possible because of Jesus.
 - We can’t have a relationship with a dead man, but with the eternal God who became man...
- When we have fellowship with Jesus, we will become more like Him. *Discuss fellowship.*
 - This doesn’t mean that when Jesus comes into our lives, He helps us to do the same things, only better. We don’t add Jesus to our life. We enter a new relationship of a shared life with Jesus. We share our life with Him, and He shares His life with us. *Discuss transformation.*
- When we go out to do the work of God, Jesus will work with us. *Has this been your experience?*
- The preaching came first and then the signs following. Signs are meant to follow believers, instead of believers following after signs. *Do you agree?*
- The followers of Jesus are still preaching...the Lord is still working with them, and He is still confirming His word through accompanying signs! *How does this encourage and motivate us?*

Next Week’s Readings

Judges 16-18 Luke 16	Judges 19 Luke 17	Judges 20-21 Luke 18	Ruth 1-4	1 Sam. 1-2 Luke 19	1 Sam. 3-5
Joel 2, Psalm 24, 1 John 1:1-9, Mark 16:1-8, 9-18					

Notes & Discussion Questions: Joel 2

Very little is known about Joel. He may have ministered during the same time as Amos (approximately 750 BC) perhaps in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. His father's name was Pethuel (in Hebrew: "persuaded of God") and Yoel (Joel) in Hebrew means: "Yahweh is God."

- The purpose of the book was to warn of the coming day of judgment of God and encourage people about our Just, Gracious God, who responds to repentance.
- Like many prophets, there is an immediate as well as prophetic element here...this is *both* directed and applicable to his current generation *and* points to a time in the future...

Past Judgment: Joel wrote about a judgment from God that came in the form of a devastating invasion of locust (Joel 1:2) Judgement had arrived in Judah. Many different types of people experienced a wide range of emotions and trouble:

- Drunkards mourned because there weren't any grapes for wine (Joel 1:5)
- Widows mourned because their husbands had died (Joel 1:7-8)
- Priests mourned because there wasn't anything for a grain offering (Joel 1:9-10)
- Farmers mourned (Joel 1:11-12) and livestock suffered (Joel 1:18)

Perhaps the locust were a wake-up call...A nudge from God before more serious consequences befall us, because of our actions (Deuteronomy 28:15, 38, 42). **Where is this also seen? Have you experienced this? Personally? In the Church? In society? Discuss signs and judgement today.**

- Joel wrote "the day of the Lord" 5 of the 17 times it is used in the Bible. This phrase refers to the Coming of Christ and the judgement He will bring...much more severe than locusts!
- Where there is sin and disobedience to the Lord, it must be met with His judgment, otherwise he would not be a just and holy God. Our sin will result in our punishment... if we don't get right with Him. **How do we get right with God?**

Future Judgment (Joel 2:1-12): Judgement will come (similar language used in Revelation 6:12-13)

- When we are in right standing with God, we long for the "day of the Lord" In Joel's day, Judah was not right with God, so the day of the Lord would be nothing but darkness and gloominess to them. **Do you long for the "day of the Lord"? Why or why not?**

The Cure (Joel 2:12-14, 32): Where there is disobedience against God, there will be judgment of God. But there's a remedy to the judgment of God and it is the same as what Joel told the people of his day as it is to us today! (Romans 10:9-11)

- God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger... He is so willing to relent from judgment and forgive that He sent His son! His goodness leads to repentance (Romans 2:4)
- He restores. Jesus is the one with clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24). He calls. So "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved". This is a broad call, a call to pray, to know God, to accept His promise, invitation, life, joy and fellowship with Him! **Have you answered this call?**

Follow: Next Week's Readings: Called

1 Sam. 6-8 Luke 20	1 Sam. 9-11 Luke 21	1 Sam. 12-13	1 Sam. 14-15 Luke 22	1 Sam. 16-17	1 Sam. 18-19 Luke 23
Isaiah 43:1-7, Psalm 40:1-5, 1 Peter 1:17-23, John 20:1-10, 11-18					

The Bigger Story – Follow

Week Eighteen: Called

Notes & Discussion Questions on Isaiah 43:1-7

- Isaiah prophesied to the Southern kingdom of Judah (700 BC)
- This prophecy (the coming judgment of Judah) was given 100 years before the Babylonians would conquer the Assyrians (606 BC)
- In 586 BC, the Babylonians overpowered Jerusalem and they destroyed it and the Temple, taking all the sacred articles of the Temple (plus captives) back to Babylon (modern-day Iraq)
- Isaiah prophesied about King Cyrus, 150 years before Cyrus was born! ([Isaiah 45:1, 3](#))
 - He spoke about the coming judgment (coming due to their rebellion, idolatry and wickedness)
 - He also spoke of the forgiveness and restoration they would experience; all of which was to take place far into the future! All because of our Loving, Creator God! Who looks to the future, who offers forgiveness, redemption and restoration!

Isaiah 43:1: ***What are reasons not to fear? What can we learn about God? Who we are in God?***

- God is our Creator. When we forget or reject God as Creator, we fail. ***How? Why?***
- “Fear not” is a command paired with promises and assurances. ***Discuss.***
- ***What does it mean that God claims us, calls us His own? How does this keep us from fear?***

Isaiah 43:2-5: God is with us.

- Trials are inevitable but God is still with us in trying times. He is our strength and shield. ***Discuss***
- ***What*** Biblical examples does this passage remind you of? From your own life?
- ***What is God’s motivation for being with us?*** See [Isaiah 43:4](#)

This Week’s Readings

1 Sam. 6-8 Luke 20	1 Sam. 9-11 Luke 21	1 Sam. 12-13	1 Sam. 14-15 Luke 22	1 Sam. 16-17	1 Sam. 18-19 Luke 23
Isaiah 43:1-7, Psalm 40:1-5, 1 Peter 1:17-23, John 20:1-10, 11-18					

Regarding the Book of Isaiah

Date of Writing: The book of Isaiah was written between 739 and 681 B.C.

Brief Summary: The book of Isaiah reveals God’s judgment and salvation. God is “holy, holy, holy” ([Isaiah 6:3](#)), and therefore He cannot allow sin to go unpunished ([Isaiah 1:2](#); [2:11-20](#); [5:30](#); [34:1-2](#); [42:25](#)). Isaiah portrays God’s oncoming judgment as a “consuming fire” ([Isaiah 1:31](#); [30:33](#)).

At the same time, Isaiah understands that God is a God of mercy, grace, and compassion ([Isaiah 5:25](#); [11:16](#); [14:1-2](#); [32:2](#); [40:3](#); [41:14-16](#)). The nation of Israel (both Judah and Israel) is blind and deaf to God’s commands ([Isaiah 6:9-10](#); [42:7](#)). Only because of His mercy and His promises to Israel, will God not allow Israel or Judah to be completely destroyed. He will bring restoration, forgiveness, and healing ([43:2](#); [43:16-19](#); [52:10-12](#)).

More than any other book in the Old Testament, Isaiah focuses on the salvation that will come through the Messiah. The Messiah will one day rule in justice and righteousness ([Isaiah 9:7](#); [32:1](#)). The reign of the Messiah will bring peace and safety to Israel ([Isaiah 11:6-9](#)). Through the Messiah, Israel will be a light to all the nations ([Isaiah 42:6](#); [55:4-5](#)). The Messiah’s kingdom on earth ([Isaiah chapters 65-66](#)) is the goal toward which all of the book of Isaiah points. It is during the reign of the Messiah that God’s righteousness will be fully revealed to the world.

In a seeming paradox, the book of Isaiah also presents the Messiah as one who will suffer. Isaiah [chapter 53](#) vividly describes the Messiah suffering for sin. It is through His wounds that healing is achieved. It is through His suffering that our iniquities are taken away. This apparent contradiction is solved in the Person of Jesus Christ. In His first advent, Jesus was the suffering servant of [Isaiah chapter 53](#). In His second advent, Jesus will be the conquering and ruling King, the Prince of Peace ([Isaiah 9:6](#)). – Got Questions

Follow: Next Week’s Readings: Believe

Developed with the notes and resources of: MacArthur, Hamrick, Bruce, Morris, Spurgeon, Luther, Clarke, Guzik, and more: Thanks!

1 Sam. 20-21	1 Sam. 22-23 Luke 24	1 Sam. 24-25	1 Sam. 26-28 John 1	1 Sam. 29-31 John 2	2 Sam 1-2 John 3
Isaiah 43:8-13, Psalm 8, 1 Peter 5:6-11, John 20:19-23, 24-31					

Regarding the Book of Isaiah

Fore Shadowing: Chapter 53 of Isaiah describes the coming Messiah and the suffering He would endure in order to pay for our sins. In His sovereignty, God orchestrated every detail of the crucifixion to fulfill every prophecy of this chapter, as well as all other messianic prophecies of the Old Testament.

The imagery of chapter 53 is poignant and prophetic and contains a complete picture of the Gospel. Jesus was despised and rejected (v. 3; Luke 13:34; John 1:10-11), stricken by God (v.4; Matthew 27:46), and pierced for our transgressions (v. 5; John 19:34; 1 Peter 2:24). By His suffering, He paid the punishment we deserved and became for us the ultimate and perfect sacrifice (v. 5; Hebrews 10:10). Although He was sinless, God laid on Him our sin, and we became God's righteousness in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Practical Application: The book of Isaiah presents our Savior to us in undeniable detail. He is the only way to heaven, the only means of obtaining the grace of God, the only Way, the only Truth, and the only Life (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Knowing the price Christ paid for us, how can we neglect or reject "so great a salvation"? (Hebrews 2:3). We have only a few, short years on earth to come to Christ and embrace the salvation only He offers. There is no second chance after death, and eternity in hell is a very long time. ***How does this world respond to this reality? How do you?***

Do you know people who claim to be believers in Christ who are two-faced, who are hypocrites? That is perhaps the best summary of how Isaiah viewed the nation of Israel. Israel had an appearance of righteousness, but it was a facade. In the Book of Isaiah, the Prophet Isaiah challenges Israel to obey God with *all* of their heart, not just on the outside. ***How should they have responded? How do we love God with all our hearts?*** Isaiah's desire was that those who heard and read his words would be convicted to turn from wickedness and turn to God for forgiveness and healing. ***Have you turned to God and received His forgiveness and healing? Have you put your trust in Jesus as Messiah, as Lord of your life and as the coming King?***

The Bigger Story – Follow

Week Nineteen: Believe

Notes & Discussion Questions on John 20:19-23

John 20:19: “That same day at evening”: We are told of five appearances of Jesus on the resurrection day:

- Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18)
- Other women (Matthew 28:9-10)
- Two on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13, Luke 24:13-32)
- Peter (Luke 24:33-35, 1 Corinthians 15:5)
- Ten of the disciples, Thomas being absent (John 20:19-23)

Jesus could have gone anywhere, done anything, after He rose...but He sought out His people, though they scattered and fled as He was arrested. **What** does this demonstrate about Jesus? **About** our relationship with Him?

John 20:19: Jesus’ first messages (and He repeats it!) to His disciples is “peace”. **Why? What is peace? Discuss** the peace of Christ, **how** our resurrected Savior, the Prince of Peace, brings and blesses us with peace.

John 20:21: Jesus gives a mission: to continue His works, as God the Father sent Him (John 17:18). **To whom is this mission for? What does it mean, to be sent by Jesus?**

John 20:22: “Receive the Holy Spirit”. **How does the Holy Spirit equip believers to carry out the mission? What does it mean that this is the same Holy Spirit that empowered Jesus?**

There is a connection between this breathing (of the Spirit) and the Genesis 2:7 breath of life... This perhaps indicates an element of re-creation...being born again. Entering into new life. **Discuss.**

Notes & Discussion Questions: John 20:24-31

John 20:24-25: **Did Thomas doubt or refuse to believe? Discuss** the difference. **Discuss** what/who prompts a change in doubt/refusal. **Discuss** the time (1 week) before Jesus speaks to the skeptical Thomas.

John 20:26-27: Jesus knew the demands of Thomas. **What does Jesus offer Thomas? What does this demonstrate about Jesus?** Jesus’ wounds are evidence of His love, sacrifice, victory and resurrection. **How can we remember this today?**

- Jesus moves Thomas from doubt/unbelief to faith. **How?**

John 20:28: Thomas addresses Jesus with titles of deity, adding personal pronouns – accepting Jesus as his Lord and God. **Discuss.**

John 20:29: Jesus gives a special blessing to those who believe, who have a faith satisfied and founded on God. **Discuss** this blessing. In His ministry, Jesus triumphed over sickness, sinister plots, then sorrow and death. Now He conquers unbelief. **Discuss.**

John 20:30-31: The author, John, described a limited number of signs in this Gospel to introduce Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God. Collectively, these signs give a strong foundation for faith in Jesus, faith not as a blind leap, but a reasonable step based on evidence. **Discuss.**

- Some say belief isn’t complicated, but isn’t always easy. **Discuss.**
- ABC: Accept, Believe Commit

The Holy Spirit and personal relationship with Jesus reveals more to believers as belief means the promise of life in Jesus’ name. **What does life in the name of Jesus look like?**

This Week’s Readings

1 Sam. 20-21	1 Sam. 22-23	1 Sam. 24-25	1 Sam. 26-28	1 Sam. 29-31	2 Sam 1-2
	Luke 24		John 1	John 2	John 3

Isaiah 43:8-13, Psalm 8, 1 Peter 5:6-11, John 20:19-23, 24-31

Notes & Discussion Questions on Isaiah 43:8-13

Isaiah prophesied to the Southern kingdom of Judah (700 BC).

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This prophecy (the coming judgment of Judah) was given 100 years before the Babylonians would conquer the Assyrians (606 BC).

In 586 BC, the Babylonians overpowered Jerusalem and they destroyed it and the Temple, taking all the sacred articles of the Temple (plus captives) back to Babylon (modern-day Iraq).

While he spoke about the coming judgment (coming due to their rebellion, idolatry and wickedness) he also spoke of the forgiveness and restoration they would experience; all of which was to take place in the future, because of our God! Who looks to the future, who offers forgiveness, redemption and restoration! ***Where do you see Jesus in these verses? What do you learn about God?***

Isaiah 43:8-9: In Isaiah 42:19, the Lord spoke of the blind and deaf who had willingly closed their eyes and ears to His truth and ways. Here, He is challenging the people to prove Him wrong, that they are correct for rejecting Him and worshiping false gods. ***Discuss spiritual blindness, choosing to not believe. Compare this story with Thomas. Compare this with current times, your own experience.***

Isaiah 43:10-13: Here, the Lord commissions His witnesses. God's people have seen and bear witness to His great works. Being a witness is being a passive observer, but God also calls His people to be "servants" and to "know" "believe" and "understand" that God is God, greater than any created, false idol or empty idea.

- ***How can you be a witness of God? How can you be God's servant?***
- ***What do you know, believe and understand about God and how can you share this?***

Isaiah 43:11-13: The Lord God is the only Savior. He "declared" and "saved" and "proclaimed". ***What do these truths mean? How can we find comfort, rest and assurance in our Savior?***

- "I am God": since Jesus is Savior (Philip. 3:20, 2 Timothy 1:10) and there is no other Savior beside the Lord, then Jesus must be the Lord. The Lord, Yahweh, is One God in Three Persons. Trinity!
- "You are my witnesses": If Israel would remember that only the Lord has ever rescued them, they would not be so quick to turn away, to other gods. ***How can we all be witnesses to the saving, rescuing, and healing work of the Lord?***
- "I work and who can turn it back": God is all-powerful, all-knowing and eternal. Before there was time, He was. His strength is infinitely greater than anything else. When God does something, no one will ever reserve it. ***How can a deeper understanding of the power of God reassure us?***

Follow: Next Week's Readings

2 Sam. 3-5	2 Sam 6-8	2 Sam. 9-11	2 Sam. 12-13	2 Sam. 14-15	2 Sam. 16-17
	John 4		John 5		John 6
John 21:1-14, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 37:1-9, Galatians 5:16-26, John 21:15-25					

Additional Little Tidbits from David Guzik's Commentary

John 20:19: "When the disciples were assembled...": It was good that the disciples stayed together. Jesus told them that when He departed they must love one another, which assumes that they would stay together (John 15:17). He also prayed for their unity after their departure (John 17:11). This command was *fulfilled* and prayer was *answered*, at least in the days immediately after His crucifixion.

John 20:23: "If you forgive the sins of any": Jesus gave His disciples *authority* to announce forgiveness and to warn of guilt, as authorized by the Holy Spirit. This lays down the duty of the church to proclaim forgiveness to the repentant believer and the duty of the church to warn the unbeliever that they are in danger of forfeiting the mercy of God. We don't create the forgiveness or deny it; we announce it according to God's Word and the wisdom of the Spirit.

John 20:26-17: There is a heavy significance in that these two important meetings with Jesus and His assembled disciples took place on Sundays; this is the first indication we have of Sunday meetings of the disciples.

The Bigger Story – Follow

Week Twenty: Boat & Breakfast

Notes & Discussion Questions on John 21:1-14

John 21:1-3: Peter and six other disciples return to fishing.

- **Discuss** Peter being called “Simon Peter” and **discuss** his classification as a disciple (see Mark 16:7)
- Jesus told them to go to Galilee, Matthew 28:7, 28:10...**Discuss** why they might have been fishing.

John 21:4-6: Jesus appears and directs their work.

- Jesus takes an interest in their work, changes their method... some say the disciples’ haul of fish is a parable of their missionary activity ahead... successful only as they follow the directions of their risen Lord and are filled with His Spirit...**Do you agree?**
- **Compare and contrast** the other appearances of Jesus.
- **Compare and contrast** the other reactions to Jesus.

John 21:7-8: The disciples recognize Jesus on the shore and John 2:9-11: Breakfast with Jesus

- Jesus *provides* and *serves* breakfast, though He invites them to add to the menu...**discuss**.

Why 153 Fish?

- Some say this catch of fish points towards the number 17...Commandments plus the gifts of the Spirit.
- Some have noted that 153 is the added numerical value of the Greek words Peter and fish.
- Some noted: in Hebrew characters Simon Iona is equivalent to 118 + 35, i.e., 153.
- Some ancient writers believed there were 153 different types of fish in the world and this catch represented a full harvest of the entire world.
- Some thought that 100 stood for the Gentiles, 50 stood for Israel and 3 stood for the Trinity.

John 21:12-14: The disciples eat breakfast with Jesus.

Compare “Come and eat breakfast” with some of Jesus’ other invitations:

- Come and see (John 1:39)
- Come and learn (Matthew 11:28-29)
- Come and rest (Mark 6:31)
- Come and dine (John 21:12)
- Come and inherit (Matthew 25:34-36)

Notes & Discussion Questions: John 21:15-25

John 21:15-19: Peter’s restoration and call

- **Why** did **Simon** Peter need restoration? Fell asleep 3 times in the garden...denied 3 times...asked 3 questions by Jesus...**What** is the significance of this? **How** do you understand “restoration”?
- Jesus had already met with Peter individually on the day of His resurrection (Luke 24:34, 1 Corinthians 15:5). **Why** was it important to restore Peter in front of the others?

The meanings of the word **Love** in John 21

- The English word love is used **7** times in John 21
- The Greek language, in which the New Testament was written, has four different words for love.
 - Storge: family love
 - Eros: romantic love
 - Philia: friendship love
 - Agape: supreme, all giving, selfless love
- The first and second time Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” Jesus used *agape*, but Peter’s response, “You know that I love you,” uses *philia*.
- The third time Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” He uses *philia* and Peter used *philia* in his response. **What does this mean and why do you think this is?**

Notes & Discussion Questions: John 21:15-25, Continued

Peter was no longer overstating his devotion to Jesus (Matt. 26:33). Perhaps knowing he loves Jesus the best he can, aware of his failures. Jesus adjusted his language to meet Peter where he was... Jesus stoops down to our dark brokenness to bring us up... His grace is greater than our sins (Romans 5:20b)

- Jesus didn't ask Peter "are you sorry?" but challenged Peter to love... asking for his heart, knowing obedience, repentance, etc. will follow. **What does this model?**
- Jesus then sets Peter's eyes on the work ahead: tending, feeding and caring for *Jesus'* sheep. **What does this mean? Look like?**

Peter was restored to a right relationship with Christ. **How is your relationship with Jesus?**

- Peter was the first in the New Testament church to preach an evangelical message (3,000 saved!)
- He knew what Jesus did for him: "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 5:10-11)
 - Before Jesus called Peter to follow Him (Matthew 4:18-19) now Peter knows that continuing to follow Jesus would mean a cross: "Follow me" is a present imperative, literally meaning "Keep on following me." **What can we learn and implement here?**
 - Jesus gave Peter assurance: though he would face challenges again, He would be faithful to the end.
- God takes broken people and makes them whole, reclaims them for His purpose and uses them for His glory... **Discuss** a time in your life when God restored, empowered, claimed something for you.

<u>This Week's Readings</u>					
2 Sam. 3-5	2 Sam 6-8 John 4	2 Sam. 9-11	2 Sam. 12-13 John 5	2 Sam. 14-15	2 Sam. 16-17 John 6
John 21:1-14, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 37:1-9, Galatians 5:16-26, John 21:15-25					

Notes & Discussion Questions on Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Context: Moses is reminding the people of the commandments of God before entering Canaan.

Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!"

- In Hebrew, these verses are known as the *Shema* ("hear" in Hebrew), the classic Hebrew confession of faith, describing who God is (not Ball or Ashtoreth) but LORD and what our duty is towards Him. Knowing who God is encourages our actions towards Him... Loving him with all our heart, soul and might.
- **What does it mean to love God with all your heart, soul and might?**
- **Compare** these verses with Mark 12:30: (heart, soul, mind, strength)

Deuteronomy 6:6-9: ...shall be in your heart....

- **What does it mean to keep the commandments in our hearts? To communicate them to our children?**
- **What does the order of these commands imply?** (heart – children – then in front of us: hand, forehead)
- "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand": Phylacteries are small boxes holding parchment with scriptures on them, held to the forehead or hand with leather straps.
- "You shall write them on the doorposts of your houses" This command leads to the Jewish practice of the *mezuzah*, a small container holding a passage of Scripture that is nailed to a doorpost.

Why does God want our love? (see Matthew 22:37-38) **Why do we love God?** (see 1 John 4:19).

Moses continues by describing the dangers of disobedience:

- 6:10-12: The danger of forgetting God in times of plenty/prosperity.
- 6:13-19: How to avoid apostasy in plentiful times: Honor God in all we do.
- 6:20-25: How to avoid apostasy in plentiful times: Teach our kids to know and honor God.

<u>Follow: Next Week's Readings</u>					
2 Sam. 18-19	2 Sam 20-21 John 7	2 Sam. 22-23	2 Sam. 24 John 8	1 Kings 1-2	1 Kings 3-5 John 9
John 21:1-14, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 37:1-9, Galatians 5:16-26, John 21:15-25					

The Bigger Story – Follow

Week Twenty-One: Wait

Notes & Discussion Questions on Habakkuk

- In Hebrew Habakkuk’s name is “Chavakuk”, which means “embraced by God”
- Outside of the book that bears his name, Habakkuk appears nowhere else in the Bible
- Habakkuk prophesied sometime just prior to the rise of the Babylonian Empire (600 BC)
- This book is not a challenge to a specific set of people but is a dialogue between himself and God, after questioning evil

Habakkuk 2:2: God told Habakkuk to record these “question and answers” for the benefit of others... ***How can our trails help others? How can we be examples during difficult seasons?***

Many ask God questions: Moses (Exodus 5:22-23), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 12:1-2), the Psalmists (Psalm 10:1, 42:9, 44:24). ***How have you asked questions? What can you learn by asking questions?***

Habakkuk 2:2-4: The Original/Historic Context is how to live in troubled times: Through actively trusting in God. Trusting God knows how to deal with the proud and is just and true (Psalm 62:12). This verse is quoted 3 times in the New Testament, each time the reference is to salvation and faith in Jesus.

1. Romans 1:17: A commentary on the justified man: “The just shall live by faith.”
2. Hebrews 10:38: A commentary on faith: “The just shall live by faith.”
3. Galatians 3:11: A commentary on the Christian life: “The just shall live by faith.”

How can we live in times of trouble and questions? Where is your watchpost? Are you looking out? Listening?
There will be hundreds of (seemingly) unanswered “why” questions. ***What do you do with the “why” questions?***
We can either focus on them, using our experience and emotions to dictate our worldview and response. Or we can focus on God, knowing He is good, even in times we don’t understand. ***How do we live and walk by faith?*** (See: 2 Corinthians 5:7, Psalm 5:11, 18:2, 56:3, 91:2)

Notes & Discussion Questions on Psalm 62

In many psalms, David began by telling his great need or describing his present crisis. Here, David began by declaring his great confidence in and trust upon God. He asks for nothing. While written in a time of trouble, there is no fear or despair. ***Why? How can recognizing our salvation in God change our perspectives?***

Verse 2: “My rock and my salvation”: God is David’s strength and stability. He is a rock, firm and stable, but not unfeeling or insensitive to our feelings. We are to pour out our hearts to Him. ***Discuss.*** Despite the enemies and trouble (verses 3-4) David’s confidence is in God alone (verse 5). He seems to be talking to his soul, reminding himself of trust in God, that God is trustworthy. ***How can we remind ourselves of God’s truth, love and presence in difficult times?***

Verse 8: After speaking truths to himself, David reminds other to trust God “O people!” He also (verses 9-10) told the people what *not* to trust in. ***Discuss.***

Verses 11-12: Power belongs to God. We don’t look for strength anywhere else, including ourselves. God is powerful but also rich in mercy and steadfast (“hesed”) love. ***What else do we learn about God? About ourselves?***

Background Information on the Book of Acts

- Written by Luke, the only Gentile writer of the Bible, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke (wrote more words than Paul, Paul wrote more books/letters)
- Luke was a physician, and he became a traveling companion of Paul (Colossians 4:14)
- Written sometime around AD 60-69 (spans a period of about 30 years, to AD 60)
- Ideally this book could be called “Acts of Jesus through the Apostles” ***How can you see Jesus throughout this book? What do you learn about the Holy Spirit?***

This Week’s Readings

2 Sam. 18-19	2 Sam 20-21	2 Sam. 22-23	2 Sam. 24	1 Kings 1-2	1 Kings 3-5
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	John 7		John 8		John 9
Mark 16-19-20, Habakkuk 2:1-3, Psalm 62, Acts 1:1-11, Luke 24:36-53					

Notes & Discussion Questions on The Holy Spirit

Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, instructed the apostles regarding what to do in His absence, detailing how the Holy Spirit lives in, empowers and inspires man and is at work in those who do not yet believe. This sets the pattern for the rest of the book, showing how the Holy Spirit empowers the church (1:8). **Why do we need the Holy Spirit?**

- To be a bold witness, to resist sin and be further sanctified, to be vessels for God’s miracles (2 Cor. 4:7)

In Acts 4-5, Jesus instructed His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Spirit. **Why were they instructed to wait? What does the waiting indicate? What do we learn about God in this? That the Spirit is “Promise of the Father”? How have you handled times of waiting?**

- To wait means that it was worth waiting for
- To wait means that they had a promise it would come
- To wait means they must receive it; they couldn’t create it themselves
- To wait means that they would be tested by waiting, at least a little

Who is Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity:

- One God, in Three Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:26-27)
- The Holy Spirit has always existed and is co-equal and co-eternal with God. He is God (Genesis 1:2)
- The Holy Spirit is not an “it” or a “force,” but He has all the attributes of personality: mind (1 Corinthians 2:11), will (1 Corinthians 12:11) emotion (Ephesians 4:30)

What are the roles of Holy Spirit?

- To be around us, near us, drawing us and leading us to Jesus. No one comes to Jesus without the Holy Spirit’s influence (John 6:44, 1 Corinthians 12:3)
- The Holy Spirit indwells Believers (John 20:19-22) At the moment of conversion, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in the Believer (1 Corinthians 3:16, Romans 8:11)
- To give gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-10, Eph. 4:7-13, Rom. 12:3-8) and produce fruit in Believers (Galatians 5:22-23)

How do you get the Holy Spirit and this power (“dunamis” in the Greek, the English word “dynamite”) (John 14:16-17)? **How do you get the baptism of the Holy Spirit?** (Luke 11:11-13). **What do we do with that power?**

<u>Empowered: Next Week’s Readings</u>					
1 Kings 6-7 John 10	1 Kings 8	1 Kings 9 John 11	1 Kings 10-11	1 Kings 12-13 John 12	1 Kings 14-15
Jeremiah 10, Psalm 119:1-8, 1 Corinthians 2:8-16, 4:7-18, Acts 1:8, 2:1-21					

Notes & Discussion Questions on The Ascension

Acts 1:9-11: Jesus ascends into heaven. (Luke 24:50) in a cloud of glory (the Shekinah) associated with the presence of God in the Old and New Testaments. **Why is the ascension important? What is He doing now?**

- To send the Holy Spirit (John 16:7) and to give gifts to men (Ephesians 4:8)
- To prepare a place for you (John 14:3)
- To make intercession for us (Romans 8:34) standing as our High Priest (Hebrews 7:25)
- To set the stage for His Second Coming (Acts 1:9-11)

Verse 11: “Will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven”: Jesus will return just as He left.

- He left physically, visibly, from the Mount of Olives, in the presence of His disciples, blessing His church...and will return in a like manner.

What did they do in response? What should we do?

When we go out to do the work of God, Jesus will work with us and the Holy Spirit empowers us! Amen!