

Genesis

Chapters 1 & 2

God made the world.

God made the sun, the moon and the stars

..... the whole universe.



God said "Let there be light" and there was light.

God made the earth with all its plants and trees
and animals and fish and birds.

God made the first people.....the first man and first woman.

God made them in his own image and said to them

"Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth."

God saw all that he had made,
and all of it was good, very good.

Dear God, thank you for making such a beautiful world!

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Genesis 3

A creature hostile to God took the form of a snake and tempted the first man and first woman.

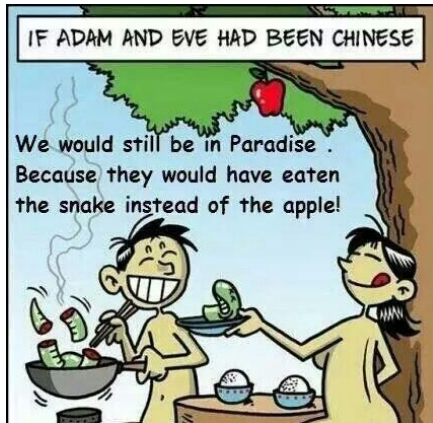
The snake tempted them to disobey God.
The man and woman then disobeyed God.

When God asked them why they disobeyed him, the man blamed the woman, and the woman blamed the snake.

God said to the snake: "You are the enemy of the human race. Someday a member of the human race will defeat you."

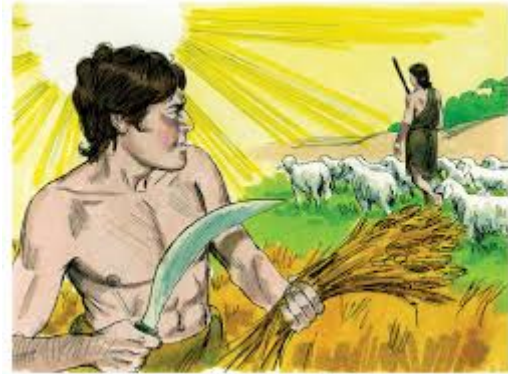
God said to the man and woman: "From dust you came and to dust you will return."

The first man's name was Adam (meaning "man").
The first woman's name was Eve (meaning "life").



Dear God, please help me understand how evil in the world started when Adam and Eve disobeyed you

Genesis 4



Two of Adam and Eve's sons were Cain and Abel.
Cain was a farmer. Abel was a shepherd.
Cain was jealous of his brother Abel.

God said to Cain: "Get control of yourself."
But Cain let his anger take over, and he killed Abel.

God asked Cain, "Where is Abel?"
Cain answered, "How should I know?
I'm not his security guard."

God replied, "I can hear your brother's blood crying out to me from the ground. That same ground will no longer give you any crops."

Dear God, please help me not to get angry with other people

Genesis 5 & 6: Among Adam and Eve's descendants were Seth, Enosh, Kenan and Enoch. Enoch was a special friend of God. Enoch walked with God. Another good man who walked with God was Noah. In Noah's time, most people had forgotten God. Most people did bad things. So God decided to cleanse the earth by a great flood. To save Noah and his family from the flood, God got Noah to build a huge boat for his family and for two animals of every kind. Even though most people forgot God, Noah believed in God and trusted God.

**Dear God, please help me to remember you,
to walk with you**

Genesis 7 & 8 Noah's family and many animals went into the big boat, the "ark". Then for about 40 days there was heavy rain which caused a great flood. The ark floated on the water. The people and animals inside the ark were safe but people and animals outside the ark died.

When the rain and flood stopped Noah and his family and the animals went out of the ark. God made a special agreement (covenant)

with Noah to bless Noah and his family. God told Noah that the rainbow would be a sign of their agreement.

Dear God, thank you for making the rainbow so beautiful



Genesis 9-11

Noah's descendants spread to many lands. They started speaking new languages. They discovered how to make bricks. In one place, Babel, they tried to build a very high tower.



But God was not pleased with them. God scattered the people of Babel to many places.

Dear God, the human family uses so many different languages. Please help us to live peacefully together on this earth

Genesis 12 & 13

God said to a man in the land of Haran named Abraham, "Leave your own country and go to a new land I will give you. I will make you into a great nation."

So Abraham and his family left the land of Haran and moved to the land of Canaan.

God said to Abraham, "I will make your descendants as many as the number of dust particles on the ground an uncountable number."

Even though Abraham and his wife Sarah were old and had no children, Abraham believed God's promise to give them many descendants.

Dear God, please help me to trust you like Abraham

Genesis 14 & 15

In the land of Canaan there were many kings. Sometimes they went to war against each other. Melchizedek, king of Salem, was also a priest of God. Abraham gave Melchizedek 10% of all his possessions.



Melchizedek gave Abraham bread and wine.

Melchizedek asked God to give Abraham a special blessing.

God said to Abraham, "This land of Canaan is yours; I give it to you and your descendants."

Dear God, please help all the kings and leaders in the world to be friends

Genesis 16

Abraham and his wife Sarah had been married many years but they did not have any children. So Sarah said to Abraham, "Take my slave Hagar and have children by her." When Hagar bore a son, Sarah was jealous and treated Hagar badly. Hagar ran away from home, but God said to her "Go back to your mistress and submit to her; I will bless all your descendants."

Dear God, please help childless couples to have a baby

Genesis 17

God appeared to Abraham and said to him "I will make an everlasting covenant with you and your descendants.

As a sign of this covenant, all your males must be circumcised. Baby boys must be circumcised when they are eight days old. Also, Sarah your wife, even though she is old, will bear you a son. You will name him Isaac."

Dear God, please bless all the babies in the world



Genesis 18

One day at Mamre, God and two angels appeared to Abraham. At first, God and the angels looked like men.

Following the ancient custom of hospitality Abraham prepared a feast for them.

God told Abraham that the town of Sodom was going to be destroyed because of the evil done there.

Abraham pleaded with God not to destroy Sodom.

God agreed to postpone Sodom's destruction for a while.

Dear God, please help people avoid sodomy

Genesis 19

The men of Sodom practised sodomy.
They wanted to abuse the two angels who looked like men
when the angels visited the home
of Abraham's nephew, Lot.

So the angels struck the threatening men with blindness.
Then the angels told Lot and his family to leave Sodom
immediately because it would soon be destroyed.

As soon as Lot and his family had left Sodom
the town was destroyed by a volcanic storm.

Dear God, please help people avoid sodomy

Genesis 20 & 21

Abraham and his wife Sarah were old people
but God blessed them with a son.
They named their son Isaac.

Sarah again made life difficult for Hagar and Hagar's son.
Hagar and her son had to leave Abraham's home
but God protected them and found them a new home.

**Dear God, please don't let me make life difficult
for anyone else**

Genesis 22

Abraham loved God very dearly.

Once when God put him to the test
Abraham was even willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac
if that was what God wanted.

When God saw Abraham's love and obedience
God renewed his promise to make Abraham and Isaac's
descendants as many as the stars of heaven.

Dear God, please help us love and obey you

Genesis 23 & 24

Not long after his wife Sarah died Abraham told his
number one servant to go back to Haran and find a wife
for his son Isaac.

The servant went to Haran, to the town of Nahor. When
women were getting water from the well in Nahor the
servant prayed to God for help to find a wife for Isaac.

He said to God, "If I ask a woman for a drink and she
answers 'Please take some of my water, and I'll give some
to your camels, too.' may she be the one you have chosen
for Isaac."

He had barely finished his prayer when Rebecca,
daughter of Bethuel came to the well. She was very
beautiful and not married. The servant asked her for
water and she said



"Drink, sir, and I'll
get water for your
camels, too."

Bethuel, a relative of Abraham, gladly agreed for Rebecca
to go with the servant to be Isaac's wife. Rebecca herself was
happy with the plan. Isaac married Rebecca and loved her
dearly.

Dear God, please help people to find "Mr/Mrs Right"

Genesis 25 After Abraham died, God blessed Abraham's son Isaac. For a long time Isaac's wife Rebecca could not have children. Then after Isaac prayed for her, she had twin boys - Esau and Jacob. Esau became a hunter. Jacob helped at home. Isaac favored Esau. Rebecca preferred Jacob. There was a strong rivalry between the two boys. Once when Esau came home seriously ill, he agreed to give Jacob his rights as first born son in exchange for some soup Jacob had made.

Dear God, please help childless couples to have a baby



Genesis 26 & 27 God blessed and protected Isaac all his life. When Isaac grew old and was nearly blind, he followed the usual custom of giving his final blessing to his sons. He wanted to bless Esau first, since Esau was his older son. But Rebecca and Jacob tricked Isaac. Jacob dressed in Esau's clothes and put hairy animal skins on his arms. Before Esau came home, Jacob asked for Isaac's blessing. Isaac said "Your voice is that of Jacob, but your arms and scent are those of Esau. Are you really Esau?" Jacob said "I am." Isaac then gave him his solemn blessing. When Esau found out what had happened, he was very angry and planned to kill Jacob. So Rebecca got Jacob to go to Haran until Esau's anger cooled down.

Dear God, please bless everyone in my family 10

Genesis 28

When Rebecca sent Jacob to Haran, she and Isaac told Jacob to find a wife in Haran. While Jacob was on his way to Haran, God appeared to him in a dream and said to him "I will keep you safe wherever you go, and I'll bring you back safely to your own land."

Dear God, please keep us safe wherever we go



Genesis 29

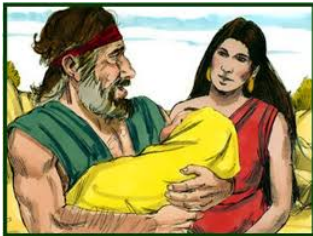
Jacob went to the home of his uncle Laban, in Haran. Laban had two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Jacob fell in love with Rachel. Jacob made an agreement with Laban: Jacob would work for Laban for seven years in return for marriage to Rachel. For Jacob, the seven years went like a flash because he loved Rachel so dearly. But Laban forced Jacob to marry both Leah and Rachel and made him work for another seven years as well.

Dear God, please help us to enjoy our work

Genesis 30

Leah gave birth to four sons - Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Rachel had no children and was jealous of her sister Leah. Rachel gave her servant girl Bilhah to Jacob and Bilhah gave birth to two sons - Dan and Naphtali. Leah then gave her servant girl Zilpah to Jacob and Zilpah gave birth to two sons - Gad and Asher. Leah herself had two more sons - Issachar and Zebulun and a daughter - Dinah. Finally Rachel had a baby, a son whom she named Joseph. For many long years Jacob worked for Laban but Laban would not let Jacob return to his own land.

Dear God, please bless everyone in my family



Genesis 31

Jacob said to Rachel and Leah: "You know how hard I have worked for your father, yet he has treated me unfairly - ten times he changed my wages. Now God has told me to go back to my own land. So, get ready, we are going." Jacob took his wives, children and livestock and left without telling Laban. Only after three days did Laban find out that Jacob had outsmarted him. Laban chased Jacob, but God told Laban not to hurt Jacob. So Laban made a treaty with Jacob and let him go on his way.

Dear God, please help us to treat everyone fairly

Genesis 32

As Jacob returned to his own land of Canaan, he feared that his brother Esau would try to kill him.

So Jacob, always clever and wily, sent messengers ahead of him to make friends with Esau.

The messengers reported that Esau was on his way to meet Jacob and had 400 men with him.

This news increased Jacob's fears so he divided his family and flocks into two groups, thinking that if Esau attacked one group then the other group could escape.



Jacob also prayed hard to God for protection.

Jacob sent gifts of animals to Esau, hoping that Esau would be friendly to him.

On the night before Jacob and Esau met, God appeared to Jacob and gave him a new name: Israel.

Dear God, please help me to be kind and clever

Genesis 33 & 34

When Esau and Jacob met, Esau was friendly and kind to Jacob. Esau accepted all the gifts of animals that Jacob gave him. But Jacob continued to be wary of Esau. Jacob moved to Shechem. One of the men of Shechem raped and then wanted to marry Jacob's daughter, Dinah. Jacob and his sons craftily said they would agree to the marriage if all of the men of Shechem were circumcised. The men agreed. But on the third day while the Shechem men were still in a lot of pain Jacob's sons Simeon and Levi took matters into their own hands. They killed all the Shechem men, because their sister Dinah had been raped. Jacob did not approve of the killings.

Dear God, please help women who have been raped

Genesis 35 & 36

God said to Jacob "Go to Bethel and live there." so Jacob moved to the area of Bethel. Not long after this, Rachel conceived another baby. But Rachel died in childbirth.

Jacob named the baby boy Benjamin. In all, Jacob had 12 sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun - their mother being Leah; Joseph and Benjamin - their mother being Rachel; Dan and Naphtali - their mother being Bilhah; Gad and Asher - their mother being Zilpah. Jacob and his family stayed in the land of Canaan, the land of his father Isaac. Esau and his family moved to the land of Edom.

Dear God, please bless and protect my brothers and sisters

Genesis 37

Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons because Joseph was the son of his old age.

Jacob had a special coat of many colors made for Joseph.

Joseph's older brothers were jealous of Joseph and hated him.

Joseph had a dream: he became a famous person.

This made his brothers hate him all the more.

One day, when the brothers were looking after their sheep in a distant place, Jacob sent Joseph to see how they were.

When the brothers saw Joseph coming some of them wanted to kill him.



Eventually they sold Joseph to some slave traders for 20 silver pieces. The slave traders took Joseph to Egypt and re-sold him there. The brothers told Jacob that a wild animal had killed Joseph.

Jacob was heart broken and mourned Joseph all the time.

Dear God, please help me not to be jealous of other people

Genesis 38

Jacob's son Judah had three sons - Er, Onan and Shelah.

Er married Tamar, but not long after the wedding, Er died.

So, according to custom, Judah asked Onan to marry Tamar and have a child for his brother. But Onan spilt his seed each time he slept with Tamar, so Tamar did not conceive. Judah then said to Tamar "Wait till Shelah grows up, and you can marry him." But when Shelah was older, he still hadn't been given to Tamar. So Tamar tricked her father-in-law Judah.



She dressed as a prostitute and conceived by Judah.

Judah did not know that the woman was Tamar; her face was covered. Three months later Judah was told that his daughter-in-law was pregnant after acting as a prostitute.

Judah followed the harsh local custom and said "Take her outside and burn her." But Tamar produced Judah's seal, stick and cord which he had given to her as a pledge when he had sex with her. So Judah admitted his guilt and freed Tamar who gave birth to twin boys.

Jesus, descendant of Tamar, please protect women from "bride burning".

Genesis 39 The slave traders took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's top officials. God was with Joseph. God blessed everything Joseph did.

Because Joseph did everything so well Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his household and all his possessions. Because of Joseph, God blessed Potiphar and all his interests. Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph who was very handsome. But day after day



Joseph refused to sleep with her. Then one day when Joseph again refused her she tore his clothes and started screaming. She claimed Joseph had tried to seduce her. Potiphar believed his wife and he put Joseph in jail.

Dear God, please don't let me cause other people to do wrong

Genesis 40 Even in jail, God protected Joseph. When two of Pharaoh's officials, his cup-bearer and his baker also were put in jail, Joseph was able to interpret dreams they had. The cup-bearer dreamt he picked grapes and made wine for Pharaoh's cup. Joseph told him the meaning of his dream: in three days he'd be free and back at work as Pharaoh's cup-bearer. The baker dreamt that birds ate bread from a tray on top of his head. Joseph told him: "In three days you'll be hanged, and birds will eat your flesh." And so it happened as Joseph had said: on the third day the cup-bearer went back to work in Pharaoh's palace while the baker was hanged. Joseph asked the cup-bearer to help him get out of jail, but when the cup-bearer was free, he forgot about Joseph.

Dear God, please bless everyone who has ever helped me

Genesis 41

Two years later Pharaoh had a dream: he was standing by the river Nile and saw 7 healthy cows feeding on the riverside. Then he saw 7 sickly cows which ate the 7 healthy cows. Pharaoh woke, then had a second dream when he went back to sleep: 7 rich ears of corn on one stalk, followed by 7 withered ears which ate the 7 rich ears. None of Pharaoh's wise men could interpret the dreams.

Then the cup-bearer told Pharaoh how Joseph could understand dreams. Pharaoh sent for Joseph and Joseph told Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams: the 7 healthy cows and 7 rich ears meant 7 good years for Egypt; the 7 sickly cows and 7 withered ears meant 7 years of famine.

Joseph also told Pharaoh what to do: use a tax to collect one fifth of all grain in the 7 good years; then during the 7 years of famine use the collected grain to feed Egypt.



Pharaoh and his ministers were so impressed by Joseph's wisdom that Pharaoh made Joseph governor of the whole of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself.

Pharaoh gave Joseph Asenath, a priest's daughter, as his wife. Joseph was now 30 years old, having spent more than 10 years in Egypt.

For the next 7 years Joseph traveled all over Egypt, supervising the collection of grain. Before the famine began, Joseph and Asenath had two sons: Manasseh and Ephraim. When the famine began, Pharaoh told the Egyptians "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you". People from all over Egypt and from other countries went to Joseph to buy grain during the famine.

Dear God, thank you for turning things around in Joseph's life

Genesis 42

In Joseph's home country of Canaan, the famine was very severe. Joseph's father Jacob said to his sons "I hear there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go to Egypt and buy grain for our families so that we will not die".

All Joseph's brothers, except Benjamin, went to Egypt and arrived at the place where Joseph was selling grain. The brothers had not seen Joseph for about 20 years and they didn't recognize him. But Joseph recognized them.

Joseph put them to the test: he said they were spies, and he told them to bring Benjamin to Egypt to prove they were not spies. He kept Simeon in prison until they returned with Benjamin.

Dear God, please help any places in the world which are suffering from famine



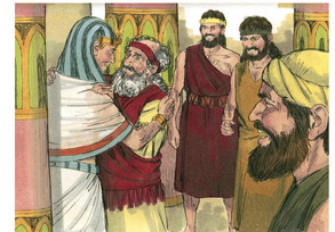
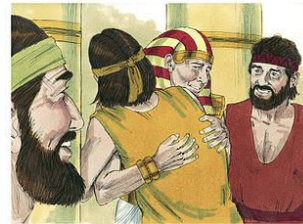
Genesis 43 The famine continued and so Jacob sent his sons back to Egypt to buy more grain. This time Benjamin went with them, even though Jacob worried greatly about his safety. When the brothers arrived in Egypt Joseph invited them to his home for a meal. Simeon was allowed to join them. The brothers still didn't recognize Joseph. Joseph was moved when he saw Benjamin, his full blood brother. Joseph left the company and cried for quite some time. When Joseph rejoined the meal he gave the brothers a hearty meal which they all enjoyed. Joseph arranged that Benjamin's portion was extra large. **Dear God, please bless all missing persons**



Genesis 44 Joseph had his brothers' sacks filled with free grain, then he gave them back their money. But he again put them to the test: he got his servants to put his special chalice in Benjamin's sack. Not long after the brothers left, Joseph's servants caught up with them and asked them why had they stolen Joseph's chalice. They replied that they would never dream of doing such a thing and that if the chalice was found in anyone's sack that man would die. Each man's sack was opened, beginning with the oldest, and finally the chalice was discovered in Benjamin's sack. On returning to Joseph's home the brothers pleaded with Joseph not to punish Benjamin. Judah even offered to be Joseph's slave for life in return for Benjamin's freedom

Dear God, please help us in time of trial 20

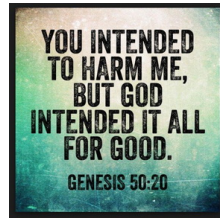
Genesis 45 When Joseph realized his older brothers were sorry for having sold him as a slave he was overcome and started crying loudly. He told his brothers "I am your brother Joseph whom you sold into Egypt. God sent me here to provide food for you." He hugged all his brothers and talked with them. Joseph told his brothers to bring their father and their families to Egypt since the famine would last for five more years. Pharaoh was pleased that Joseph's brothers had come and warmly invited them to live in Egypt. The brothers returned to Canaan. They told their father that Joseph was alive. Their father Jacob was overcome with joy. **Dear God, please help separated family members to be re-united again**



Genesis 46 Jacob and his whole family, about 70 people, took all their possessions and moved to Egypt. God said to Jacob "I myself will go down to Egypt with you." Joseph was ready for their arrival in Egypt. As soon as his father appeared, Joseph ran to greet him. Joseph threw his arms around his father and cried for a long time on his father's shoulder. Jacob said to Joseph "Now that I have seen you again, I can die in peace."

Dear God, please help separated family members to be re-united again 21

Genesis 47-49 Pharaoh met Jacob and Joseph's brothers and welcomed them to be shepherds in the land of Goshen. Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Pharaoh humbly received Jacob's blessing. Joseph provided food for his family during the famine. As the famine got worse the Egyptians sold their livestock and their farms to Joseph in return for grain. Joseph made the Egyptians promise that when the famine was over they would give one fifth of their produce to Pharaoh. Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen more years before he died in Joseph's arms. Before his death, Jacob blessed all his sons. Jacob adopted and also blessed Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. **Dear God, please bless Egypt and Israel, and help them be friends**



Genesis 50 After mourning their father for 70 days Joseph and his brothers went to Canaan and buried Jacob there. Many of Pharaoh's officials went with Joseph to Canaan. When the group returned to Egypt, Joseph's brothers again asked him to forgive them for selling him as a slave. Joseph replied "God has turned this evil into good, and through me has helped many people. So do not be afraid. I will provide for you and your families." Joseph lived to see his children's children. Before he died, he asked that his bones one day be taken back to Canaan. **Dear God, thank you for the beautiful story of Joseph**

Exodus

This is the story of how the Israelites left Egypt, how they made their exodus, their departure, from Egypt. The Book of Exodus

Chapter 1

After about 300 years, when the Israelites had grown to a huge number, the Egyptians began to see the Israelites as a danger to Egypt.

So they forced the Israelites into slavery and made their life miserable.



The Egyptians forced the Israelites to make bricks and build cities. But the more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they increased in number.

So the Egyptian king told the Israelite midwives to kill all new-born boys.

But the midwives let the baby boys live and God was pleased with the midwives and blessed them.

Pharaoh then ordered all Israelite baby boys to be drowned in the river.

Dear God, please stop people, especially children, from being used as slaves

Exodus 2

One Israelite mother hid her baby boy for three months. When she could no longer hide him, she put him in a basket and placed the basket among reeds near a river bank. The basket was found by Pharaoh's daughter when she went to bathe in the river. She felt sorry for the baby and decided to keep it. The baby's sister saw all this happen and asked Pharaoh's daughter if she'd like a nurse for the baby.

Pharaoh's daughter agreed, and so the baby's mother was paid by Pharaoh's daughter to be the baby's nurse. When the child was weaned, he was taken to Pharaoh's daughter who treated him like her own son. She named the baby Moses. When Moses became a man, he visited the Israelites and saw their hard life. He saw an Egyptian hit one of the Israelites so he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. But people found out; and so did Pharaoh who decided to kill Moses.

Moses then fled to the land of Midian. The priest of Midian had 7 daughters. One day when they drew water for their father's sheep they were driven away from the well by some shepherds. Moses protected them from the shepherds and helped them get water from the well. Their father, Jethro, was grateful to Moses and invited him for a meal. Moses then stayed with Jethro who gave him his daughter Zipporah for a wife.

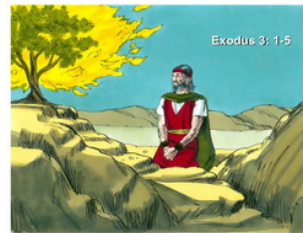
Dear God, please protect all new-born babies, especially baby girls



Exodus 3

The Israelites begged God to free them from slavery in Egypt. God heard their cry and called Moses to be their leader. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and said to him "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I have heard the prayers of my people in Egypt. I now send you to Pharaoh to win the freedom of my people." Moses asked what was God's name. God replied "I Am who Am. Tell the people 'I Am has sent me to you'."

Dear God, God of life, God of Abraham, we praise you Lord



Exodus 4

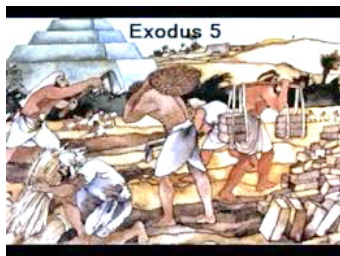
Moses said to God "What if the people won't believe you sent me?" God said "Throw your staff onto the ground." When Moses threw his staff onto the ground, it became a snake. "Catch it by the tail" said God. When Moses caught it by the tail, it changed back into a staff. Moses said to God "I'm a poor speaker." God said "Aaron your older brother can be your mouthpiece. Now go back to Egypt. It's safe to go back now; the people who wanted to kill you are dead." Back in Egypt, Moses and Aaron gathered the Israelite leaders and told them all that God had said. The elders rejoiced that God was going to help them.

Dear God, God of Moses and Aaron, we praise you Lord

Exodus 5 & 6

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said "God says: 'let my people go into the desert to worship me'." Pharaoh not only refused to let them go; he also made their life more difficult by forcing them to gather their own straw for making bricks. The people complained to Moses and Aaron for having made their life more difficult. So Moses prayed to God for help and God said he would force Pharaoh to let the people go.

Dear God, please don't let me make life difficult for other people



Exodus 7

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh again and showed him Aaron's staff changing into a snake. When Pharaoh's magicians were able to do the same thing. Aaron's staff swallowed up the magicians' staffs. But Pharaoh's heart stayed stubborn and he wouldn't listen to Moses and Aaron.

So God told Moses and Aaron to go the river the next morning. When they saw Pharaoh there Aaron struck the river with his staff and the river and all water throughout Egypt turned into blood. But Pharaoh still would not let the Israelites go.

Dear God, please soften stubborn hearts that make life difficult for other people

Exodus 8 After seven days, God told Moses and Aaron to go to Pharaoh again, this time causing a plague of frogs to cover the land when Pharaoh again refused to let the people go. Then God got Aaron to strike the ground and the dust turned into mosquitoes which attacked people and animals throughout Egypt. But still Pharaoh would not let the people go. Next there was a plague of flies which afflicted every place except the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived. Pharaoh then said the people could go and he asked Moses to pray for the flies to stop. But once the flies stopped Pharaoh changed his mind and would not let the people go.

Dear God, please help all world leaders to listen to your voice



Exodus 9 Through Moses, God kept saying to Pharaoh "Let my people go to offer me worship." But Pharaoh kept refusing to let the people go. So God sent three more plagues : all the Egyptian's animals died, then all the Egyptians were covered with boils, then the land was hit by a fierce hailstorm. During the hailstorm, Pharaoh said the people could go. But as soon as the storm stopped, he changed his mind again.

Dear God, please help us not to ignore your voice

Exodus 10

Pharaoh's advisers urged him to let the Israelites go. They said to him. "How much longer is this affair going to go on? Let the Israelites go before Egypt is ruined." Pharaoh agreed to let the men go, but not the rest of the people. So God sent two more plagues on the Egyptians: locusts which devoured all the plants and trees and then three days of total darkness, except in the land where the Israelites lived. But even after the above nine plagues, Pharaoh still wouldn't let the people go.

Dear God, stubbornness can sometimes be a good thing, but please don't let me be stubborn if that will hurt other people



Exodus 11

One last time God sent Moses to Pharaoh, with this message: "Tonight at midnight, God's angel will pass through Egypt. All the first-born in the land of Egypt will die, all the first-born of humans and animals, except the first-born of the Israelites."

Dear God, please bless everyone in Egypt!

Exodus 12 & 13

God said to Moses and Aaron "From now on, this month is to be first month of your year. On the evening of the 14th day of this month each family must kill and eat a one year old male sheep or goat. Some of its blood must be put on your front door. You must eat it in a hurry, with a belt round your waist, sandals on your feet and a staff in your hand. This night I will go through the land of Egypt and strike every first-born of human and animal. But when I see the blood on your doors I shall PASS OVER your homes and you shall be unharmed. Each year you must remember this night. Each year you must observe this feast of the Passover. You also must consecrate all first-born to me." That night God indeed struck dead the first-born of all the Egyptians, from the son of Pharaoh to animals in the field. There was great mourning in Egypt and Pharaoh finally agreed to let the Israelites go.



The Israelites now numbered about 600,000 men, having been in Egypt exactly 430 years. As the people travelled, God went before them in the form of a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night.

Dear God, please help me understand the full meaning of the Passover story

Exodus 14

Not long after the Israelites left Egypt Pharaoh again changed his mind. He decided to catch the Israelites and make them return to Egypt. The Israelites were near the edge of the Red Sea when they saw the Egyptians approaching.

The Israelites cried out in fear but Moses said to them "Do not be afraid. God will do the fighting for you."

God then told Moses to stretch out his staff over the sea. After he did so, a strong wind blew all night and caused the waters to part.



Then the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on both sides. The Egyptians gave chase and also went into the sea.

When the Israelites had crossed to the other side Moses again stretched out his staff over the sea and this time the sea returned to its normal flow, drowning all the Egyptians. The people offered thanksgiving and praise to God.

Dear God, please rescue people in trouble, just as you rescued the Israelites when they were in trouble

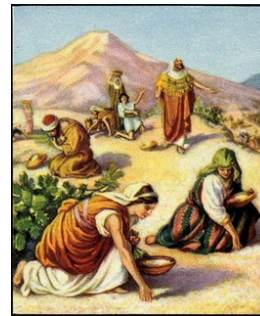
Exodus 15

The Israelites used this prayer to thank and praise God: "The Lord has covered himself in glory, horse and rider he has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, he is my salvation. This is my God, I praise him. The Lord is his name.

Lord, when you blew over the waters, they piled high on two sides. Lord, only you are God, there is no other.

Lord, you are our king for ever."

Dear God, you are my strength and my salvation



Exodus 16

As the Israelites traveled through the desert they began to complain about not having enough food.

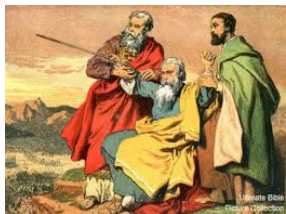
So God rained down bread, manna, from heaven in the form of a coating of dew which appeared on the ground

each morning, as well as flocks of quails which came every evening.

For forty years the Israelites ate manna and quails, bread and birds.

Dear God, thank you for the food we have each day

Exodus 17 In one place where there was no water the people grumbled against Moses : "Give us water to drink or else we will die." Moses asked God for help and God told Moses to strike a large rock with his staff. When Moses did this, water flowed from the rock. In another place the Israelites were attacked by the Amalekites. Moses prayed while Joshua led the people in battle. As long as Moses kept his arms raised up in prayer, the Israelites were winning. But when Moses let his arms down, the Amalekites started winning. So Aaron and Hur got Moses to sit on a rock and they supported his hands until sunset. Joshua and the people then won the battle. **Dear God, please help us understand the power of prayer**



Exodus 18 Moses father-in-law, Jethro, heard about all that God had done for Moses and the Israelites, so he visited Moses in the desert. Jethro saw that Moses was struggling to do so much administration by himself. Jethro suggested that Moses appoint men to help him: leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Moses accepted this advice and appointed judges as Jethro suggested. These judges handled all small issues and referred only difficult cases to Moses.

Dear God, please make us willing to share responsibilities with other people



Exodus 19 The Israelites kept traveling and came to Mount Sinai (Mount Horeb). Through Moses, God told the people to prepare themselves for a special revelation from Heaven.



Three days later a thick cloud covered the mountain accompanied by lightning and thunder and a trumpet blast which grew louder and louder. God then called Moses to the top of the mountain and gave him "The Ten Commandments".

Dear God, please make us willing to hear your voice

Exodus 20

The Ten Commandments given by God to Moses:

- 1: I am the Lord your God.
Do not worship anyone or anything else.
- 2: Use my name with respect. Do not insult my name.
- 3: Make the Sabbath Day a holy day each week.
- 4: Honor your father and your mother.
- 5: Do not kill.
- 6: Do not commit adultery.
- 7: Do not steal.
- 8: Do not tell lies.
- 9: Do not desire someone else's wife.
- 10: Do not desire what belongs to someone else.

Dear God, please help us to put these commandments into practice

Exodus 21

Laws announced by Moses: "When you buy an Israelite slave, you may keep him for only six years. In the seventh year he is free to leave or stay. Put to death anyone who kills someone in cold blood, anyone who curses or strikes his father or mother. If someone injures another person, the compensation will be according to the formula eye for eye, tooth for tooth, burn for burn, injury for injury."

Dear God, please help people not to seek revenge



Exodus 22

Laws announced by Moses: "If a man seduces a virgin, he must marry her. A sorceress must be put to death. Anyone who has intercourse with an animal must die. Do not discriminate against foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. Do not be harsh to widows and orphans. Do not demand interest if you make a loan to a poor person. Always remember you are a people consecrated to me."

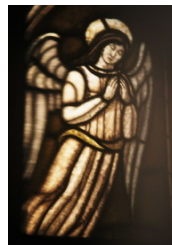
Dear God, please help us not to hurt other people

Exodus 23

Moses told the people: "Don't be unfair to anyone, friend or foe. Work for six days, then rest on the seventh day.

Work your land for six years, then let the land rest and recover in the seventh year. Three times a year you must celebrate special feasts: the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Harvest, the Feast of Ingathering. On these three feasts all men must present themselves before the Lord." God's promise: "I will send an angel before you to protect you and bring you to the land I have prepared for you. Eventually you will possess this special land and take it over from the peoples who live there now."

Dear God, please help everyone love you



Exodus 24

God invited Moses, Aaron, Nadab and 70 other men to see him face to face. They saw God face to face and ate and drank in his presence. Under God's feet the ground was like a pure blue jewel. God then invited Moses to go up the mountain. A cloud covered the mountain and for 6 days the glory of the Lord settled on the mountain. On the seventh day God spoke with Moses inside the cloud. Moses stayed on the mountain for about 40 days.

Dear God, thank you for times of prayer

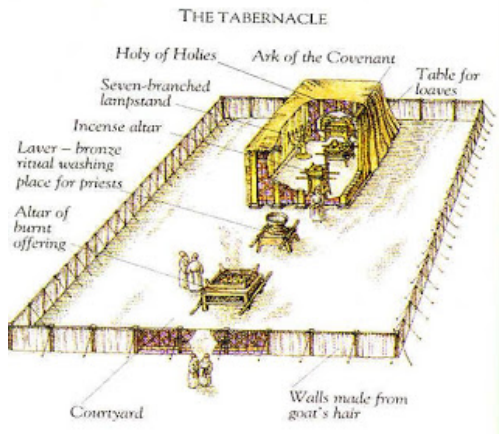
Exodus 25

God said to Moses: "Build me a sacred tent so that I may live among the people. Let everyone follow the promptings of their heart in making contributions for the building of the temple.

Make a sacred chest (ark) to hold the stone tablets on which are the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod and some manna.

Also make a table for the bread of offering, and a golden lamp-stand."

Dear God, thank you for churches and other special places for prayer



Make an altar out of acacia wood.

Make altar vessels out of bronze.

Make a sacred courtyard to go around the tent.

Place a sacred flame outside the veil

and keep the flame burning from night till morning."

Dear God, thank you for churches and other special places for prayer

Exodus 26-27

God said to Moses:

"Make a cover for the sacred tent. Make the cover's support frames of acacia wood. Make a veil of purple, violet and red behind which to put the sacred chest.

Exodus 28, 29

God said to Moses:

"Your brother Aaron and his sons will be priests in my service.

Make sacred vestments for them:

breastpiece, ephod, robe, tunic, turban and sash.

You must anoint Aaron and his sons

and consecrate them to serve me as priests."

Dear God, please bless and protect all sacred ministers

Exodus 30

God said to Moses:

"Every morning offer one lamb as a sacrifice for the people.

Every evening offer another lamb as a sacrifice for the people.

I will meet the people of Israel in the place consecrated to my glory.

I will remain with the people of Israel and be their God.

They will know that it is I who brought them out of Egypt."

Dear God, you created us, we are your people

Exodus 31

God said to Moses:

"The Israelites must make the sabbath a holy day each week, because the sabbath is a sign between you and me.

Do not do any ordinary work on the sabbath.

Work for six days, then rest on the sabbath.

Consecrate the sabbath to me."

God's words were inscribed on two stone tablets.

Dear God, please help us to make Sunday a holy day

Exodus 32 Moses stayed on the mountain about 40 days. During this time the people told Aaron to make them a god out of gold. Aaron made a golden calf and the people worshipped it. On the mountain, God said to Moses "Go down now, because the people have been unfaithful to me. I will punish them, but of you I will make a great nation." Moses pleaded with God not to punish the people. When Moses, carrying the two tablets, came down the mountain he saw the people partying before the golden calf. He threw down the tablets and broke them. He smashed the golden calf. The men of the tribe of Levi were then commissioned to go through the camp and kill many men. About 3,000 men were killed.

Dear God, please don't let us ever worship anyone or anything except you



Exodus 33 The Israelites continued their journey through the desert. Where ever the people camped, Moses would put the Sacred Tent outside, some distance from the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the Tent, the pillar of cloud came down on the Tent and God spoke with Moses face to face, just like friends speak to each other. The Israelites would go out to the Tent for Moses to consult God for them.

Dear God, thank you for your friendship

Exodus 34 Again Moses went up the mountain and stood before God. God described himself: "I am the Lord, a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness." When Moses came down from the mountain the skin on his face was radiant after speaking with God.

Dear God, we praise your tenderness and compassion

Exodus 35 Moses encouraged the Israelites to give willingly and generously in building the Tent of Meeting. Everyone whose heart was moved to help brought their gifts for the Lord.

Dear God, move our hearts to help other people

Exodus 36 The Israelites were so generous towards building the Tent that Moses was told by the craftsmen: "The people are bringing more than is needed for the Lord's Tent." The skilled workers made the tabernacle, the framework and the veil for the Tent of Meeting.

Dear God, please give me a generous heart

Exodus 37 & 38



The skilled workers next made the ark, then the table for the bread offerings, then the lamp-stand and the altar of incense. Next they made the altar of sacrifice, the bronze basin and the courtyard with its special curtains.

Dear God, please bless all skilled workers

Exodus 39 The skilled workers made the high priest's vestments: his ephod, his breastpiece, his robe. Vestments were also made for the ordinary priests. When everything for the whole Tent was finished, Moses examined all the work. He saw what a good job the workers had done. Moses then blessed all the workers.

Dear God, please help me always to do a good job

Exodus 40 God said to Moses: "On the first day of the first month, consecrate and start using the Tent of Meeting. Use chrism to anoint all the furnishings. Anoint Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests." Moses did everything that God asked.

Then a cloud covered the Tent and the glory of God filled the sacred site. At every stage of their journey in the desert, the Israelites would continue their march whenever the cloud rose from the sacred site. A fire shone within the cloud at night.

Dear God, please guide us on our way through life



Leviticus

1 – 7



Moses instructed the people: As a sign that you are asking God for forgiveness, put your hand on an animal's head as you sacrifice it to the Lord.

Dear God, please forgive my sins

8 – 10

Moses followed God's instructions and ordained Aaron and his sons as priests.

Moses washed them, put special clothing on them, anointed their heads with chrism and offered a special animal sacrifice on their behalf.

Then Aaron lifted up his hands towards the people and blessed them.

A flame from the Lord consumed the offering on the altar. The people shouted for joy and fell on their knees.

But later on when two of Aaron's sons offered unauthorized fire, a fire from the Lord consumed them.

Moses then said:

"God expects the highest standard from priests."

Dear God, please bless and protect all priests

Leviticus 11 & 12

The people were told which animals were "clean" and which were "unclean". Only "clean" animals were allowed to be eaten. Regulations were also made for when a woman had a baby: a lamb or two turtledoves or two young pigeons were to be offered as a prayer for mother and baby.

Dear God, please give me a clean heart

Leviticus 13 – 15

Instructions for hygiene: People with skin diseases, suspected leprosy, boils and burns should be carefully examined and isolated if necessary. The clothing and homes of people with leprosy should be put out of use. During and after seminal or illness discharges and menstruation, people should show extra concern for hygiene.

Dear God, please help me take good care of my health

Leviticus 16 & 17

Instructions for the annual Day of Atonement: Once a year Aaron or his successor must wear special vestments and enter the sanctuary past the veil. Then he is to offer two goats to pray for atonement for the whole community of Israel. One goat will be sacrificed in the Temple; the other is to be set free to go out into the desert - a symbol of the people's sins being carried away.



(this story gives us the English word: "scapegoat")

Dear God, please forgive us, and help us to forgive others

Leviticus 18 Do not marry a close relative. Do not have sex during time of menstruation. Do not practise sodomy. Do not have sex with an animal.

Dear God, please help us to respect the gift of sex

Leviticus 19 God's words through Moses: "Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy. Honor your father and mother. The Sabbath must be a holy day. When you collect from harvest or vine, leave something for the poor and the stranger. Be just, honest and truthful in your relationships. Do not let hatred live in your heart. You must love your neighbour as yourself"

Dear God, please help me live according to your sacred word

Leviticus 20 People should be put to death for child sacrifice, for cursing parents, for unlawful sex between men and woman, for sodomy, for sex with an animal, for being a necromancer or magician.

Dear God, please help me to avoid what is wrong

Leviticus 21, 22, 23 God's words through Moses: "Regard the priests as holy, for they offer holy sacrifice.

Keep the sacred festivals:

- every Sabbath
- the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread
- the First Sheaf
- the Feast of Weeks
- the first day of the seventh month
- the Day of Atonement
- the Feast of Tabernacles."

Dear God, thank you for special worship days and seasons



Leviticus 24 & 25

God's words through Moses: "Every seventh year your land is to have a rest, a sabbath for the Lord. Every fifty years will be a Year of Jubilee: no sowing, no harvesting, a time for freeing slaves."

Dear God, please help us understand and keep your word

Word for Word



Leviticus 26 & 27 God's words through Moses: "If you keep my commandments, I will bless you in every way: you will have rain at the right time, the earth shall give its produce, your land will know peace, you will be fruitful and multiply, I will be in your midst: I will be your God and you shall be my people.

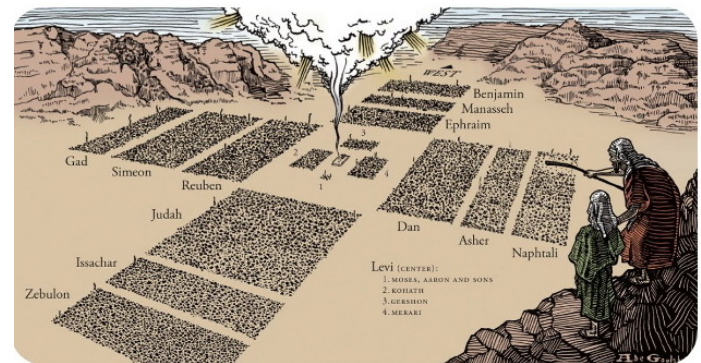
But if you ignore my words and break my commandments: you will have no peace, there will be no rain, the earth shall not yield its produce, sickness and pestilence will afflict you, you will be scattered among the nations."

Dear God, please help us to keep your commandments

Numbers

1 – 5: A census was taken of all the men aged twenty years and above. The twelve tribes were told to pitch their tents all around the Sacred Tent site. Each time they moved to a new place and pitched their tents, they would do so in the place allocated to each tribe.

Dear God, may our homes never be too far from a church



6: God said to Moses and Aaron: "This is how you are to bless the people. Say to them:

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace."

Dear God, please bless everyone in the world

Numbers 7 & 8

When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with God, Moses heard God's voice. Specially dedicated to God were the Levites. They were responsible for the worship ministry in the Tent. They served this ministry from when they were twenty five years old until they were fifty years old.

Dear God, please bless all pastors and ministers

Numbers 9

Whenever the Israelites pitched camp the Cloud of God's presence covered the Sacred Tent. From nightfall until morning, the Cloud took the appearance of fire. Whenever the Cloud lifted above the Tent, the Israelites broke camp. Wherever the Cloud stopped, there the Israelites pitched camp. Sometimes the Cloud stayed in one place for one day, sometimes for a month, sometimes a year. However long the Cloud stayed above the Tent the Israelites remained in camp. In this way they pitched camp and broke camp at the Lord's command.

The Cloud symbolizes the Holy Spirit, so we can pray:

Dear Holy Spirit, please lead me and guide me just as the cloud guided the Israelites through the desert



Numbers 10 The Israelites made two silver trumpets. When both trumpets sounded, the whole community would go to where Moses was. When only one trumpet sounded, only the leaders would assemble. The trumpets were also used on special feast days, to remind the people to praise God. **Dear God, when we hear trumpets being used in an orchestra or band, may their sound remind us of you**

Numbers 11 Some of the Israelites started complaining about not having meat to eat, only manna. So God arranged for quails to land near the camp and be easily caught for food. About this time Moses selected seventy men to help him care for the people. God blessed the seventy men and they began to prophesy. Moses said "I wish the whole people of God could be prophets, and God would give his Spirit to them all." **Dear God, please pour out your Holy Spirit on the whole human family**



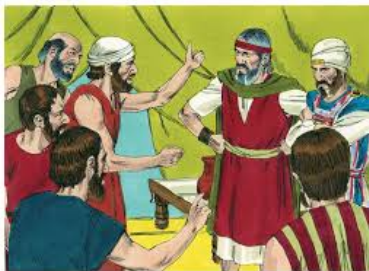
Numbers 12 Aaron's sister Miriam started complaining against Moses. So God called Moses, Aaron and Miriam to the Sacred Tent. God said: "Moses is at home in my house and I speak with him face to face. You were wrong to speak against my servant Moses." When God finished speaking Miriam had become a leper. Moses pleaded with God for Miriam. Miriam was exiled from the camp for seven days and then the leprosy left her. **Dear God, please help me not to complain so much about other people**

Numbers 13 & 14

Moses sent some men to reconnoitre the land of Canaan. After some weeks the men returned and reported that the land was fertile and rich. But most of the men also said that the towns of Canaan were too well fortified for the Israelites to capture. They said that the Canaanites were too strong for the Israelites.

Only Caleb and Joshua had the trust in God and courage to do battle with the Canaanites. Just as the rest of the people were thinking of stoning Joshua and Caleb, the glory of God appeared at the Sacred Tent.

God then said that all the men aged twenty and over who had refused to go to Canaan would indeed never see Canaan: they would keep on traveling in the desert until they died.



Canaan would not be entered by the Israelites until all the men aged twenty and over had died, excepting Caleb and Joshua. The reconnoitre men who inspired the rebellion were all struck dead that day.

Dear God, please give me more courage to face the trials of life, and don't let me ever discourage other people

Numbers 15 & 16

Another rebellion broke out when Korah and his group of 250 men rebelled against Moses and Aaron. This group said “You take too much on yourselves. The whole community is consecrated. How can you say you are more important than the community?”

The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



and so God is done talking with Korah.
Num 16:31-32

The next morning this group and other rebels were punished by God: the ground where the Korah group were standing split open and they disappeared into the hole.

The other rebels died when a fire came down from heaven and consumed them.

Dear God, please help people not to rebel against you

Numbers 17 Once again the people complained against Moses and Aaron. This time through Moses God told the leaders of the 11 tribes to bring 11 branches and plant them with Aaron's branch. The next day Aaron's branch had blossomed and produced fruit. Aaron's branch then became a sign to the people that they should stop complaining.

Dear God, please help me not to complain so much

Numbers 18 God's words to Aaron: "You and your sons will be priests. You will lead the liturgy and carry out the duties of your priesthood. You will have no portion of the land as your own. I myself will be your portion. When your sons receive the people's tithes, they must give you for a special offering a tithe of the tithes."

Dear God, please help priests to be good and not greedy

Numbers 19 God's words to Moses: "Burn a red heifer and mix its ashes with water to make holy water for special blessings in cases of uncleanness."

Dear God, thank you for holy water. May it protect and cleanse us

Numbers 20 The Israelites arrived at Kadesh in the desert of Zin. They had no water, and complained bitterly to Moses and Aaron. Moses and Aaron pleaded with God for help. God told Moses to hit a rock with a branch and in this way order the rock to give water. Water did in fact flow when Moses hit the rock, but through lack of faith Moses hit it twice. So God said to Moses and Aaron: "Because you did not fully trust me, therefore you will not lead the people to the promised land." When the Israelites moved on from Kadesh, they asked the Edomites for permission to go through their land. But the Edomites refused this request. Later, on Mount Hor, Aaron died and was succeeded as High Priest by his son Eleazar.

Dear God, please increase our trust in you 50



Numbers 21

In order to avoid the land of Edom, the Israelites headed towards the coastline.

But the people again criticized God and Moses.

So God sent snakes among the people and many people died.

The people then said to Moses

"We have sinned; please pray for us to save us."

Moses prayed for them, and God heard his prayer.

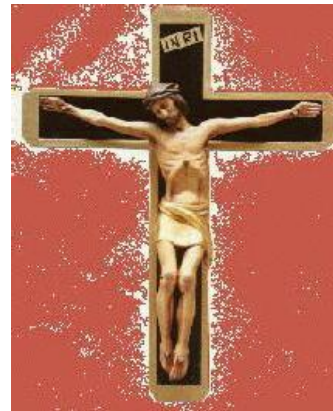
God told Moses to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole.

Anyone bitten by a snake

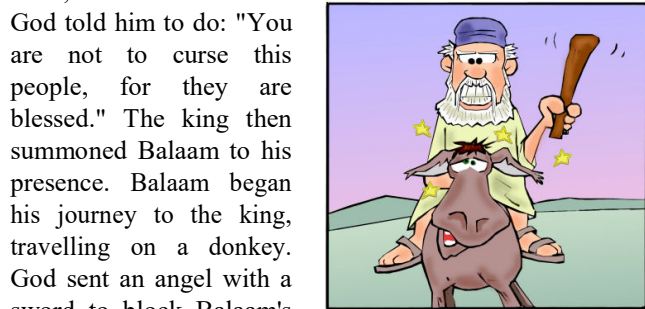
could then look at the bronze snake and live.

Jesus' words (John 3.13):

"The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him"



Numbers 21 & 22 As the Israelites continued their journey, a number of kings did battle with them. One of these was Og, king of Bashan. God said to Moses: "Do not be afraid of him, for I have given him into your power." Israel then easily defeated Og and occupied his land. The king of Moab also wanted to attack the Israelites, but before attacking, he consulted Balaam son of Beor who was a type of prophet and could see the future. Several times the king asked Balaam to curse the Israelites, but each time he blessed them, because this is what God told him to do: "You are not to curse this people, for they are blessed." The king then summoned Balaam to his presence. Balaam began his journey to the king, travelling on a donkey. God sent an angel with a sword to block Balaam's way. The donkey could see the angel, so she left the road to make a detour. Balaam hit her and made her return to the road. On the road the donkey again saw the angel and just lay down on the road. Balaam was very angry and hit her with a stick. Then God made the donkey speak: "Why did you hit me? Haven't I always been faithful to you?" God now opened Balaam's eyes and he saw the angel with a sword. Balaam realized that the donkey had saved his life. The angel then told Balaam to continue his journey but to say to the king only what God said to say



"Ok... ENOUGH! Whacking me on the head is not helping. Where I once saw ONE angel in my path... now I see TWO!" **Numbers 22:21-35**

Balaam hit her and made her return to the road. On the road the donkey again saw the angel and just lay down on the road. Balaam was very angry and hit her with a stick. Then God made the donkey speak: "Why did you hit me? Haven't I always been faithful to you?" God now opened Balaam's eyes and he saw the angel with a sword. Balaam realized that the donkey had saved his life. The angel then told Balaam to continue his journey but to say to the king only what God said to say

Dear God, please stop people from being cruel to animals

Numbers 23 & 24

When Balaam came to the king of Moab, the king again tried to get Balaam to curse the Israelites. But Balaam followed God's words and said: "How can I curse people that God does not curse? These people are specially blessed by God. How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob.



How lovely are your dwellings, O Israel. From you will come a mighty one who will reign over countless peoples. A star from Jacob will be leader."

Dear God, please bless the Jewish people with peace and love

Numbers 25 For a while the Israelites settled in the area of Shittim. In that place the Israelite men gave themselves over to debauchery with the women of Midian. The Israelites joined these women in sacrifices to local idols. God therefore sent a plague to punish the Israelites and thousands of people died. God commanded Moses to execute Israelites who had taken part in sacrifices to local idols. Phinehas the priest, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron showed his loyalty and zeal by personally executing one of the main offenders, at a time when most people didn't care what was happening.

Dear God, please help us to care about what goes on around us and what is happening in the world around us

Numbers 26 & 27 Moses made a census of all the men in the community. The total number was 624,730.

Moses also gave a ruling concerning inheritance:
"If a man dies without sons, his inheritance is to pass to his daughters.

If he has no daughter, the inheritance is to go to his brothers.
If he has no brother, it is to go to his father's brothers.
If his father has no brothers, it is to go to the member of his clan who is his closest relative." As Moses neared the end of his life, he asked God for someone to succeed him as leader. God answered: "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom the spirit dwells. Lay your hands on him, then bring him before Eleazar the priest and the whole community so that everyone will obey him."

Dear God, please bless all my relatives... and people in authority

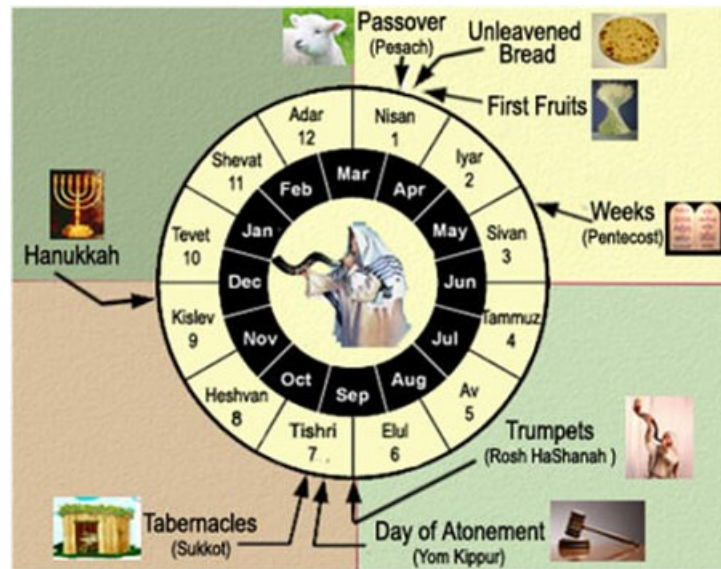


Numbers 28 & 29

Times for the Israelites to offer sacrifices to God:

- daily
- the Sabbath
- the feast of the New Moon of each month
- the feast of Unleavened Bread (14th day of 1st month)
- the feast of Weeks
- the feast of Acclamations (1st day of 7th month)
- the day of Atonement (10th day of 7th month)
- the feast of Tabernacles (15th day of 7th month).

Dear God, thank you for special days and seasons to honor you



Numbers 30 – 33

The Israelites waged war against the Midianites and claimed their land and the land of Canaan.

To the sons of Gad, Reuben and Manasseh were given the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan.

The land of Canaan was divided by lot among the Israelite clans.

Dear God, please give peace to the people of the Middle East

Numbers 34, 35

God gave the land of Canaan to the Israelites and Moses allocated a section of the land to the eleven tribes.

The tribe of Levi received some towns and pasture land from each of the eleven tribes.

Cities of refuge were established, where people could find safety if they had accidentally caused someone's death and the dead person's relatives wanted to take revenge.

In cases of homicide, more than one witness was required to convict someone of murder.

A final law: the inheritance of each tribe was not to be transferred to another tribe.

Dear God, please bless my family with a sense of history and togetherness

Deuteronomy

Chapter 1

After wandering in the desert for 40 years, the Israelites reached the land of Canaan.

Moses then assembled the people and recalled all that had happened over the past 40 years:

"When God first told us to take this land, I said to you: Do not be afraid. God goes ahead of you and will be fighting on your side, as he did in Egypt.



I also said how God carried you, as a man carries his child, all along the road you traveled to this place.

But you did not trust God and God closed the door to Canaan for 40 years, causing us to wander in the desert until now."

Dear God, please help me to trust you a bit more

Deuteronomy 2-4 Moses continued his talk to the Israelites: "God has been with us these 40 years, watching over us and providing for us. God gave us many victories and continually told us not to be afraid of any enemies. So now, Israel, do not forget God's goodness and help and laws. Do not forget the things your eyes have seen. Make sure to tell these things to your children's children. God has brought you out of Egypt to be his special people. If you seek God with all your heart and soul you will find him. Understand this today, therefore, and take it to heart: The Lord is God indeed, in heaven above as on earth below, he and no other.

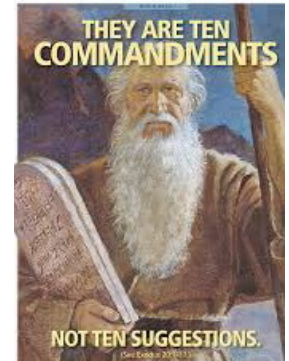


Keep his laws and commandments as I give them to you today, so that you and your children may prosper and live long in the land that the Lord your God gives you forever."

Lord, please help me to seek you with all my heart

Deuteronomy 5 Moses reminded the people of the Ten Commandments:

1: I am the Lord your God. Do not worship anyone or anything else. 2: Use my name with respect. Do not insult my name. 3: Make the Sabbath a holy day each week. 4: Honor your father and your mother. 5: Do not kill. 6: Do not commit adultery. 7: Do not steal. 8: Do not tell lies about other people. 9: Do not desire someone else's wife. 10: Do not desire someone else's possessions.



Dear God, please help us to put these commandments into practice



Deuteronomy 6 Moses continued his speech to the people: "Listen Israel. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength. Let these words I urge on you today be written on your heart.

You shall repeat them to your children and say them when you are resting in your house or going for a walk, when you are lying down and when you get up. You shall fasten them on your hand as a sign and on your forehead as a circlet. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Dear Lord, please help us to love you with all our hearts

Deuteronomy 7

Moses continued his speech to the people:

"You are a people consecrated to the Lord your God.
It is you that the Lord our God has chosen
to be his very own people out of all the peoples on the earth.

But know this:
if the Lord set his heart on you and chose you,
it was not because you outnumbered other peoples.
In fact you were the least of all peoples.

It was for love of you
and to keep his promise to our ancestors
that the Lord chose you.

Listen then to these ordinances, be true to them and observe
them, and in return the Lord your God will be true to you.

He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers.
He will bless the fruit of your body and the produce of your
soil, your corn, your wine, your oil, the issue of your cattle,
the young of your flock.

No man or woman among you shall be barren,
no male or female of your beasts infertile.

The Lord will keep all sickness far from you.

Be loyal then to the Lord and have nothing to do
with the religious practices of the people you will conquer."

Dear God, please help us to love you as we should

Deuteronomy 8

Moses continued his speech to the people: "Remember how
the Lord your God led you for 40 years in the wilderness, to
humble you, to test you, to know your inmost heart - whether
you would keep his commandments or not.

He humbled you, he fed you with manna, to make you
understand that man does not live on bread alone
but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.



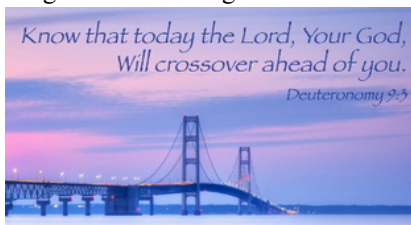
Learn from this that the Lord your God was training you
as a man trains his child. Keep the commandments of the
Lord your God. Follow his ways and reverence him.

When you become prosperous in the land that God is giving
you, do not become proud and say your own efforts have
brought you success. Take care and do not forget the Lord
your God."

**Dear Lord, don't let me ever forget all you have done for
me**

Deuteronomy 9 Moses continued his speech to the people: "Listen, Israel, you are soon to cross the Jordan River, to dispossess nations greater and stronger than yourself. Know that the Lord your God will go in front of you. So often in the past you forgot the Lord. So often you were rebels and did not obey the Lord. In future you must rebel no more."

Dear Lord, please don't let me ever rebel against you



Deuteronomy 10 Moses continued his speech to the people: "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you? Only this: to love and honor the Lord, to follow all his ways, to serve him with all your heart and all your soul, to keep the commandments and laws of the Lord that for your good I set before you today. Circumcise your heart and be obstinate no longer. The Lord your God is great and good. He it is you must praise, he is your God. It is he who sees justice done for the orphan and widow, who loves the



stranger and gives him food and clothing. You too must love the stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt."

Dear Lord please help me to love you as I should

Deuteronomy 11

Moses continued his speech to the people: "You must love the Lord your God. Remember this day, how it was you who heard these words, not your children. It is your eyes that have seen the great works God has done.

Keep the Lord's commandments, so that you may have strength to conquer the land God is giving you. That land is a land of hills and valleys watered by rain from heaven.

If you love the Lord your God with all your heart the Lord will give your land its rain in due season, autumn and spring, so that you may harvest your corn, your wine and your oil.



But if you forget the Lord your God and worship other gods, then the heavens will be closed and produce no rain.

See, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: a blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord our God; a curse if you disobey the commandments of the Lord our God."

Dear Lord, please help us to obey you and never forget you, and please give rain to places that urgently need it

Deuteronomy 12 & 13

Moses continued his teaching: "Be faithful in keeping all the instructions that I give you, so that you and your children after you may be happy, always doing what is good and right in the eyes of the Lord your God. If anyone, even someone from your own family, tries to get you to worship a false god, have nothing to do with that person. That person must be punished."

Dear God, please don't let anyone influence me to forget you

Deuteronomy 14 & 15

Moses' teaching: "There are certain animals you must not eat, including pigs. At the end of every 7 years, you must cancel all debts.

If there is a poor person among you, do not harden your heart or close your hand against that person. Always be generous to anyone in need."



Dear Lord, make me more generous towards poor people

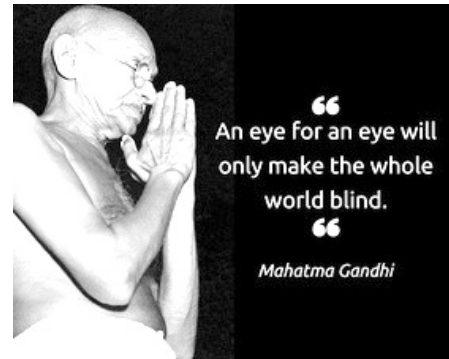
Deuteronomy 16 - 18

Moses' teaching: "Remember the special feasts and days that you must observe. Appoint judges for the people. Do not pervert the law. You must be fair, you must not take bribes. No bribes, no corruption.

Do not practise divination, soothsaying. No one may be an augur or sorcerer. Do not use charms, do not consult ghosts or spirits. Instead, be entirely faithful to the Lord your God."

Dear Lord, please help people avoid astrology and consulting fortune tellers

Deuteronomy 19 - 21



Moses' teaching: "A life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot.

When you go to war, the following men are excused from fighting:

a man who has not yet dedicated his newly-built house; a man who has planted a vineyard, and not yet enjoyed its fruit; a man who is engaged to be married; a man who is fearful and faint of heart."

Dear Lord, help me to understand how Jesus taught us to love our enemies and not to take revenge

Deuteronomy 22 – 25

Moses' teaching:

"You shall not commit adultery or fornication.

You must avoid all forms of prostitution.

You may demand interest on a loan to a foreigner,
but do not practise usury among yourselves.

Be honest in all your dealings."

Dear Lord, please give me a clean heart

Deuteronomy 26

Moses' teaching:

"When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you,
you must take the first-fruits of your produce
to the priest then in office and say:

'Today I declare to the Lord my God that I have come to the
land the Lord swore to our fathers he would give us.'

After the priest receives your offering, you must declare:

'My father was a wandering Aramaean.

He went down to Egypt to find refuge there, few in number.

But then he became a nation, great and strong.

The Egyptians ill-treated us, they gave us no peace
and inflicted harsh slavery on us.

But we called on the Lord our God who heard our voice
and saw our misery, toil and oppression.

The Lord our God then brought us out of Egypt with mighty
hand and outstretched arm, with signs and wonders.

He brought us here and gave us this land, a land where milk
and honey flow. So I now bring the first-fruits of my produce
that you, Lord, have given me".

You are then to share these gifts with your household
and with the Levite and stranger who live among you."

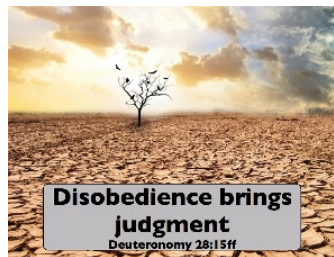
**Dear Lord, help me to show gratitude for all your gifts,
by sharing what I have with those less fortunate than I**

Deuteronomy 27 & 28

Moses' teaching: "Be silent, Israel, and listen. Today you
have become a people for the Lord your God. A curse on
anyone who breaks the commandments of the Lord.

Blessings on everyone who keeps the commandments of the
Lord. If you obey the voice of the Lord your God, you will
be blessed in the town and blessed in the country.

Blessed will be the fruit of your body, the fruit of your soil,
the issue of your livestock. Blessed will you be coming in,
and blessed going out.



But if you do not obey the
voice of the Lord your God,
you will be accursed in the
town and accursed in the
country.

Accursed will be the fruit
of your body, the fruit of
your soil and the issue of
your livestock."

**Dear God, please help us to obey your words
... and be blessed**

Deuteronomy 29 & 30

Moses called the whole of Israel together and said to them: "Keep the words of this covenant and observe them and you will thrive in all you do. Let there be no man or woman among you, no clan or tribe, whose heart turns away from the Lord your God to go and serve the gods of the nations.

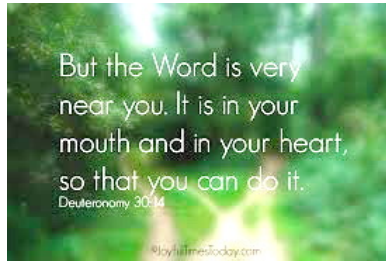
If ever you are scattered from the land God is giving you, God will bring you back when your hearts turn back to him. The Lord will circumcise your hearts until you love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. This law I enjoin on you today is not beyond your strength or beyond your reach. It is not in heaven, so that you need to wonder 'who will go up to heaven for us and bring it down to us so that we may hear it and keep it?"

Nor is it beyond the seas, so that you need to wonder 'who will cross the sea for us and bring it back to us, so that we may hear it and keep it?"

No, the Word is very near to you.

It is in your mouth and in your heart for your observance.

See, today I set before you life and prosperity, death and disaster



If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, if you love the Lord your God and follow his ways, if you keep his commandments, his laws, his customs, you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to make your own.

But if your heart strays, if you refuse to listen, if you let yourself be drawn into worshipping other gods and serving them, I tell you today, you will most certainly perish; you will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today:

I set before you life or death, blessing or curse.

Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live in the love of the Lord your God, obeying his voice, clinging to him. For in this your life consists, and on this depends your long stay in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob he would give them."

Dear Lord, please help more and more people to choose life and blessings ... and not to turn their backs on you

Deuteronomy 31



Moses said to the people: "I am 120 years old and can no longer come and go as I will. The Lord has told me I will not cross the Jordan."

Moses then said to Joshua in the presence of all the people: "Be strong, stand firm. You are going with this people into the land promised by the Lord. The Lord himself will lead you; he will be with you; he will not fail you or desert you. Have no fear; do not be disheartened by anything."

Dear Lord, please help me remember that you are with me every day. Please don't let anything or anyone dishearten me

Deuteronomy 32

The Song of Moses: Listen, O heavens, and I will speak; let the earth hear the words on my lips. May my teaching fall like the rain, my speech descend like the dew, like rain drops on the young green, like showers falling on the grass.



For I shall praise the name of the Lord.
O give glory to this God of ours!
The Rock - his deeds are perfect, and all his ways are just,
a faithful God, without deceit, a God who is right and just.

Those whom he begot unblemished
have become crooked, false, perverse.
Is it thus you repay the Lord,
O senseless and foolish people?
Is he not your father who created you,
he who made you, on whom you depend?

Remember the days of old,
consider the years that are past;
ask you father and he will show you,
ask your elders and they will tell you.

When the Most High gave the nations their heritage
and disposed men according to his plan,
in fixing the boundaries of the nations
he thought first of Israel's sons.
For Israel was the Lord's possession,
Jacob the one he had chosen.

God found him in a wilderness, in fearful, desolate wastes; he surrounded him, he lifted him up, he kept him as the apple of his eye. Like an eagle what watches its nest, that hovers over its young, so he spread his wings; he took him, placed him on his outstretched wings. The Lord alone was his guide and no other god was with him.

Dear Lord, thank you for life and all your love and care

Deuteronomy 33 & 34

Before Moses died, he blessed the twelve tribes of Israel.

Moses then went up Mount Nebo, opposite Jericho, where the Lord showed him the whole land that the Israelites would possess. Moses was buried in the land of Moab.



After the people mourned Moses for 30 days, Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, since Moses had laid his hands on him.

From that time there has never been a prophet like Moses, the man who knew the Lord face to face.

**Dear God, thank you for the life of Moses.
May civic and church leaders be more like him,
filled with love for you and for the people**

The Book of Joshua

Chapter 1

God said to Joshua:

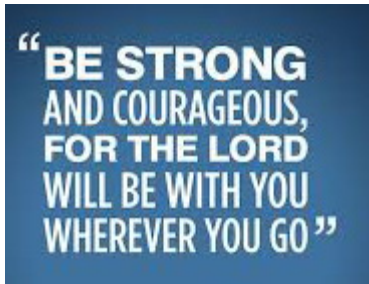
"I will be with you, as I was with Moses.
I will not leave you or abandon you.

Be strong and stand firm and be careful to keep all the Law
which my servant Moses laid on you.

Never swerve from this to right or left,
and then you will be happy in all you do.

Have the book of this Law always on your lips.
Meditate on it day and night, so that you may carefully
keep everything that is written in it.

Be fearless,
be confident,
for wherever you go
I the Lord your God
am with you."



Then Joshua said to the people:

"Get ready, for in 3 days you will cross the Jordan River and
take possession of the land which God is giving to you."

**Dear God, thank you for the courage and confidence
that you give us**

Joshua 2

Joshua sent two men as spies to explore the Jericho area.
In Jericho they went to the house of Rahab the prostitute.

The king of Jericho was told about this and he sent men to
capture the two Israelites. But Rahab hid the men
and told the king that they had already gone.

Rahab said to the men in their hiding place on her roof :

"I know that the Lord has given you this land. My people are
afraid of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the sea
for your crossing out of Egypt. We have heard how you
defeated the 2 kings Sihon and Og.



Since I have shown you kindness I now ask you to show
kindness to my family and spare their lives when you attack
this city". The men agreed and told Rahab to tie a scarlet cord
to her window so the Israelites would know her family were
inside. Rahab helped the men go down from the window by a
rope. The men stayed in the nearby hills for 3 days until it was
safe to leave. The men returned to Joshua
and told how the people of Jericho were already trembling at
the thought of an Israelite attack.

**Lord, please bless all women and girls caught up
in prostitution**

Joshua 3

Instructed by the Lord, Joshua told the people to go to the bank of the Jordan River. He told the priests carrying the Sacred Chest to stand in the river on the edge of the water.

As soon as the feet of the priests touched the water, the river stopped flowing. The people then went across the dry river bed towards Jericho.

Dear God, please help me to cross rivers of difficulty, doubt, conflict etc

Joshua 4 After the Israelites crossed the Jordan River, Joshua selected 12 men, one from each tribe, and told them to get 12 stones from the middle of the Jordan. The 12 stones were set up at Gilgal, east of Jericho, as a reminder of how God had helped the Israelites cross the river. When children in the future

asked "What do these stones mean?" parents were to answer: "The waters of the Jordan separated and stopped flowing

when the Lord's Sacred Chest entered the river. These 12 stones are a permanent reminder of this."

As soon as the Israelites had finished crossing the Jordan, its waters immediately started flowing again.

Dear Lord, please don't let me ever forget the many times you have helped me cross "Jordan" rivers



Joshua 5

The kings of the Jordan area heard that the Lord had dried up the Jordan's waters to let the Israelites cross over. The kings became very afraid of the Israelites. At Gilgal near the Jordan the Lord instructed Joshua that all un-circumcised men should be circumcised. It was at Gilgal that the Israelites kept the Passover Feast and tasted the produce of the land. As soon as the Israelites tasted the produce of the land, the manna stopped falling.

Dear God, thank you for all you did for the Israelites



Joshua 6

The Lord said to Joshua: "I am delivering Jericho and its king into your hands. Get your soldiers to march around Jericho. Do this for 6 days, marching

with the Sacred Chest with 7 trumpets in front of it.

On the 7th day, march around the city 7 times, and then let the whole people give a mighty war cry."

The soldiers and people did this, and when the war cry was made, the walls of Jericho fell down. The Israelites then entered the town and captured it. They spared the lives of Rahab the prostitute and her family.

Dear Lord, long ago you caused the walls of Jericho to fall. Please in our day cause walls of prejudice and corruption to fall

Joshua 7

The Lord had told the Israelites not to keep anything for themselves when they captured Jericho. But one man disobeyed the Lord and secretly kept some of the spoils.



As a result of that man's disobedience, the Israelites were defeated in battle when they attacked the town of Ai.

The disobedient man's identity was found by drawing of the lot:

- of the 12 tribes, one was chosen, the tribe of Judah.
- of the tribe of Judah, one clan was chosen, that of Zerah.
- of the families of Zerah, one was chosen, that of Zabdi.
- of the men of Zabdi, one was chosen, Achan.

Achan admitted his guilt. He and his whole family were then stoned to death and a great cairn built over them. All of Achan's possessions were burnt.

Dear Lord, please don't let me disobey you

Joshua 8

Once again the Israelites attacked the town of Ai, this time with a special strategy:



5,000 men went by night to the back of the town and hid themselves in the nearby hills. In the morning Joshua and the rest of the people marched towards the front of Ai.

When the king of Ai saw them coming, he led his people out for battle. In chasing the Israelites, the king of Ai left his town undefended.

Then the 5,000 Israelites attacked Ai from the rear and set it on fire. When the men of Ai looked back and saw their town on fire, they realized they were caught in a trap.

The Israelites easily won the battle and captured Ai.

Dear Lord, please give leaders the courage of Joshua

Joshua 9

After hearing that the Israelites had captured Jericho and Ai, other peoples of the region formed an alliance to fight against the Israelites. But the people of Gibeon used another strategy: they tricked the Israelites into thinking they were not locals but had come from far away. So the Israelites made a treaty with them.

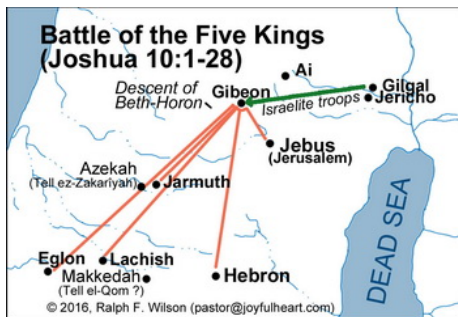
When the Israelites realized they had been tricked, they kept their side of the bargain and did not attack Gibeon. Instead the Gibeonites became wood-cutters and water-carriers in the service of the Israelites.

Dear Lord, please help nations to make treaties instead of war

Joshua 10

Five kings in the southern part of the land made war on Gibeon. The Gibeonites appealed to Joshua for help. Joshua and his soldiers marched through the night and caught the armies of the 5 kings by surprise and defeated them. The Israelite army also attacked other southern towns and captured them. Joshua and his army were victorious in the south because the Lord supported and helped them.

Dear God, please help me in the battles of life



Joshua 11 – 21

Some kings in the north combined to fight the Israelites. But the Lord delivered them into the power of Israel.

Eventually the whole country had rest from war, and the land was divided up among the 11 tribes.

So it was that the Lord gave the Israelites all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors. They took possession of it and settled there. The Lord granted them peace on all their frontiers just as he had sworn to their ancestors.

Of all the promises that the Lord had made to the House of Israel, not one failed. All were fulfilled.

Dear Lord, please give peace to nations troubled by war

Joshua 22

The campaign to subdue the whole land had taken a long time. Joshua especially thanked the tribes from across the Jordan for their help. These tribes - Reuben, Gad and Manasseh - had been given land on the Eastern side of the Jordan, but still helped in the campaign to control the Western side.

Joshua said to them: "Despite the fact that the campaign has lasted so long, you have loyally helped your brothers. Keep on loving the Lord your God, following his paths. Be loyal to him and serve him with all your heart."

**Dear Lord, please help me to be loyal
- to you, to my family and to my country**

Joshua 23, 24

As Joshua neared the end of his life, he urged the Israelites to stay faithful to the Lord while living with many foreign neighbours: "Continue to observe everything written by Moses. Do not mingle with the foreign peoples still among you. Do not utter the names of their gods. Stay loyal to the Lord your God. Love the Lord your God.

If you stay faithful, the Lord will bless you.
If you are unfaithful, everything will go wrong for you.

Choose today whom you will serve:
the Lord our God, or false gods.
As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

**Dear Lord, may Joshua's dying words be true for me:
"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"**



The Book of Judges

Chapters 1 & 2

After the death of Joshua,
the Israelites continued their campaign
to occupy all parts of the land of Canaan.

But as time went on,
the Israelites began to forget the Lord their God.

As a result, things went wrong for the Israelites.

To help them, the Lord appointed judges to lead them.
For a while the people followed the judges.

But as soon as the judge died,
the people again lapsed into idolatry.

**Dear God, please don't let me forget you.
Please help me pray to you and love you every day**

- › Living with the Canaanites (Judges 1-2)
- › Living under the Canaanites (Judges 3-16)
- › Living like the Canaanites (Judges 17-21)

Judges 3

Some of the Israelites forgot the Lord their God and worshipped false gods. As a result, they were enslaved by the king of Edom for 8 years.

They cried to God for help and God raised up Othniel, a nephew of Caleb, to lead and rescue them. Then the land enjoyed peace for 40 years.

But when Othniel died, the Israelites again began to do what displeases the Lord, and were again enslaved, this time by Eglon king of Moab, for 18 years. Once more they cried to the Lord for help and he raised up Ehud, a left-hander.

As Ehud presented tribute to Eglon, he said to Eglon: "I have a secret message for you." When they were alone, Eglon thought he was safe, because Ehud's knife was on his right thigh. Ehud then used his left-hand to grab the knife unexpectedly and killed Eglon.



Ehud escaped from the king's quarters before the king's attendants knew Eglon was dead.

Ehud then roused the Israelites to fight and defeat the Moabites, after which the land enjoyed peace for 80 years.

Lord, please raise up good leaders in every country

Judges 4

After Ehud died, the Israelites again began to stray from the Lord and therefore again lost their freedom and peace.

The Lord then used Deborah, who was a judge and prophetess, to rescue the people. Deborah instructed Barak son of Abinoam to go and do battle with Sisera, the people's oppressor.

Barak said he would go only if Deborah went with him. She agreed but then said that his hesitation would cause the Lord to give battle victory to a woman, not Barak.



When Barak's forces routed those of Sisera, Sisera fled and took refuge in the tent of Jael, wife of Heber. As Sisera slept from exhaustion, Jael drove a tent peg into his head and he died. So once again the Lord had rescued the Israelites.

Dear God, please give me more courage in the battle of life

Judges 4, 5, 6

After Sisera's forces were defeated, the land enjoyed peace for 40 years. But then the Israelites again lapsed into idolatry, and so they were oppressed by the Midianites for 7 years.

The Lord then raised up Gideon to rescue the people. Following the Lord's instructions, Gideon at night time destroyed the altar to Baal in his father's house. When the Midianites heard what Gideon had done, they prepared to attack the Israelites.

The spirit of the Lord came on Gideon and he rallied the Israelites. Gideon asked for a sign of success in battle, and said to the Lord: "See now, I spread out a fleece of wool on the ground; tomorrow morning, if there is dew only on the fleece and not on the surrounding ground, then I know you will deliver Israel by my hand."

And so it happened the next morning: the ground was dry but the fleece was drenched with dew.

Gideon asked for a second sign, requesting that the fleece be dry but the ground covered with dew.

And God did what Gideon asked: the fleece stayed dry, and there was dew on the ground.



**Dear Lord, thank you for hearing Gideon's prayer
(and please bless the work of the *Gideon Society*
which puts Bibles in hotels around the world!)**

Judges 7

Gideon prepared to go to war with the Midianites. But God told him to reduce his number of soldiers. The army was told "Let anyone who is frightened or fearful go home." 22,000 men went home; 10,000 stayed.

The Lord said there were still too many. "So many men might cause Israel to claim that a victory had nothing to do with the Lord."

So Gideon got the men to go to the river to drink. All those who lapped the water, like a dog, he put on one side. These numbered 300. The rest knelt down and used their hands to drink. These were sent home.

Gideon divided his 300 men into 3 groups, surrounding the Midianite camp. To each man he gave a horn and an empty water container, with a torch inside each container. In the middle of the night, they attacked. They sounded their horns and smashed their containers, holding a horn in their right hand and a torch in their left.



The Midianites woke in terror, thinking that the Israelites had a huge number of men. In their panic, the Midianites attacked each other as they fled the camp. The Israelites drove the Midianites from the Israelite homeland.

Dear God, thank you for the courage and leadership of Gideon

Judges 8 After Gideon defeated all the enemies of the Israelites, the Israelites asked him to be their ruler. He replied: "It is not I who shall rule over you, nor my son; The Lord must be your ruler." After Gideon's death, the people of Israel again began to worship the local idols. They no longer remembered the Lord who had so often rescued them. The people were also ungrateful to Gideon's family despite all the good deeds that family had done for Israel.

Dear Lord, please don't let me ever become an ungrateful person

Judges 9 Gideon had seventy sons by his wives and concubines. One of his sons was Abimelech, son of a concubine. Abimelech became king after murdering all but one of his 70 half-brothers. The half-brother who escaped was Jotham. Abimelech ruled over Israel for 3 years. Then God sent a spirit of discord between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem.

The leaders of Shechem rebelled against Abimelech. Abimelech started attacking and destroying their towns. Abimelech besieged the town of Thebez. The people of the town took refuge in a tower. When Abimelech tried to set fire to the tower, a



woman in the tower threw down a large rock which crushed Abimelech's head. Abimelech got his armor-bearer to kill him with a sword, so that no one could say he was killed by a woman

Dear Lord, please stop evil people from hurting other people

Judges 10 & 11

The Israelites yet again served false gods, and once more they were oppressed, this time by the Ammonites. The Israelites appealed to Jephthah to help them. Jephthah was the son of a prostitute. His brothers had driven him from home and would not give him a share of their father's inheritance. Jephthah went into exile and became a famous soldier. Jephthah agreed to help the Israelites after they agreed to make him their future leader.

Jephthah tried to reason with the Ammonite king, but the king refused to negotiate a peace agreement. The spirit of the Lord then came on Jephthah and he led the Israelites to victory over the Ammonites.

Dear Lord, may your Spirit give courage to all leaders

Judges 12 & 13

Jephthah was judge in Israel for 6 years. For the following 25 years, Ibzan (7 years), Elon (10 years) and Abdon (8 years) were judges. After these judges, the Israelites again were unfaithful to the Lord and so they were oppressed by the Philistines for 40 years. It was then that the angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife and said to her:



"You are barren and have had no child. But you will soon conceive and bear a son. No razor is to touch his head, for he shall be dedicated to the Lord from his mother's womb.

It is he who will rescue Israel from the Philistines."

The woman gave birth to a son and called him Samson. The child grew and the Lord blessed him.

Dear Lord, please bless all barren women

Judges 14 Samson wanted to marry a Philistine woman, even though custom required he marry an Israelite. On his way to the visit the woman in Philistine territory, Samson was confronted by a young lion. The spirit of the Lord filled Samson and he tore the lion to pieces with his bare hands. On his next visit to the woman's home, Samson saw that in the carcass of the dead lion there was a swarm of bees, and honey. The people of the village made a wedding feast for 7 days. But they were scared of Samson so they assigned 30 men to stay with him.

Samson challenged them to answer a riddle: if they got the right answer before the 7 days were over, he would give them 30 pieces of silver and 30 festal robes. But if they failed to get the right answer, they had to give Samson 30 pieces of silver and 30 robes. They agreed to the challenge.

Samson stated his riddle: "Out of the eater came what is eaten, out of the strong came what is sweet." Three days went by and they could not solve the riddle. So they asked Samson's wife to find out the answer. Day after day she pestered Samson with pleading and tears until, on the 7th day, he told her. She then told the men.



The men then said to Samson: "What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?" Samson was filled with the spirit of the Lord. He went to a nearby Philistine town and killed 30 men there. He took their robes and gave them to the 30 wedding feast guests. Full of anger, he stormed out of the village and returned to his parents' house. His wife was then given to the companion who had been his best man.

Dear God, please help me control my anger



Judges 15

When Samson found out his wife had been given to someone else he took his revenge on the Philistines by setting fire to their crops.

The Philistines then attacked the land of Judah, trying to capture Samson.

To avoid war with the Philistines, the men of Judah bound Samson with ropes and handed him over to the Philistines.

But as the Philistines approached him, Samson was filled with the spirit of the Lord and broke free from the ropes.

He saw a dead donkey's jawbone on the ground and used this to strike down many Philistines before making his escape.

Samson was judge in Israel for 20 years.

**Dear Lord, you once gave strength to Samson.
Please give me strength to face the battles of life**

Judges 16 Samson went to Gaza and entered the house of a prostitute. The men of Gaza tried to capture Samson but he eluded them. Samson then fell in love with a woman called Delilah. The Philistine leaders pressured Delilah to find out the secret of Samson's great strength. Day after day Delilah pestered Samson until he told her his secret: "A razor has never touched my head, because I have been specially dedicated to God from my birth. If my hair is cut, I will lose my strength."

Delilah then cut Samson's hair while he was asleep and called the Philistines to capture him. The Philistines bound Samson, put out his eyes and chained him in a prison in Gaza. But in prison, Samson's hair began to grow again. The Philistines held a special ceremony in a large building to celebrate the capture of Samson. They paraded Samson at the ceremony and then made him stand between two pillars.



Samson prayed to God for strength one more time and the Lord heard his prayer. He then used his great strength to pull down the main pillars supporting the building. In this way, at his death, Samson killed more Philistines than before he went to prison. **Dear Lord, you once gave special strength to Samson. Please give me strength to face the battles of life**

Judges 17 – 21 After Samson's death, there was no leader in Israel and everyone did as they pleased as lawlessness and anarchy became widespread. **Dear Lord, please don't let lawlessness increase in our world**

The Book of Ruth

Chapter 1

In the days of the judges, there was famine in the land. Because of the famine, a man from Bethlehem named Elimelech moved to Moab. Elimelech took with him his wife Naomi and his two sons.

Elimelech died. The two sons married Moabite women: Orpah and Ruth. But then the two sons also died.

Naomi was heart-broken. She had lost her husband and two sons. She decided to return to Bethlehem and told her daughters-in-law to go back to their own homes.

Orpah went back to her people. But Ruth with great loyalty and love chose to go with Naomi.



Ruth said:
"Wherever you go,
I will go. Wherever
you live, I will live.
Your people shall be
my people.
Your God shall be
my God.
Wherever you die,
I will die, and there I
will be buried."

Dear God, in time of trouble, please help people to be loyal and kind to each other

Ruth 2 Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem at the time of the barley harvest. Ruth went to the fields to look for left-over ears of corn. She came to the attention of Boaz, Elimelech's clansman. Boaz was a kind man and he told the men harvesting his crop to let Ruth take some sheaves of corn, not just left-overs.

As one of Naomi's closest relatives, Boaz was in a group of several men from which one man was required by law to marry Ruth and produce children for Elimelech.

Lord, please bless all young wives who have become widows



Ruth 3 & 4 Naomi told Ruth to go to the threshing shed of Boaz and to sleep there at the feet of Boaz, this action symbolizing her wish to marry Boaz. When Boaz discovered Ruth there during the night, he praised Ruth for wanting to continue Elimelech's family.



The next day, Boaz went to the gate of Bethlehem

and met the only man who preceded him in the legal right to marry Ruth. The man agreed to let Boaz marry Ruth and so Boaz took Ruth as his wife. Boaz and Ruth had a son, Obed. Obed was the father of Jesse whose son was King David.

Dear God, please bless all grandparents, as you blessed David's great grandparents Ruth and Boaz

One Samuel

Chapter 1

Each year, Elkanah and his two wives Hannah and Peninnah, went to Shiloh to worship the Lord.

Peninnah had children, but Hannah was barren. Each year at the temple, Peninnah would taunt Hannah because she was barren.

One year at the temple, Hannah prayed in great distress: "God, if you give me a child, I will dedicate him to you."

Not long after, Hannah conceived a son whom she called "Samuel".

When Samuel was weaned, she took him to the temple and gave him to the priest there to serve the Lord for the rest of his life.

Dear God, please bless all woman who are unable to have a baby



1 Samuel 2

Hannah praised God for giving her a child:

"My heart rejoices in the Lord. The Lord, our fortress, is holy.
Don't speak proudly, for the Lord knows what's in our hearts.

The Lord breaks
the power of the
strong.
He gives strength
and victory to the
weak.

He blesses the
barren woman.

The Lord raises
the poor from the
dust, and gives
them a seat of
honor with princes.

The Lord guards the steps of good people,
but scatters bad people in their pride."

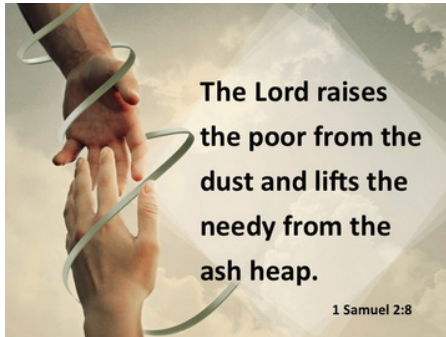
The Lord blessed Hannah
and she gave birth to three more sons and two daughters.

Her son Samuel grew up in the temple.
The temple priest at that time was Eli.

But Eli's sons were bad men.

They stole the people's offerings to the Lord.

**Dear God, please bless good people like Hannah,
and please help bad people like Eli's sons to stop being bad**



1 Samuel 3

One day when the boy Samuel was serving in the temple,
the Lord called to him "Samuel, Samuel."

The boy thought it was the old priest Eli calling to him
so he ran to Eli and said "Here I am."

Eli replied "I did not call you."

Two more times the Lord called.



Both times
the boy went
to Eli.

Eli now
realized it was
the Lord
calling
Samuel.

Eli told Samuel to say
"Speak Lord, your servant is listening"
the next time he heard the voice.

The Lord told Samuel that Eli's family would be punished
for the bad things they had done.

The people quickly found out that
the Lord was with Samuel
and that Samuel was the Lord's prophet.

**Dear Lord, please help me to listen to your voice,
your voice in the Bible,
in my conscience and in other people**

1 Samuel 4

Around this time,
the Philistines defeated the Israelites in a battle.

The Israelites then went to Shiloh
and took the Sacred Chest of the Lord.

They took the Sacred Chest into battle with them
but the Chest was captured by the Philistines.

In the same battle, Eli's two sons were killed.

When Eli heard that his sons were dead
and that the Sacred Chest had been captured,
he fell backwards off his seat,
his neck was broken, and he died.



**Dear God, please don't let me cause unhappiness
for my family**

1 Samuel 5

The Philistines took the captured Sacred Chest to the shrine
of Dagon in one of their towns.. Next morning, they found
the statue of Dagon on its face on the ground, in front of the



Sacred Chest. They
picked Dagon up
and put him back
in his place. But
next morning he
was down again,
with his head and
hands cut off from
the rest of his body.

While the Sacred Chest was in the Philistine town, the
people there were struck with tumors and many people died.
The people told their leaders to take the Sacred Chest back
to Israel where it belonged.

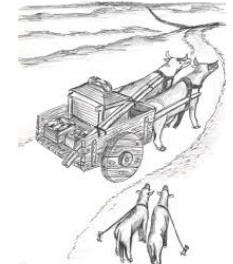
**Dear God, please help everyone know that there is
no other God but you**

1 Samuel 6

The Sacred Chest of the Lord was in
Philistine territory for 7 months.

Then the Philistines put the Chest on
a cart pulled by 2 milch cows.

The cows went straight to the
Israelite town of Beth-shemesh,
without anyone leading them. The people of Beth-shemesh
were overjoyed to see the Sacred Chest.



**Dear Lord, thank you for the joy in our hearts
which comes from friendship with you**

1 Samuel 7

The Sacred Chest was taken from the town of Beth-shemesh to the town of Kiriath-jearim, to the house of Abinadab, whose son Eleazar was consecrated to guard the Chest.

After 20 more years, the Israelites again longed for freedom from the Philistines. Samuel gathered all the Israelites at Mizpah, where after prayer, battle was joined with the Philistines who were defeated.

The Philistines no longer came into Israelite territory.

Samuel was judge over all Israel for the rest of his life.

During Samuel's time the Philistines no longer troubled Israel. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

Each year Samuel went on circuit around the country to judge cases of law. He would then return to his home town of Ramah and continue his work as a judge from there.

Dear God, please give the world more leaders like Samuel



1 Samuel 8

When Samuel grew old, the people asked him to find someone to be their king.

Samuel was not happy that the people asked for a king. Samuel also warned the people that a king would impose taxes and have many rights over them.

But the people insisted on having a king.

The Lord then told Samuel to give the people a king.

Dear God, you are our only true King

1 Samuel 9 & 10

Among the men of the tribe of Benjamin there was a very tall and very handsome man named Saul. Once when he went in search of his father's stray donkeys, he met up with Samuel. The Lord had told Samuel that he would meet Saul, and that he should be anointed as king. And so Samuel took some oil and poured it on Saul's head. He told Saul that the Lord had chosen him to be king. Samuel presented Saul to the people. The people acclaimed Saul saying "Long live the king!"

Dear Lord please protect and guide all people in authority

1 Samuel 11

The people of Jabesh-gilead told Saul that the Ammonites were threatening them. The spirit of the Lord stirred up Saul and he led the Israelites to a great victory over the Ammonites. Samuel and all the people then went to Gilgal where Saul was again proclaimed king.

Dear Lord may your Spirit stir us up to do good things

1 Samuel 12

As the elderly Samuel handed over leadership to Saul, he said to all the people: "In future it is the king who will lead you. The Lord is my witness that I have never treated you unjustly.. You must follow the Lord with all your heart. Do not turn your back on the Lord's way. Do not follow false ways."

Dear God, thank you for the life of Samuel. Please help all people to follow your way, not follow false ways

1 Samuel 13-15

Not long after he became king, Saul began doing things that caused Samuel to stop supporting him. Samuel clearly told Saul what the Lord wanted Saul to do,



but Saul insisted on doing things his own way. Saul seemed more concerned about his own popularity than about being

obedient to the Lord. This displeased the Lord and he rejected Saul.

Dear God, please help us not to disobey you. "Your will be done"

1 Samuel 16

The Lord told Samuel to go to Bethlehem and anoint one of Jesse's sons as king. Samuel

anointed Jesse's son David as king. The spirit of the Lord came down on David and stayed with him from that day on.



Dear God, may your Holy Spirit come down on more and more people

1 Samuel 17

The Philistine and Israelite armies prepared for battle.

The Philistines were on one hill, the Israelites on an opposite hill, with a valley between them. The Philistines produced a giant warrior, Goliath, who challenged the Israelites to find one man to fight him. Goliath said: "If I win, you become our slaves; if I am killed, we will become your slaves."

For many weeks Goliath issued his challenge, but no Israelite soldier was brave enough to fight Goliath. Then David visited the army camp and heard Goliath's words. He offered to fight Goliath.

Some people made fun of David, but David knew he would be helped by the Lord. David took 5 smooth stones from the river bed and with his sling in his hand he went to fight Goliath.

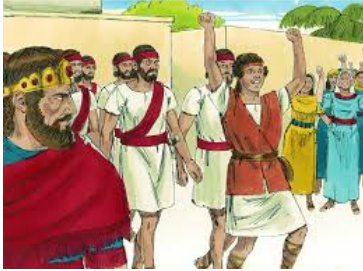


When Goliath saw the young boy David, Goliath insulted and ridiculed him. But David took out one of his stones and slung it at Goliath. The stone hit Goliath on the forehead and he dropped to the ground. David then used Goliath's sword to kill him and cut off his head.

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled in fear, chased by the Israelites who defeated them. Saul put David in charge of his army and David had many victories. David and Saul's son Jonathan became good friends.

Dear God, please help me just as you helped David

1 Samuel 18



After one of David's victories against the Philistines, the Israelite women came to meet David and Saul singing "Saul has killed thousands, David tens of thousands."

From that day Saul became jealous of David. Saul realized that the Lord was with David and that the people loved David. Saul was filled with jealousy of David and wanted to kill him. Saul more and more treated David like an enemy.

Dear God, please don't let me jealous of other people

1 Samuel 19

Saul's son Jonathan urged his father not to hate David, but Saul again tried to kill David, this time with a spear.



David then escaped from his home and went to live with Samuel at Ramah.

Three times Saul sent men to capture David. Each time they were overcome by the spirit of the Lord and they went into an ecstasy. Then Saul himself went to Ramah and he too went into ecstasy.

Dear Lord, please protect people who are being unfairly treated by others

1 Samuel 20-24

Jonathan again tried to help David make peace with Saul. But Saul was full of anger and just wanted to kill David. David then became a nomad, roaming from place to place, continually pursued by Saul's soldiers. David once had a chance to kill Saul but David refused to kill him. David said: "Saul is the anointed one of the Lord. It is wrong for me to hurt him." Even though Saul hated and hunted David, David respected and protected Saul.



Dear God, when other people treat me unkindly, please help me to be kind to them as David was kind to Saul

1 Samuel 25-31

Samuel died and was buried in his home town of Ramah. Saul continued to try to capture David. David and his band of 600 soldiers spent more than a year in Philistine territory. They stayed with Achish, king of Gath. They fought against the enemies of Achish. Achish sent David away when the Philistines made war on Israel. Saul and his son



Jonathan died in this war.

Dear God please protect and help all refugees

Two Samuel

Chapters 1-3

When David heard that Saul and Jonathan had died, David was very sad. David was then anointed as king over the house of Judah, but Ishbaal became king of the rest of Israel. War broke out between the House of David (Judah) and the House of Saul (Israel). Gradually the House of David grew stronger and the House of Saul grew weaker.

Dear God, please give peace to all nations suffering from civil war

Chapters 4 & 5

After Ishbaal, son of Saul, was murdered, David became king of Israel as well as king of Judah. David was 30 years old when he became king.



He reigned over Judah for 7 years. Then he reigned over all Israel and Judah for 33 years.

David continued to fight against the Philistines. God blessed David in all his campaigns.

Dear God, may all of Israel be blessed with peace

2 Samuel 6



David and 30,000 men went to Baalah (Kiriath-jearim) to bring the Sacred Chest to Jerusalem. David and the people danced before the Sacred Chest and sang loudly to the

accompaniment of much music. After the Sacred Chest entered Jerusalem David blessed the people in the name of the Lord.

Dear God, please help us praise you with joy, as David did

2 Samuel 7

After David settled into his palace and the land enjoyed peace, David thought about building a temple for the Lord.

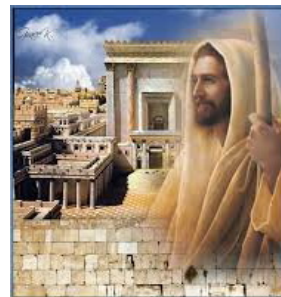
Then through the prophet Nathan the Lord told David:

"I will establish your dynasty for ever. But it will be your son, not yourself, who will build a temple for me."

David praised God: "Who am I, Lord, and what is my House, that you have helped me so much and promised me so much?

May my House continue in your presence for ever. May you bless my House forever."

Dear God, please bless everyone in my family tree, past, present and future



2 Samuel 8 & 9

Wherever David went, the Lord gave him success and victory. David showed kindness to Saul's family.

Meribbaal, son of Jonathan and grandson of Saul was crippled in both feet.

David restored Saul's property to Meribbaal and arranged for Meribbaal to eat at the royal table each day.



Lord, help us show kindness to people who treat us badly

2 Samuel 10 & 11

The Ammonites went to war with the Israelites, but David led the Israelites to victory. During a further war with the Ammonites, David stayed in Jerusalem and did not go to the battle.

While in Jerusalem, he made love to Bathsheba the wife of Uriah who conceived and sent word to David, "I am with child."



David recalled Uriah to Jerusalem and tried to get him to sleep with his wife.

But Uriah loyally observed the custom of the time and refrained from marital relations since he was a soldier at war.

David then arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle by having him stationed in a defenceless position. After a time of mourning for Uriah, Bathsheba became David's wife and bore him a son. The Lord was displeased with David.

Dear God, help us not to displease you

2 Samuel 12

The Lord sent the prophet Nathan to David. Nathan said: "Why did you do what is displeasing to the Lord?"

David replied: "I have sinned against the Lord."

Nathan said: "The Lord forgives you, but because of your sin, the child will die."



After the child died, Bathsheba conceived another son by David, whom she named Solomon. The Lord specially blessed Solomon.

"Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offence" (David's prayer in Psalm 51)

2 Samuel 13



David had many wives and concubines. One of his sons, Amnon, fell in love with his step-sister Tamar and raped her.

King David was very angry about this but did not punish Amnon, since he loved him. Amnon was his first-born son.

But another son, Absalom, Tamar's full brother, hated Amnon and killed him. Absalom fled for three years to another land. All that time the king mourned for Amnon.

Dear Lord, please spare my family from conflict and strife

2 Samuel 14 & 15 When David had finished his time of mourning for Amnon, he allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem. Only after two years did David agree to meet Absalom. He met him and pardoned him. But as time went on Absalom started to plot against David. Absalom gathered enough supporters to overthrow David.

David found out about the plot and fled from Jerusalem.

David was very sad and prayed to God that someday he could return to Jerusalem.

Dear God, please help people who are exiled from their homes



2 Samuel 16 – 24

When David was living in exile, some people helped him, some people insulted him. To insult his father and to claim the kingship Absalom publicly had

sex with his father's concubines. Gradually David was able to re-build his army and his army defeated Absalom's soldiers in battle. In that battle, Absalom died and David mourned his death for a long time. Eventually David was able to become king of all Israel again.

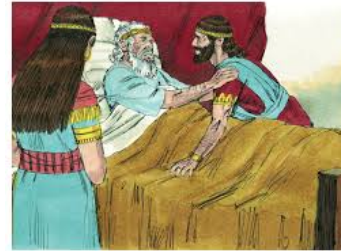
Dear God, may Israel be a land of peace

One Kings

Chapter 1

When King David was very old and near the end of his life, Absalom's brother Adonijah plotted to become king.

The prophet Nathan therefore advised Bathsheba to go to David and remind him that he had promised to let Bathsheba's son Solomon become king.



David then summoned the priests and royal guards and ordered them and Nathan to anoint Solomon as king.

Dear God, please give the world good leaders

Chapter 2

Before King David died, he encouraged his son Solomon to love the Lord with all his heart and soul. Solomon executed his main enemies and rivals, including Adonijah who had again plotted to become king. Solomon then was secure and safe as king.

Dear God, thank you for the life of David who, despite his faults, loved you with all his heart

Chapter 3

The Lord appeared to King Solomon in a dream and said "Ask me for anything you'd like." Solomon asked for wisdom: "Give you servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil."

God replied: "I now give you a heart full of wisdom, wisdom greater than anyone else has ever had.

And I also give you what you did not ask for: riches and glory and long life."

Not long after this, two prostitutes came for judgement: they lived in the same house and both had given birth to a son, but one of the babies died during the night.

The mother of the dead baby changed babies during the same night and claimed that the living baby was hers.

Solomon asked for a sword to cut the living baby in two and give half to each mother. The lying woman agreed, but the real mother said "No. Don't kill the baby. Give it to the other woman." Solomon then knew the real mother was telling the truth and gave the baby to her.

For wisdom such as this, Solomon's reputation spread far.

Dear Lord, please give me more wisdom for my life



1 Kings 4 & 5

Solomon enjoyed peace with all his neighbouring countries. He was blessed by God with great wisdom and understanding.

He composed 3,000 proverbs and 1,000 songs.

People from all nations went to hear Solomon's wisdom.

Solomon made preparations for building a temple for the Lord.

Hiram, king of Tyre, made a treaty with Solomon.

Hiram provided wood for building the temple.

Dear God, please help all nations live peacefully with each other

1 Kings 6 & 7

Solomon built the temple of the Lord with finest wood and many precious materials. The temple took 7 years to build. Solomon also built a palace for himself. This took 13 years to build.

Dear God, may all temples and churches in the world be places of prayer and peace

1 Kings 8 & 9

When the temple was finished, Solomon shifted the Sacred Chest to the temple. After the Chest was placed in the temple, the glorious cloud of the Lord filled the temple. Solomon then praised God and blessed the people.



Solomon prayed that the temple would be a place of blessings. Solomon also prayed that all the peoples of the world would come to know the Lord from whom all life comes. The Lord again appeared to Solomon and said: "I will be near to all who enter the temple you have built."

Dear God, may all temples and churches in the world be places where people praise and love you

1 Kings 10

Solomon's wealth continued to grow. He acquired a fleet of ships for trading. He also had a huge force of chariots and horses. The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon's wisdom and came to visit him. Solomon answered all her questions. None of her questions was too difficult for him.

Dear Lord, please give wisdom to all world leaders

1 Kings 11

Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. Many of these women were foreigners. As Solomon grew old, his foreign women swayed his heart to allow the worship of foreign idols. This displeased the Lord and led to the breakup of Solomon's kingdom. Solomon was king for 40 years and then died.



Dear God, please protect leaders from corruption

1 Kings 12 – 16



After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king. The people asked Rehoboam not to be harsh like Solomon. Solomon had imposed heavy taxes, enforced labor etc

Rehoboam asked the elders for advice. They said "Treat the people kindly and they will serve you."

Rehoboam asked his peers for advice. They said "Treat the people more harshly than your father."

Rehoboam accepted the advice of his peers. Therefore the people of Israel rejected him as king. Only the people of Judah accepted him. The people of Israel made Jeroboam king. He had previously led an unsuccessful revolt against Solomon. Rehoboam and Jeroboam died and were succeeded by various kings who ruled over Judah and Israel.

Dear God, please help leaders be kind to their people

1 Kings 17 When Ahab was king of Israel, in the 9th century B.C., Elijah was a prophet of the Lord.



Elijah told Ahab there would be no rain for a long time because the people were following the cult of Baal. Elijah did miracles in the name of the Lord: he blessed a poor widow's food to make it increase, and he brought back to life a young boy who had died.

Dear God, please bless our prayers as you blessed the prayers of Elijah

1 Kings 18 In the 3rd year of drought, the Lord sent Elijah to speak to Ahab. Elijah got Ahab to gather all the people and all the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to produce fire to consume a sacrificed bull.

Elijah mocked the false prophets as they ranted and raved and cut themselves, but produced no fire for their bull. Then Elijah got the people to pour water on his bull and he prayed to God to hear his prayer. A fire from heaven then consumed the bull and the people acknowledged the Lord as God. Elijah then told Ahab there would soon be rain, and the sky grew dark and produced torrents of rain. **Dear God, please help people not to follow false gods.**





1 Kings 19

Elijah once spent a night in a cave. The Lord then told him to stand at the mouth of the cave.

Then there was a mighty wind that shattered trees and rocks. But the Lord was not in the wind.

Then there was an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake.

Then there was a gentle breeze. And the Lord was in the breeze. Not long after this Elijah called Elisha to become his follower.

Dear Lord, please help us be aware of your presence in our lives

1 Kings 20 & 21

King Ahab wanted the vineyard of Naboth, but Naboth refused to sell his ancestral inheritance. Ahab's wife Jezebel then had Naboth murdered and Ahab took the vineyard.

The prophet Elijah confronted Ahab for his crime. Ahab then repented of his crime.

Dear God, please help us respect other people's property

1 Kings 22 Some false prophets encouraged the king of Israel and the king of Judah to go to war. Micah, a true prophet of the Lord, warned the kings not to go to war. The men of Israel and Judah were defeated in the war. Ahab, the king of Israel, died in the war.

Dear Lord, please don't let false prophets deceive the world

Two Kings

Chapter 1 Ahaziah, king of Israel, was seriously ill after a fall. He tried to send messengers to the temple of a false god to ask about his future. But the Lord sent Elijah the prophet to intercept the messengers and tell them that the king would die. The king sent 50 soldiers to arrest Elijah but as they approached Elijah, fire from heaven destroyed them. The king sent another 50 soldiers. They too were destroyed by fire from heaven. A third group of 50 was sent. They begged Elijah to spare them. The Lord told Elijah to go with them to the king.

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



and King Ahaziah sent a 3rd captain with 50 men to GET Elijah. After passing 102 charred bodies.. captain #3 decided to use the magic word. **11 Kings 1:1-15**

Dear Lord, please don't let us ever get involved with false religion

Elijah then told the king to his face that he would soon die because he had tried to ask a false god about his future.

Not long after this, Ahaziah died.

2 Kings 2 & 3

The Lord revealed to Elisha and other prophets that Elijah would be taken up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Elisha said to Elijah
"Let me inherit a double share of your spirit."

Then a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. The spirit of Elijah then came to rest on Elisha and he began to do miracles by the power of the Lord.

Holy Spirit of God please increase your influence in my life



2 Kings 4

A poor widow whose husband had been a prophet asked Elisha for help when a creditor demanded her two sons as slaves. All she had was a small pot of oil, not enough to pay her debts.



Elisha told her to get many jars, and start pouring oil from the pot into the jars. As she and her sons did this, the oil did not run out. Elisha told her to sell the oil to pay off her debts. At another time Elisha brought back to life a dead child. He also once brought about a miraculous multiplication of bread.

Dear God, you once worked miracles by the prayers of Elisha. Please let miracles be done in our day 116

2 Kings 5

Naaman was an army commander for the king of Aram. Naaman enjoyed success and favor, but he was a leper.

He heard about Elisha and the king sent him to Elisha with gifts of gold, silver and garments to request healing.

When Naaman reached Elisha's house, Elisha sent him a message:
"Bathe 7 times in the Jordan River."



At first Naaman was angry at this message, having expected Elisha to see and heal him personally.

But then he humbly bathed 7 times in the Jordan and his flesh became clean once more.

Elisha declined Naaman's gifts.

But after Naaman left Elisha, Elisha's servant Gehazi caught up with Naaman and deceitfully obtained some silver.

Elisha confronted Gehazi about this and Gehazi became a leper.

Dear God, please heal everyone who has leprosy

2 Kings 6

The king of Aram was at war with Israel. But each time he planned an attack, Elisha warned the king of Israel and the attack was foiled. The king of Aram therefore sent soldiers to capture Elisha. Elisha prayed to God for help and the soldiers were temporarily blinded. While they were blinded, Elisha led them to the king of



Israel. The king of Israel asked Elisha "Shall I kill them?" Elisha told him not to kill them but to feed them and let them go. After this there was peace for a time between Aram and Israel.

Dear God please bless our enemies and help us be kind to them

2 Kings 7-13 During Elisha's lifetime, there were many kings in Israel and Judah. A number of these kings were assassinated. Elisha also died and was buried in a tomb. Once when a dead man was put in Elisha's tomb, the man came back to life.

Dear God, please help us love you the way Elisha loved you. It was then that the king of Assyria invaded Israel and Judah. Hezekiah, king of Judah, a good man, prayed to God for help.

Dear God, please save us in time of trial

2 Kings 14-18 After the death of Elisha, kings continued to come to power and be assassinated in Judah and Israel.

It was then that the king of Assyria invaded Israel and Judah. Hezekiah, king of Judah, a good man, prayed to God for help.

Dear God, please give us leaders who pray



2 Kings 19 King Hezekiah asked the prophet Isaiah for advice. Isaiah said to the king: "The Lord says 'Do not be afraid of the King of Assyria. He shall not enter Jerusalem. I will protect this city and save it.'" That same night the angel of the Lord struck the Assyrian camp with a type of

plague which killed thousands of men. The Assyrians then went back to their own land and did not attack Jerusalem.

Dear God, please protect the city where I am living now

2 Kings 20 King Hezekiah became ill and was dying. Hezekiah begged the Lord to cure him. The Lord told Isaiah the prophet to tell Hezekiah: "I will add 15 years to your life." The king recovered and lived for another 15 years.

**Dear God, please cure
(..a sick person..)
the way you cured Hezekiah**



2 Kings 21-25 Josiah king of Judah was a good leader who loved the Lord and promoted religious reform. But most other kings of Judah and Israel at this time were not good. The country was invaded by the king of Babylon who deported most of the population to Babylon. Only the poorest people in the countryside were left behind.

Dear God, please give the world good leaders

The Books of Chronicles

No files, because these books are a repetition of earlier books of the Old Testament

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Reflection:

We believe the Old Testament overall is inspired by God, but not every word should be taken literally. "God said" often should be understood to mean "A person said".
e.g. "Eye for eye" (Exodus 21) surely is not from God's heart, but from a human brain.

See Youtube:

Jewish History – Evidence of Ancient Israel

Pentateuch David Carr

The Book of Ezra

Chapter 1 After the Jewish people had been in Babylon about 70 years, the Lord moved the heart of the king of Persia to free the Jews. The king also told the Jews to re-build their temple in Jerusalem.

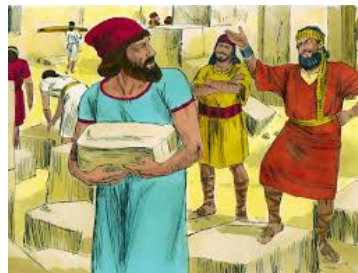
Dear Lord, please give freedom to all the peoples of the world

Chapters 2 & 3 About 50,000 Jews returned to Israel after 70 years of exile in Babylon. The returnees gathered in Jerusalem for worship. They were overcome with joy.

Dear God, please help all exiles return to their homeland



Chapter 4 Having returned from exile, the Jews started to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. But some enemies of Israel tried to frighten and dishearten the Jews from rebuilding the temple.



Dear God, if anyone tries to stop us from doing good, please give us courage to keep going

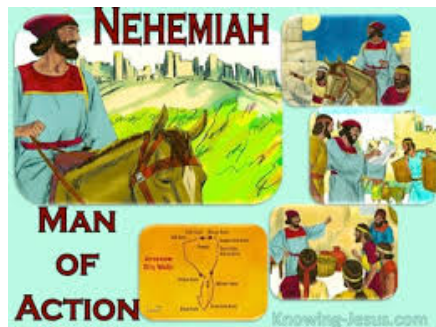
Nehemiah

Chapters 1 – 4

Nehemiah was cupbearer for the king of Persia. He heard how the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem were facing many difficulties. Nehemiah received permission from the king to go to Jerusalem and help rebuild the city. Nehemiah then supervised the re-building of Jerusalem's wall, even though some foreigners in Jerusalem made fun of him.

When the workers were ridiculed by foreigners, Nehemiah said to the workers: "Do not be afraid of them. Just keep your mind on the Lord."

Dear God, please help us to do what is right, even if we meet ridicule and opposition



used his own money to pay his expenses, and never took the salary that he could have claimed.

Dear God, to reduce government corruption in all countries, please raise up more leaders like Nehemiah



Chapter 5

The people were very poor and could not pay their debts. Therefore Nehemiah cancelled all debts owed by poor people. Nehemiah was a just and kind leader. He even

Ezra 5 & 6 The prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people in the rebuilding of the temple. Despite opposition, the Jews kept on rebuilding the temple. **Dear God, please help me to be a person of encouragement for others**

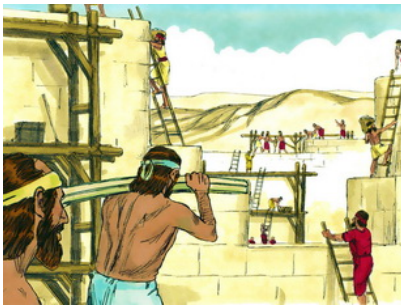


Ezra 7 Ezra was a scholar who loved to study the Law of the Lord. He was a descendant of Aaron. The Lord moved the heart of the king of Persia to grant any request that Ezra made to help the Jews. Ezra prayed: "Blessed be the Lord our God,

for moving the king's heart to look favorably on the rebuilding of our temple." **Dear God, please move the hearts of all government leaders to look favorably on citizens who want to do good things**

Ezra 8 – 10 Before the Jews left Babylon, Ezra had organized them to pray and fast for a safe journey. When the Jews reached Jerusalem, Ezra dissolved any marriages that had been arranged with foreign women while the Jews were in Babylon. **Dear God, please help us to remember to pray for safety each time we set out on a journey**





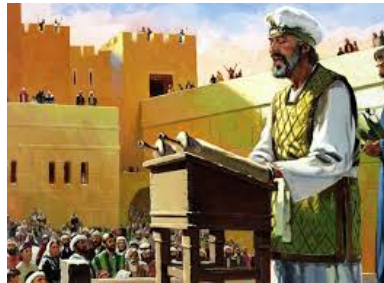
Nehemiah 6

As Nehemiah and the Jews rebuilt the wall some people continued to obstruct them. But with God's help the wall was finished in 52 days.

Dear God, please help us do your work, despite difficulties

Nehemiah 7 – 13 The wall of Jerusalem was finally rebuilt and doors were set in place in the wall. In the seventh month of the lunar calendar Nehemiah assembled all the people and read to them the Book of the Law of Moses.

This was the first time that most of the people had heard the words of Moses' Book. The people were grateful to God and praised him with great happiness.



The people also promised God that they would serve him more faithfully in the future. But while Nehemiah was away on a visit to the king the people and leaders became careless about the Law. When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem he brought the people back to proper observance of the Law. **Dear God, may we find joy and strength in reading the Bible and may the world have more good leaders like Nehemiah**

Tobit

Chapter 1

Tobit was a Jewish exile living in the city of Nineveh in Assyria. Even though other Jewish exiles, even his own relatives, neglected their religion, Tobit stayed loyal to God.

Tobit also cared for the poor and hungry. And he made a special practice of burying the dead.

Dear God, please help me to be like Tobit: loyal to you and caring for the poor



Chapters 2 & 3

One night when Tobit was resting, sparrow droppings fell into his eyes and he became blind. Some people made fun of Tobit for his misfortune. Tobit humbly entrusted his life to the Lord.



At the same time as Tobit was praying, Sarah was praying in the town of Media. Sarah had been given in marriage 7 times but all of her bridegrooms had been killed by the demon Asmodeus before the couple could make love.

The Lord heard the prayers of Tobit and Sarah and sent the angel Raphael to help them.

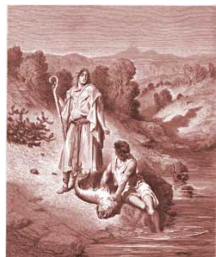
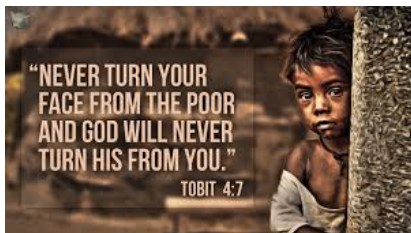
Dear God please help people who are in difficult situations

Tobit 4

Tobit said to his son Tobias: "When I die give me an honorable burial. Always honor your mother. When she dies, bury her at my side. Be faithful to the Lord all your days. Always be willing to help poor people. Give your bread to those who are hungry and your clothes to those who are naked.

Ask advice of every wise person. Bless the Lord God in everything. Beg him to guide your ways and bring your paths and purposes to a successful conclusion. Avoid all loose conduct. Do to no one what you would not want done to you. Choose a wife from our tribe, from our kin in Media. Go to Media, to my friend Gabael. Many years ago I left 10 talents of silver with him. This money is yours."

Dear God please guide me and help me to do what is right



Tobit 5 & 6 Tobit told Tobias to find a trustworthy man to go with him to Media. Tobias found Raphael, but Tobias did not know Raphael was an angel. On the first night of their journey, Tobias and Raphael caught a large fish. Raphael told Tobias to keep the gall, liver and heart of the fish.

Raphael explained that the gall would cure the blindness of Tobit, and that the liver and heart would drive away the demon Asmodeus.

Dear God, thank you for the help we receive from your angels

Tobit 7 When Tobias and Raphael reached Media, they went to the home of their relative Raguel, father of Sarah. Tobias asked Raguel for Sarah to be his wife. Raguel told Tobias that 7 previous bridegrooms had died. Tobias repeated his request, and Sarah became his wife. That night everyone prayed for the safety of the couple.

Dear God please bless everyone being married this month

Tobit 8 Before Tobias went to bed with Sarah, he remembered what Raphael had said. Tobias put some of the fish's heart and liver on burning incense. The smell of the fish made Asmodeus flee. Tobias with Sarah then prayed to the Lord: "You are blessed O God of our fathers. Let the heavens and all creatures bless you, you who created Adam and Eve. I now take Sarah as my wife not for any lustful reason, but out of true love. Please have pity on us and bring us to old age together." Then they went to bed.

Meanwhile Raguel, who feared Tobias would die, prepared a secret grave. But when Raguel sent a maid to the room of Tobias and Sarah the maid found they were alive and sleeping peacefully. Then Raguel too praised God: "Thank you, my God, for making me happy. What I feared has not happened." The next day Raguel prepared the customary 14 day wedding feast.



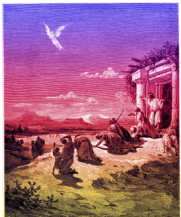
Dear God, thank you for the many times when we could say "What I feared has no

Tobit 9 & 10 Tobias arranged that Raphael go to Gabael to collect the silver left by Tobit many years before. Gabael returned with Raphael to Raguel's house and joined the wedding feast. Realising that his parents would be worried about him, Tobias left for home as soon as the wedding feast was over. Raguel gave Tobias and Sarah half his possessions and prayed that he would see their children some day. A happy and grateful Tobias thanked God for all the blessings of his journey to Media.

Dear God, thank you for all the blessings of my life

Tobit 11 When Tobias returned home, his parents were full of joy. Tobias followed Raphael's instructions and applied the fish gall to his blind father's eyes. Tobias then peeled away a filmy skin from the eyes and his father Tobit was able to see again. Tobit and Tobias joyfully praised God. Tobit welcomed Sarah and held a banquet for all his friends.

Dear God, please give sight to the blind people I know, just as you gave back sight to Tobit long ago



Tobit 12 When Tobit's banquet was finished, Tobit wanted to thank Raphael for all his help. Only then did Raphael tell Tobit and Tobias that he was an angel sent by God to help them. "I am Raphael, one of the 7 angels who stand ever ready to enter the presence of the glory of the Lord. Never tire of giving

God thanks. And never tire of helping the poor." Raphael farewelled them, rose in the air, and left them. They praised and thanked God for all he had done for them.

Dear God, thank you for all your love, all your blessings

Tobit 13

Tobit praised and thanked God in these words:

"Blessed be God who lives for ever,
declare his praise in every nation.
He is our Creator, our God, our Father.
Praise him for all his kindness to us.
My soul rejoices in the King of heaven.
Let his praise be sung in Jerusalem and in all nations."

Dear God, may you be known and loved by all the peoples of the world, since all people are your children



Tobit 14

Tobit was 62 when he went blind. He died when he was 112. After he was cured of blindness, he continued his custom of helping the poor. Before he died he said to Tobias: "Take your family and move to Media, since Nineveh will soon see war and strife. Serve God sincerely, always be willing to help poor people." After Tobit and Anna died, Tobias moved to Media and lived with Raguel his father in law.

Dear God, please help me imitate Tobit in his kindness to poor people

Judith

Chapter 1 When Nebuchadnezzar was king of the Assyrians, he fought a war with King Arphaxad and his supporting nations. Nebuchadnezzar sent a message to the nations near Assyria to help him fight Arphaxad. But the peoples of those places ignored Nebuchadnezzar. They thought victory was beyond him. But Nebuchadnezzar was in fact victorious and after his victory he set out to punish the nations which had refused his call for help.

Dear God, please help all nations to live in peace with each other



Chapters 2 – 4

Nebuchadnezzar summoned his top general Holofernes and gave him a huge army to punish the nations that had not joined him for the war against Arphaxad. Nation after nation, people after people, fell to the sword of Holofernes. Some places made peace with Holofernes by giving him all their possessions and then becoming slaves of Nebuchadnezzar, worshipping Nebuchadnezzar as a god.

As the army of Holofernes approached Israel, the Israelites fasted and prayed to God for help. They also blocked the mountain passes to delay Holofernes' advance.

Dear God, please help nations which have been invaded by other nations

Judith 5 When Holofernes heard that the Israelites were resisting him he was very angry. He asked Achior, leader of the neighboring Ammonites, for information about the Israelites. Achior told Holofernes of the Israelites' history: how God had freed them from Egypt, how they had conquered the land of Canaan, and how God protected them. Holofernes ignored Achior's advice and decided to attack the Israelites. **Dear God, please protect our country from war and strife**

Judith 6 Holofernes not only ignored Achior's advice, he ridiculed him for suggesting that the Israelites could resist his army. Holofernes then handed Achior over to the Israelites "to suffer the same punishment as they would receive from Holofernes' army."

Dear God, when people ridicule us for speaking the truth, please give us strength and courage



Judith 7 Holofernes laid siege against the Israelite mountain town of Bethulia. Holofernes seized control of Bethulia's water supply springs, thinking that thirst would force the Israelites to surrender. For 34 days the siege

continued, until the people of Bethulia were weak from thirst. The people of Bethulia prayed hard to God for help. The leaders of Bethulia planned to hold out for 5 more days before surrendering. A feeling of hopelessness hung over the town.

God, help of the helpless, please help people who are in big trouble



Judith 8 Judith lived in Bethulia. She had been a widow for 3 years. She loved God, prayed all the time, and often fasted. When she heard about the situation of Bethulia she encouraged the elders to keep on trusting God for help.

Dear God, when life gets tough, help us to keep trusting you

Judith 9 Judith put ashes on her head, bowed with her face to the ground, and prayed urgently to God: "Lord God, help of the oppressed, support of the weak, please hear my prayer and protect your people Israel."

Dear God, help us to imitate Judith and pray to you with faith when we are in trouble



Judith 10 Judith put on her most beautiful clothes and jewelry. Then she and her maid headed for the Assyrian camp. She told the Assyrian soldiers that she was fleeing from Bethulia since it would soon be attacked. She said she wanted to give Holofernes some important information. The soldiers took her to meet Holofernes.

Dear God, please give us the courage of Judith

Judith 11

Judith was very clever when she spoke to Holofernes. She told him that the Jews would be abandoned by God if they broke God's laws. She said that the Jews planned to break God's laws in a few days by eating consecrated foods. She said she would monitor the situation each day and let Holofernes know when the Jews were abandoned by God and ready to be attacked by Holofernes.

Judith's words and beauty won over Holofernes and his staff and they agreed to her suggestions.

Dear God, please give us wisdom and tack for dealing with difficult people



Judith 12

Holofernes allowed Judith and her maid to stay in a special tent each night, and each morning to go to a spring near Bethulia to wash and pray.

After 3 days, Holofernes held a banquet for his staff. He invited Judith to the banquet with the aim of seducing her.

Holofernes was so captivated by Judith's beauty that he kept on drinking wine until he was drunk.

All the while Judith kept praying to God for strength and help.

Dear God, please give me a bit more of Judith's faith and courage

Judith 13

When the banquet was over at a late hour, Judith was alone with Holofernes in his tent. Holofernes lay drunk on his bed. After praying to God for strength, Judith used Holofernes' sword to cut off his head.

She went outside and gave the head to her maid. Her maid put the head in her bag.

Judith and her maid then left the camp as they usually did when they went to pray early in the morning.



They went straight to Bethulia and showed Holofernes' head to the people. The people were overcome with joy and praised God for what he had done by the hand of a woman.

Dear God, please give people the courage to confront injustice

Judith 14-16

At daybreak the Jews attacked the Assyrian camp. When the Assyrians realized that Holofernes was dead, they panicked and fled. The Jews gave thanks to God for all that Judith had done. Judith praised the God of Israel for rescuing the Jews: "Lord you are great, you are glorious, wonderfully strong, unconquerable. May all peoples love and serve you."

**Dear God, thank you for the story of Judith.
Please help me imitate her faith**

Esther



Dear God, please bless all kings and queens in the world

Chapter 2 A selection process was begun to find a woman to replace Vashti as queen. Esther was a beautiful Jewish orphan girl who had been brought up by her cousin Mordecai. After the long selection process was finished, Esther was chosen to be queen. No one in the palace knew she was Jewish.



Dear God, again I ask you, please bless all kings and queens



Chapter 3 About this time Haman from the land of Agag was promoted by King Ahasuerus to a top position. All other officials were to bow and prostrate themselves before Haman. Mordecai refused to bow to Haman. This made Haman very angry. Haman found out that Mordecai was a Jew. Haman decided to kill Mordecai and all Jews in the kingdom. Ahasuerus agreed to Haman's plan and a decree to this effect was announced: all Jews were to be killed on the 14th day of the 12th month.

Dear God, please protect poor people from people like Haman

Esther 4

When Mordecai heard about Haman's plan, Mordecai asked Esther to appeal to Ahasuerus for help.



Mordecai and Esther both knew that to approach the king without an invitation was a crime punishable by death, unless the king saw fit to welcome an uninvited person.

So they prayed to God to move the heart of Ahasuerus to welcome Esther.

Dear God, please move the hearts of rulers to care for their people

Esther 5

After Esther prayed to God for a long time, she went to the palace and presented herself to the king.

At first the king was angry that Esther came without being invited, but then his heart softened and he welcomed her. When King Ahasuerus saw that Esther was distressed, he asked her what was wrong.

He promised to do anything for her.

Esther asked that there be two special banquets for herself, the king and Haman. The king agreed and the banquets were arranged.

Haman meanwhile was making his own arrangements: a high gallows on which to hang Mordecai.

Dear God, please move the hearts of rulers to be kind to their people



Esther 6 – 8

On the night between the two banquets, the king could not sleep. To induce sleep he started reading the history of his kingdom. He read how some years ago two of his eunuchs planned to assassinate him, but the plot was foiled by Mordecai.

The king asked Haman how to honor a man whom the king wished to honor. Haman thought the king was talking about himself, Haman, so he suggested royal clothes, a royal horse and a royal parade.

The king agreed and told Haman to honor Mordecai in this way. This was a great humiliation for Haman.



And it got even worse for Haman.

At the second banquet, Esther told the king that she was Jewish

and that Haman planned to kill all Jews.

The result: Haman was hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the Jews were not only spared annihilation - they were given places of honor in the kingdom.

The Jews praised God for all his help through Mordecai.

Dear God, please stop people like Haman from committing injustice

One Maccabees

Chapter 1

Some Jews abandoned their religion and made a pact with King Antiochus Epiphanes, a Seleucid king of the Greeks. Antiochus conquered many lands, including Israel. He plundered the Temple and forced the Jews to renounce their religion. But many Jews courageously stood firm and were punished with death. This was a sad and terrible time for Israel.

Dear God, please help us stay faithful to you



Chapter 2 Mattathias was a Jew loyal to his religion at a time when most people were not loyal. When the king's representative came to the town of Mattathias and started forcing people to take part in pagan ceremonies, Mattathias killed the representative.

Mattathias then called on everyone loyal to God to join him in the desert. Mattathias soon had a small army which gradually won control of many parts of the country and restored observance of God's law. When Mattathias was coming to the end of his life he appointed his son Judas as his army successor.

Dear God, help us to be loyal to you like Mattathias

Maccabees 3 Judas led the people in many successful battles. He often said that it is easy for a great number of soldiers to be defeated by a few. "Victory in war does not depend on the size of an army. It is from heaven that strength comes."

As Judas' fame spread, King Antiochus ordered a huge army to attack Judas. **Dear God, please help us put our trust in you rather than in anyone or anything else**



Maccabees 4 The army of Antiochus was led by Gorgias and had 40,000 men. Judas and his men numbered only 3,000. Judas implored God for help and then

fought bravely. The army of Gorgias was routed. The next year another force, numbering 60,000 men, was sent against Judas who had 10,000 men. Once again by prayer and courage, Judas was victorious. Judas gave thanks to God, and then went to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem Judas re-dedicated the Temple and re-built the city walls.

Dear God, please give me the courage of Judas

Maccabees 5 & 6 As the years went on, several nearby countries made war on Israel. But Judas and his followers used prayer and courage to defeat all enemies. When King Antiochus heard of Judas' continued victories, he became severely depressed and realized he was dying. The king's son succeeded him and he too sent a huge army against Israel. This army also failed to defeat Judas. The king then made peace with the Jews and for a time there was peace.

Dear God, please help all nations to live in peace

I Maccabees 7

Some Jews who were disloyal to Judas joined with supporters of the new king, Demetrius, to plot the overthrow of Judas. Nicanor, one of the king's generals, was sent to defeat Judas and exterminate the Jews. But when the battle took place, Nicanor himself died and his army was routed. Once again the land experienced peace of a while.

Dear God, please protect us from people who are disloyal

I Maccabees 8

Judas had heard about the Romans: how they had conquered many lands and yet acted in a friendly way to other nations. Judas therefore sent representatives to Rome and an alliance was agreed to with the Romans.

Judas' aim was to obtain protection and peace for Israel.

Dear God, may peace and justice be the aim of all leaders

I Maccabees 9

King Demetrius sent another army against Israel. The size of this army was so large that many of Judas' soldiers deserted him. Judas had only a small force to fight the king's army.

Judas could have saved his life by running away from the battle, but he courageously chose to stay and fight. Judas died in the battle and his troops fled. Judas' brother Jonathan succeeded him as leader of the Jews. Jonathan gradually reclaimed control of most of the country and again there was peace for a time.

Dear God, please give me some of the courage of Judas

I Maccabees 10

When King Demetrius was challenged for the throne by Alexander, Demetrius tried to get Jonathan's support for a possible war with Alexander. Alexander then also sought Jonathan's support, and appointed him as high priest of Israel.

Demetrius again tried to win Jonathan's support, but Jonathan and the Jews did not trust Demetrius.

Alexander and Demetrius went to war. Demetrius died in the battle. Alexander then became king. He married Cleopatra, daughter of Egypt's Ptolemy, thus securing a treaty with Egypt.

Jonathan met Alexander and Ptolemy and was given great honor in their presence. About 147 B.C. Demetrius son of Demetrius challenged Alexander for the throne.

This younger Demetrius also challenged Jonathan to fight. Jonathan defeated the army of Demetrius.

Alexander then gave Jonathan new honors.

Dear God, please help all countries live at peace with each other



Maccabees 11

King Ptolemy of Egypt pretended to be friends with Alexander. But then he went to war with Alexander.

Ptolemy's army won the battle, but not long after both Ptolemy and Alexander died.



Demetrius then became king. He had an unstable relationship with Jonathan even though Jonathan on one occasion rescued him from former supporters of Alexander.

Demetrius was replaced as king by a young Antiochus. Antiochus confirmed Jonathan's position as leader of Israel.

Dear God, please stop countries from fighting each other

Maccabees 12

Jonathan sent a delegation to Rome to renew his treaty with the Romans. He also renewed treaties with other groups, all the time using politics to secure peace for Israel.

But Demetrius once again made war on Jonathan, this time with a larger army than before.

Jonathan bravely faced and defeated Demetrius' army before they could enter the land of Israel.

Not long after this Jonathan was tricked and captured by Trypho who wanted to become king of Asia, replacing Antiochus.

Dear God, please give wisdom and courage to all leaders

Maccabees 13 & 14

After Jonathan's capture, Jonathan's brother Simon became leader of the Jews. He rallied the people to defend their land against an attack by Trypho.

Trypho was forced to abandon his attack by a heavy snowfall.

As he returned to his own land, he killed Jonathan.

Trypho killed Antiochus and became king of Asia.

Simon made peace with Demetrius.

He also renewed the treaties with Sparta and the Romans.

Israel had peace during the time of Simon.

Dear God, please give the world leaders who work for peace

Maccabees 15

In 138 B.C., Antiochus son of Demetrius made war with Trypho. This same Antiochus became hostile to Simon after the Romans renewed their treaty with Israel.

When Antiochus sent an army to attack Israel, Simon defeated that army.

A disloyal and ambitious Jew named Ptolemy got Simon and two of his sons drunk at a banquet and killed them.

Simon was succeeded by his son John as leader of the Jews.

Dear God, please protect good leaders from disloyalty

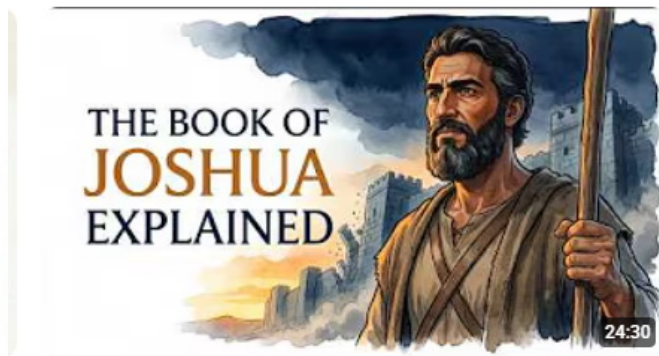
The Second Book of Maccabees

This book is largely a repetition of First Maccabees. Therefore no Simple Bible file Second Maccabees.

For people who love the Bible:

Youtube: ***Deep Made Simple***

Many great videos, like this one:



The Book of Joshua Explained: What the Hebrew Name Hides

5.1K views • 2 weeks ago

The Book of Job

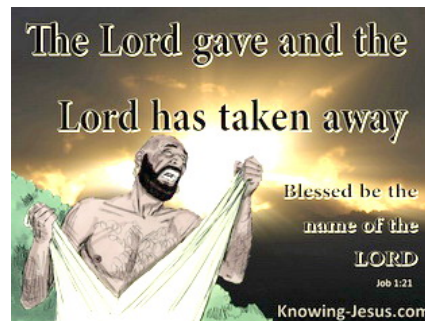
Chapter 1

Job lived in Southern Israel. He had 7 sons and 3 daughters. He owned thousands of animals. He loved God and was a good man.

Satan, one of the fallen angels, challenged God to let Job be put to the test. God gave permission to Satan to test Job.

On the same day, all Job's animals were captured by raiders, and all his children died in a storm.

Job tore his clothes, shaved his head, bowed to the ground and prayed: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked I shall return to the womb of the earth."



The Lord gave,
the Lord has taken
back. Blessed be the
name of the Lord."

Dear God, please give us courage and faith when life is difficult

Job 2

Satan asked permission from God to test Job even further. God gave permission. Satan struck Job with sores and ulcers from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. Job scraped himself with a piece of pot. His wife told him to curse God and die. But Job replied "If we take happiness from God's hand, must we not take sorrow too?"

News of Job's situation reached three of his friends: Eliphaz Bildad and Zophar and they decided to visit Job.



and faith

Job 3-7

Job broke the 7 day silence by wishing that he had never been born. He added "For me, there is no peace, no sleep. My suffering doesn't let me rest." Eliphaz then spoke and reminded Job that God corrects those whom he loves.

Job replied that he was innocent of any wrongdoing, so why was he being punished? He added: "Lying in bed I wonder 'When will it be day?' During the day I think 'How slowly night comes.' Neither day or night offers me any relief from my suffering."

Dear Lord, please give courage and peace to people who are suffering great pain or distress

Job 8 – 10

Bildad then spoke of God's justice and the fate of people who forget God. Job agreed and said how God was sole creator and judge of the world:



"He and no other stretched out the skies. The Bear, Orion, the Pleiades and the Mansions of the South - all were made by him. Challenging God is unthinkable. Yet I know I am innocent and I'm being punished unjustly. I also know that God knows I'm innocent. So why am I being punished? This is my question."

Dear God, please save us in time of trial

Job 11 – 14

Zophar then said that Job must still have some secret sins of which he had not repented.

Job sarcastically replied:

"No doubt you are the voice of the people and when you die, wisdom will die with you.

I am only too aware that God knows everything. How could I hide anything from him?

God, why do you hide your face?

Why do you look on me as an enemy?"

Dear God, please give us trust and courage in time of trial

Job 15-17

Eliphaz then said that Job's own words condemned him since he was in fact challenging God. Job replied that he was sick and tired of listening to his friends' speeches. He also said he felt death was not far away: "My breath grows weak, I am ridiculed by everyone, every fiber of my heart is broken. I have no hope."

Lord, help of the helpless, please help people who feel their situation is hopeless

Job 18-19

Bildad then said that Job's suffering was caused by his sins. Job repeated that he was innocent of any wrong-doing. He added: "I am sure of three things:
my God lives,
my God will rescue me,
and I will see my God's face."

Dear God, I believe you live and that someday I will see your face

Search: **Youtube**

- I Know That My Redeemer Lives

Job 20 – 21

Zophar then said it was unreasonable for Job to think that his situation was an exception as regards God's justice. Job replied: "I can't help asking why do wicked people prosper while good people suffer?"

Dear God, please help us to understand the mystery of good and evil

Job 22 – 24

Eliphaz then said that God was punishing Job because justice demanded that Job be punished for his sins. Job replied: "I know that God sees everyone and everything. God sees every step I take. But I cannot contact him. He has filled my life with sadness and fear and yet he doesn't answer my prayer."

Dear God, in times of darkness, with Jesus we pray "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

Job 25 – 31

Bildad then reminded Job that God's power is beyond human understanding. No one should question God's actions.

Job replied: "I swear by God who denies me justice that as long as I have breath, I will live a life of innocence.

I remember how I have always lived as a friend of God: how I helped the poor, the orphan, the dying, the widow, the blind, the lame.



I remember how I made a pact with my eyes not to linger on any other woman but my wife.

I remember how I have never put my trust in riches or fame. I have always trusted only in the Lord.

Yet now people laugh at me and make fun of me. They avoid me and even spit on me.

When will God answer me?"

Dear God, please help me to imitate Job's way of life

Job 32 – 39

Job's three friends had no more to say. But a young man named Elihu, decided to join the conversation.

He said to Job "How can you claim to be innocent and yet say that God is persecuting you without cause?"

As Elihu continued his speech, suddenly the voice of God himself was heard. God asked Job "Have you ever given orders to the morning for day to begin?
Have you ever arranged the stars in the sky?"

Was it you who gave all the animals their various powers?
Who do you think you are?"

Dear God, when we are confronted by the mystery of suffering and evil, please help us realize that these things do not come from you

Job 40 – 42

Job said to God : "My words have been frivolous.
I will not say anything else."

God then reminded Job how God was creator of everything, including amazing animals like the hippo and crocodile.

Job then said to God : "I know you are all-powerful.
I have been speaking about things I don't fully understand.
I retract all I have said and in dust and ashes I repent."

God then praised Job for his fidelity.
God restored Job to good health.

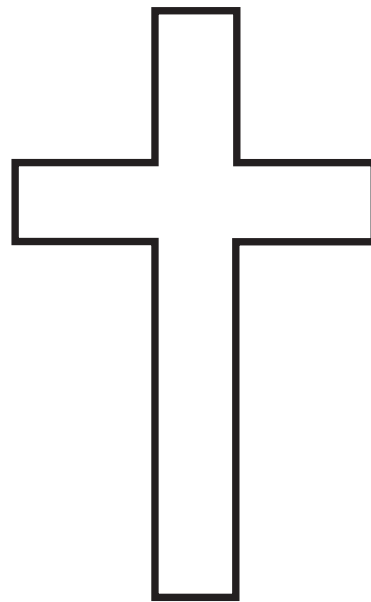
God restored Job's possessions, more than he had before:
10 more children and thousands of animals.
Job lived to be 140 years old and died full of peace.

**Dear God, you never really answered Job's questions about the mystery of evil and suffering
.... but I know your Son Jesus gave us the answers**

Simple Bible : Gospel

**I am the Way
the Truth
and the Life**

(John 14.6)



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**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
the love of God the Father
and the friendship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all
(2 Cor 13.13)**

