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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 30 NUMBER 9

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Jacob Medford

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Worship .....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 p.m.

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Bible Classes.....6:30 p.m.

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Are All Religions Equally Valid?



Allen Webster

In a society that values tolerance above truth, it is popular to say, "All religions are equally valid." This idea appears respectful, inclusive, and fair. Many government regulations around the world, including the Constitution of the United States, protect all religions, but that does not mean all religions are equal. The goal of a free society is for truth to prevail over error in the "marketplace of ideas." The goal is not for all philosophies, views, and religions to come out equal, like a little league that gives everyone a participation trophy but crowns no champion.

The answer to the question of religion matters. Since religion deals with the eternal soul (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14; Mark 8:36), believing a lie leads to everlasting consequences (Matthew 25:46). Let us examine the claims and weigh the evidence.

LOGIC SAYS NOT ALL RELIGIONS CAN BE TRUE

There are areas in life where one is as good as another. Where we choose to eat lunch probably is not of consequence. Whether we buy milk and bread at the corner convenience mart or at the large chain grocery will not matter when the cereal and sandwiches are finished. What sports team had our undying allegiance will not matter when the world is on fire (2 Peter 3:9–10).

Yet, other areas require intelligent weighing of options, and choices have consequences.

- If one is seeking a spouse, would he/she think one was as good as the other?
- When a mother leaves the maternity ward, is one baby as good as another?
- Would we tell our children it makes no difference whom they pick for friends—the drug dealing student who is failing his classes or the honor student who is kind and fun?
- If one needed brain surgery, would one doctor be as good as another? Is a pediatrician or a podiatrist as good as a surgeon? Is an intern as good as the head of the department?
- When choosing a college, is there any difference? Will a degree from the local community college open the same doors as one from an Ivy League university?
- When one makes a deposit at the bank, is one account as good as another?

- If one needs heart medicine, is a prescription for diabetes just as good?

We weigh options and make careful choices. Some decisions will be celebrated and others regretted, perhaps for the rest of our lives. Our choice makes a difference.

Now we turn our attention to religion. If all religions are equally true, then truth itself is meaningless. Why? Because the world's religions make mutually exclusive claims that cannot all be true. If there is one God—and there is (Deuteronomy 6:4–6)—and He has one Son—and He does (John 3:16)—and that one Son will judge everybody in the world (John 5:22; Acts 17:30–31; Hebrews 9:27) according to His Word (John 12:48), then it follows that Christianity is the only religion that saves. It comes down to either Jesus is the Son of God—or He is not. Either salvation is through Him alone—or it is not. One cannot logically say that a religion that does not have Jesus is as good as the one that does.

HISTORY SAYS THAT CHRISTIANITY STANDS ALONE

The facts of Christianity give a foundation no other religion can claim—verifiable historical evidence. Unlike the vague myths or philosophical teachings of other faiths, Christianity is rooted in real events, people, and places. The world anticipated Jesus' arrival (John 4:25). His birth, life, death, and resurrection are recorded in detail. The information was circulated throughout the world, so that even two thousand years later, Jesus is the best-known person in the world.

Secular historians such as Josephus and Tacitus mention Jesus of Nazareth, but the Bible presents His life in detail. Jesus is identifiable by Old Testament prophecies He fulfilled. Have you considered that five identification marks are enough to separate any one human from all others? Take your address, for instance: you are the only person on planet earth with that precise name and address; out of the eight billion-plus people on earth, a letter can get to the right person.

In the same way, five identification markers would be enough to identify Jesus, but His prophecies number in the hundreds, written centuries before they occurred. The Old Testament contains prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus, such as:

- **Birthplace.** The promised Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), yet strangely He would be in Egypt as an infant (Hosea 11:1). He would also be called a "Nazarene." Children would somehow be massacred in connection with His birth (Jeremiah 31:15). Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:3–6), yet His parents fled to Egypt when Herod determined to slay all the young children in that city (Matthew 2:13–18). When they returned, they lived in Nazareth (Matthew 2:23).
- **Ancestry.** The Messiah would be of Abraham's seed (Luke 1:68–73; Genesis 12:3; 22:16–18) through Isaac and Jacob (Luke 3:34; Genesis 17:19; 21:12; Numbers 24:17). He would be of the tribe of Judah (Luke 3:33; Genesis 49:10) and the Son of David (Luke 3:31; Matthew 1:1; 2 Samuel 7:8–14). How many people on earth have ever had such a pedigree? Jesus is one of them.
- **Conflict and Opposition.** One would think that the anticipated Messiah would be welcomed by the people He came to save. Yet, strangely, the Old Testament pictured this Messiah as facing conflict and opposition. He would be the stone that builders rejected (Psalm 118:22–23; Mark 12:10–12; Luke 20:17; Matthew 21:42; Acts 4:11; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:7). He would be betrayed by someone close to Him (Psalm 41:9; John 13:18), and even the betrayal price—thirty pieces of silver—was named (Zechariah 11:12–13; Matthew 26:14–16; 27:5–10).
- **Death.** The Messiah was not predicted to live a long life, but to die a violent death in the midst of life (Psalm 22:1–18; Matthew 27:33–50). Remarkable details were furnished in advance that would be a part of the death circumstances. He would be with thieves in His death (Isaiah 53:9, 12; Matthew 27:38; Luke 22:37). He would be given vinegar and gall (Psalm 69:21; Matthew 27:34; John 19:28–29). Lots would be cast for His clothing (Psalm 22:18; Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23–24). He would be pierced (Zechariah 12:10; 13:6, Psalm 22:16; Luke 24:39; John 19:37; 20:24–29), yet He would suffer no bones broken (Psalm 34:20; John 19:31–36).
- **Burial.** He would be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57–60).

One modern rabbi, while rejecting Christ, admitted the coming Messiah would have to be "just like Jesus of Nazareth—except for His untimely death." Ironically, that "untimely death" was foretold by Scripture.

Other religions lack historical and prophetic foundation. Contrast Christianity's evidence with the religious systems of the East:

- **Buddhism** has some branches that do not even require belief in the historical Buddha. It is about meditation and detachment, not evidence.
- **Hinduism** lacks a central founder, prophet, or doctrine. Its countless gods and beliefs vary widely by region and time.
- **Confucianism** is more of a social code than a religion. Confucius was not a prophet; he was a philosopher focused on relationships and harmony.
- **Islam** has some historical grounding, but it lacks prophetic fulfillment, payment for sin, and a living founder.

None of these systems offers fulfilled prophecy, resurrection claims, or detailed eyewitness accounts like Christianity.

SCRIPTURE SAYS THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO HEAVEN

One cannot accept the Bible as one sacred book among others. It does not allow for religious relativism.

- Solomon warned, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12; repeated in 16:25). A path may feel right but be fatally wrong.
- The psalmist said, "Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:104). And "All Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way" (119:128). If God's way is right, then all contradictory ways must be wrong.

- Jesus said the gate is narrow, and the way is difficult (Matthew 7:13–14). He warned against false prophets (7:15) and said many would be deceived by those claiming to be Christ (24:4–5, 24–25).
- Peter foretold of false teachers who would deny the Lord and bring in destructive heresies (2 Peter 2:1–2). He said their teachings would lead to damnation, not salvation.
- Paul said that there are seven exclusive "ones": body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, and God (Ephesians 4:4–6). He urged self-examination in religion: "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5). He warned against empty words that invite God's wrath (Ephesians 5:6) and urged believers to avoid those who teach contrary to Christ's doctrine (Romans 16:17–18).

If all religions are equally valid, then Solomon, the psalmist, Jesus, Peter, and Paul were all mistaken.

WHY THIS MATTERS

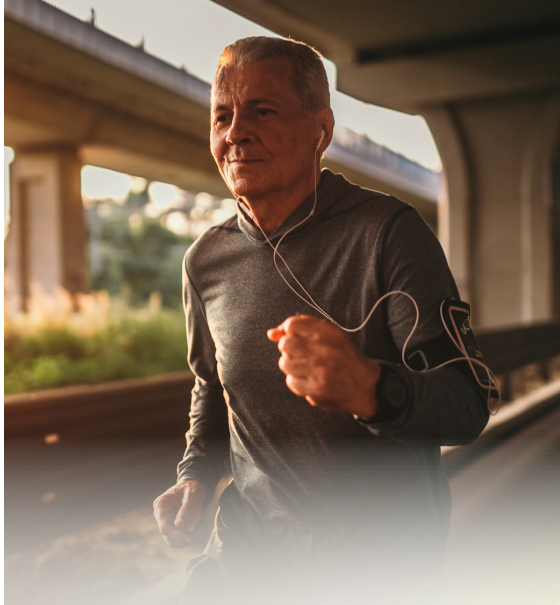
Saying all religions are valid sounds nice—but it does not pass the logical, historical, or biblical tests.

If all religions are equally valid, Christ's death was unnecessary. The apostles were fools. The martyrs were misled. The Bible is a lie. But if Christianity is true—and the evidence says it is—then we must come to God through Jesus (Acts 4:12). The gospel is not one of many ways. It is the only way. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Either He was right, or He was not. He leaves no room for middle ground. If He was right, then no other religious road will get a person to God. Truth, by nature, is exclusive. Two opposite ideas cannot both be true.

The stakes are high. If one religion leads to eternal life, and another leads to destruction, then it matters which we follow. If one stakes his eternity on a philosophy that feels good but is not based on fact, then it will not end well. Religion is not a cafeteria line where everyone picks what he likes.

Jesus is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5)—let Him mediate your case with the Father. He is the world's one Savior (Matthew 1:21)—let Him wash away your sins through penitent faith and baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). He will be your Judge—let Him remove your sins before you face Him (Matthew 25:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Jesus loves you (John 13:34–35)—love Him back (John 14:15).





Do Not Quit

When things go wrong,
as they sometimes will,
And the road you are traveling
seems all uphill;
When funds are low,
and debts are high,
And you want to smile,
but you have to sigh;
When care is pressing you
down a bit,
Rest, if you must
—but do not quit.

'Cause you never can tell
how close you are,
Though it may be near
when it seems so far.
So stick to the job when you are
hardest hit,
It is when things seem worse
that you must not quit.

"Be strong and very courageous."

JOSHUA 1:7

God's Plan for Saving Man

Watch on youtube

Divine Love: John 3:16
God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9
Holy Spirit's Word: 1 Corinthians 2:12–13
Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16
Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37
Christian's Work: James 2:24
Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10



Witticisms

Steven Wright is the famous erudite (comic) scientist who said: "I woke up one morning, and all of my stuff had been stolen and replaced by exact duplicates." His mind sees things differently from the way most of us do. Here are some of his gems:

"I would kill for a Nobel Peace Prize."

"When everything is coming your way, you are in the wrong lane."

"I intend to live forever. . . . So far, so good."

"What happens if you get scared half to death twice?"

"My mechanic said, 'I could not repair your brakes, so I made your horn louder.' "

"To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal from many is research."

"The colder the x-ray table, the more of your body is required to be on it."

"Everyone has a photographic memory; some just do not have film."

"If at first you do not succeed, skydiving is not for you."

"A conscience is what hurts when all your other parts feel so good."

"A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory."

"If your car could travel at the speed of light, would your headlights work?"

"A merrry heart does good."

PROVERBS 17:22

To watch videos, read articles, answer Bible questions, and more go to housetohouse.com

A Child's 10 Commands for Parents



1. My hands are small; please do not expect perfection whenever I make a bed, draw a picture, or throw a ball. My legs are short; please slow down so that I can keep up with you.

2. My eyes have not seen the world as yours have; please let me explore safely. Do not restrict me unnecessarily.

3. Housework will always be there. I am only little for a short time—please take time to explain things about this wonderful world to me and do so willingly.

4. My feelings are tender; please be sensitive to my needs; do not nag me all day long. (You would not want to be nagged for your inquisitiveness.) Treat me as you would like to be treated.

5. I am a special gift from God; please treasure me as God intended, holding me accountable for my actions, giving me guidelines to live by, and disciplining me in a loving manner.

6. I need your encouragement to grow. Please go easy on the criticism; remember, you can criticize the things I do without criticizing me.

7. Please give me the freedom to make decisions concerning myself. Permit me to fail, so that I can learn from my mistakes. Then someday I will be prepared to make the kind of decisions life requires of me.

8. Please do not do things over for me. Somehow that makes me feel that my efforts did not quite measure up to your expectations. I know it is hard, but please do not try to compare me with my brother or my sister.

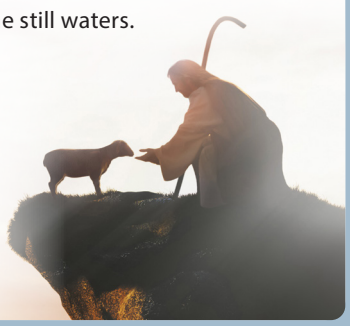
9. Please do not be afraid to leave for a weekend together. Children need vacations from parents, just as parents need vacations from children. Besides, it is a great way to show us children that your marriage is important.

10. Please take me to Sunday school and church regularly, setting a good example for me to follow. I enjoy learning more about God. —Anonymous

Just for Fun — Put Psalm 23 In Order

Number the stanzas of Psalm 23 in the correct order

__ For You are with me;
__ He restores my soul;
__ He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
__ He leads me in the paths of righteousness
__ I will fear no evil;
__ The Lord is my shepherd;
__ Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
__ For His name's sake.
__ You anoint my head with oil;
__ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
__ And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
__ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
__ He leads me beside the still waters.
__ I shall not want.
__ All the days of my life;
__ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
__ My cup runs over.
__ Forever.



The Right Place at the Right Time

In Jesus, disciples have peace and good cheer (John 14:1; 16:33). God's blessings have often been restricted to specific locations:

- The tree of life was in the garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve were driven from there, they had no access to its blessings (Genesis 3:24).
- God offered salvation from the flood in the ark. All who were not in it perished (Genesis 6–9).
- When the firstborn of every family in Egypt faced the plague of death, God provided safety in houses where the Passover lamb's blood was on the door posts and the lintel (Exodus 12).
- Rahab was saved in Jericho as long as she remained in her house (Joshua 2).
- Paul told those in a storm on his prison ship: "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31).

Peace, spiritual prosperity, and safety are where God placed them—in the church (Ephesians 1:3; 3:21; Psalm 122:7). Being in Christ is synonymous with being a member of His church (Galatians 3:26–27; Ephesians 1:22–23; 4:4). Some of the blessings found "in Christ" (a phrase Paul used 169 times) include the following:

- Redemption (Romans 3:24; Colossians 1:14).
- Peace (Romans 5:1).
- Joy (Romans 5:11).
- Grace (Romans 5:17).
- Abundant life (Romans 6:11).
- Eternal life (Romans 6:22; Ephesians 1:3–13; 1 John 5:11).
- Newness of life (Romans 6:4). "Walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).
- Forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7).
- Salvation (2 Timothy 2:10; Acts 4:12; John 14:6).

Since all spiritual blessings are in Christ, and none outside of Him, to receive them, we must be in Him. How does one get into Christ? Several Scriptures answer that question, and they all say the same thing—one is baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3; 1 Corinthians 12:13). One is brought to Christ by hearing the gospel (Romans 10:13–14), believing it (Hebrews 11:6), repenting of sins (Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3), and confessing Christ (Matthew 10:32–33; Romans 10:10). Then one is brought into Christ by baptism. —Anonymous

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

ROMANS 3:24



Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.



Bible Quiz

VOLUME 30:9

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark. We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Chapter to Chapter - Genesis" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Phone: _____

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 30:7 *How Much Do You Know About the Resurrection?*: 1. An angel of the Lord (Matthew 28:2); 2. A spirit (Luke 24:37); 3. Six (Mark 15:25–34); 4. The first (Mark 16:9); 5. Three (Matthew 26:57–75); 6. Simon Peter (John 18:10); 7. The Helper / Holy Spirit / Spirit of truth (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13); 8. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (John 19:38–42); 9. Simon (Luke 23:26); 10. Tiberias (John 21:1); 11. Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38); 12. Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:11–14); 13. Thomas (John 20:24–25); 14. Forty days (Acts 1:3); 15. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

V. 30:8 *One Dozen Scriptures for Couples:* 1. Rejoice (Proverbs 5:18); 2. Burdens (Galatians 6:2); 3. Wives, husbands (Ephesians 5:24); 4. Leave, joined (Genesis 2:24); 5. God, joined (Matthew 19:6); 6. Lie (Colossians 3:9); 7. Love, gave (Ephesians 5:25); 8. Body, wife (1 Corinthians 7:4); 9. Adultery, adultery (Matthew 19:9); 10. Honorable, bed (Hebrews 13:4); 11. Husbands, children (Titus 2:4); 12. Love (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Facts about the Apostles

Find answers in Matthew 4:18–22; 9:9; 14:28–29; 26:14–16; Luke 6:15; 22:56–62; John 1:40–42, 45–46; 11:16; 13:23; 14:8, 22; 20:24–29; 21:20–23; Acts 1:23–26; 2:14–40; 12:1–2; Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1; Revelation 1:9. *Questions are taken from the New King James Version.*

1. Who were the first two apostles called by Jesus? _____
2. Which apostle was formerly a tax collector? _____
3. What was the occupation of Peter, Andrew, James, and John before following Jesus? _____
4. Which apostle doubted Jesus' resurrection until he saw Him? _____
5. Which apostle betrayed Jesus? _____
6. Who replaced Judas Iscariot as an apostle after his death? _____
7. Which apostle walked on water toward Jesus? _____
8. Which apostle denied Jesus three times before the rooster crowed? _____
9. Which apostle preached the first gospel sermon on the Day of Pentecost? _____
10. Which apostle is called the "the disciple Jesus loved"? _____
11. Which apostle was exiled to the island of Patmos? _____
12. Which apostle was a Zealot before following Jesus? _____
13. Which apostle is known for bringing his brother to Jesus? _____
14. Which apostle said, "Show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us"? _____
15. Which apostle asked Jesus, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" _____
16. Which apostle did King Herod kill with the sword? _____
17. Which apostle said, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" _____
18. Which apostle was called "the Twin"? _____
19. Who was the only apostle believed to have died a natural death? _____
20. Which apostle wrote more New Testament books than any other? _____



The *New Testament*

The New Testament is the capstone of God's revelation to man. Without it the story of redemption is incomplete. Everything set forth in the Old Testament in prophetic predictions, promises, types, and shadows comes to majestic fullness and fruition in Christ, the gospel, the church, and the New Testament as they display in radiant splendor God's "eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:11).

In the Old Testament, "it was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation" (Hebrews 9:9–10).

The Old Testament worthies, as faithful as they were to God and the law under which they lived, "did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us" (Hebrews 11:39–40).

In the New Testament, we have the record of the birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation, reign, and promised second coming of Christ. In the New Testament, we have the gospel plan of salvation clearly set forth. In the New Testament, we have the account of the beginning of the church and the record of its early growth.

In the New Testament, we have instructions as to what the church is to be and how it is function until the end of the ages.

In the New Testament, we have how we are to worship the Lord. In the New Testament, we have the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of His inspired apostles, and the complete revelation of what we are to teach, believe, and practice religiously until the end of time. In the New Testament, we have divine instructions—both positive and negative—as to how we are to live as Christians. In the New Testament, we have in beautiful apocalyptic language the ultimate victory that the faithful people of God will experience. In short, in the New Testament, we have "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3). —Hugh Fulford

"Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant."

HEBREWS 12:24

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Recommended **Resource**

TOPICAL BIBLE STUDIES

Topical Bible Studies produces online content to help you explore your Bible questions.

topicalbiblestudies.com
youtube.com/@TopicalBibleStudies

I want to learn more **about the Bible!**

If you knew for sure that the religious path you are on would not get you to heaven, would you change? If there was the possibility of a doubt, would you investigate? Why not request a personal Bible study today?

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Prayer requests or comments: _____

_____

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- ☐ How Is Your Mustard Garden Doing?
- ☐ The Angels' Fishing Trip
- ☐ What Kind of Dirt Are You?

More subjects:



☐ Fourteen Chapters and No Sins



☐ Three Attractions of the Cross



☐ Of Serpents and Sins



☐ The Jews' Place in God's Plan



☐ The Gospel is For All



☐ How To Face Your Golgotha



☐ A New Look at the Old Rugged Cross



☐ God's Battlement of Love

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All materials are completely FREE of charge (including shipping in the U.S. or Canada).

Chapter to Chapter EXODUS

This chart is part of a memory system for learning the key people, events, topics, and verses of all 929 Old Testament chapters.

INTRODUCTION

Written by Moses, Exodus records Israel's dramatic deliverance from slavery in Egypt and the beginning of their covenant relationship with God. The book is foundational, revealing God's power through the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, and the giving of the Ten Commandments. It introduces key themes like redemption, divine presence, and law. Much of Exodus is devoted to instructions for the tabernacle, symbolizing God dwelling among His people. It was likely written between 1446 and 1406 BC.

CHAPTER/TOPICS	VERSES
1. A new king who did not know Joseph.	1:8
2. Moses is saved.	2:10
3. The burning bush; "I AM" sends Moses.	3:14
4. God gives signs to Moses for Israel.	4:5
5. "Let My people go."	5:1
6. God reaffirms His covenant.	6:3
The 10 Plagues—Chapters 7–12	
7. The Nile turns to blood	7:20
8. Plagues of frogs, gnats, and flies.	8:6, 17, 24
9. Plagues of livestock deaths, boils, and hail.	9:6, 10, 25
10. Plagues of locusts and darkness.	10:14, 22
11. God warns of the death of the firstborn.	11:5
12. The Passover. Blood over the door means Israel is spared.	12:13
13. God leads with pillars of cloud and fire.	13:21
14. God parts the Red Sea; Israel escapes.	14:21
15. Israel sings a song of victory.	15:1
16. God promises to send manna (bread) from heaven.	16:4
17. Water flows from the rock at Horeb.	17:6
18. Jethro advises Moses to appoint leaders.	18:21
19. God descends on Mount Sinai.	19:20
20. God begins to give the Ten Commandments.	20:1
21. Laws are given regarding servants.	21:6

CHAPTER/TOPICS	VERSES
22. Laws about property and restitution.	22:1
23. God sends an angel to guide Israel.	23:20
24. Israel agrees to the covenant.	24:7
25. God instructs Moses to build the sanctuary.	25:8
26. Instructions for the tabernacle's curtains.	26:1
27. Instructions for the altar of burnt offering.	27:1
28. The priestly garments are described.	28:2
29. The priests are consecrated.	29:9
30. The altar of incense and atonement.	30:10
31. Sabbaths are a sign of God's covenant.	31:13
32. Israel makes the golden calf.	32:4
33. Moses meets with God face to face.	33:11
34. Moses receives new tablets of the Law.	34:28
35. The people bring offerings for the tabernacle.	35:5
36. The people give more than enough; construction begins.	36:5
37. Bezalel makes the ark of the covenant.	37:1
38. The bronze basin is made from women's mirrors.	38:8
39. The ceremonial attire for the high priest is finished.	39:1
40. God's glory fills the tabernacle.	40:34



During the Lord's Supper

Focus on the body of Jesus.

His head (that lay on Mary's bosom, that would soon wear the King's crown—now torn with thorns);

His ears (that heard the cries of the lonely desolate, heard His Father speak from heaven—now filled with curses of His enemies);

His eyes (that beheld the crowds—now scratchy as His body dries out);

His hands (that tenderly held children, healed the leper, worked in a carpenter's shop—now quivering with the raw nerves touching the iron nail).

Many of us have seen or heard about little boys plucking flowers to give to their adoring mothers. A little-known song recounts a similar story of one small boy who came running to his mother with tears streaming down his cheeks and roses in his hands that he had gathered as a gift for her. The tears were shed because he had cut his hands on the thorny stems of the beautiful red roses. The song's refrain says, "He was showing his love, and that is how he hurt his hands."

In my mental images of Jesus, I often think about His hands and how He used them out of love for others. With His hands He cleansed a leper (Matthew 8:3). He placed His hands on the tongue and ears of the deaf mute, causing him to hear and speak (Mark 7:33). With His hands, He gave sight to the blind (Mark 8:23). To the failing faith of a sinking man, He extended His hand in assurance (Matthew 14:31). To a maiden asleep in death, He raised her by the hand (Mark 5:41).

At no time were those hands more precious or more loving than when they were nailed upon the cross for you and me. Those bleeding hands, that bloody brow, His stricken back, and that sword-pierced body were given as a sacrifice for my many sins. Indeed, He was showing His love, and that is how He hurt His hands. Let all of us see more clearly the love in the hands of Jesus. He truly loves and cares for you. —John W. Moore

House to House
Heart to Heart
9/25

Jerseyville church of Christ
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A Blessing or a Lesson

I saw a sign yesterday that read, "Friends can be a blessing or a lesson."

There is a lot of truth to that statement. Proverbs 18:24 reads, "A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." Solomon added, "The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray" (Proverbs 12:26).

A true friend is indeed a blessing, and we all need true friends. These friends will be there for you in good times and bad. They know just what to say and when to say it, or what to do and when to do it. We all have many acquaintances, but how many true friends do we have?

Some people that we call friends may be a lesson instead. Paul wrote, "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits'" (1 Corinthians 15:33). Perhaps the person who falls into this realm is not a friend at all.

Choose friends wisely.

—Harry Goff, Macon, Georgia

"As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend."

PROVERBS 27:17

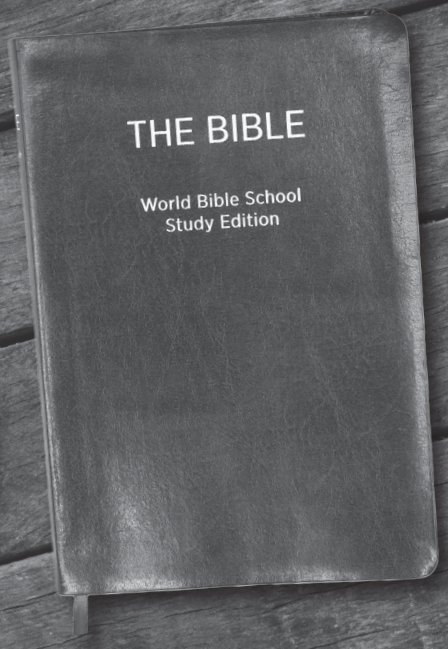
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