

TRUTH AND LIFE

Doctrinal and Ethical Notes on the Bible

G. Wright Doyle, M.Div., Ph.D.

Part I

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Volume 2

OTHER HISTORICAL BOOKS

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Note: *Truth and Life* is a work in progress. Sections will be posted over time and may be incomplete. Check back for new and updated documents. This is *Truth and Life: The Old Testament - Other Historical Books, Version 1 (May 2019)*.

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These book notes will be published online as they are available and complete, within their respective volumes and within the scope of the larger project. Though this Table of Contents may indicate that the notes for a book are currently unavailable, those notes may already be published separately within the specified volume.

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INTRODUCTION to *TRUTH AND LIFE*

Origin and Nature of this Book

Truth and Life: Doctrinal and Ethical Notes on the Bible grew out of a study that I did with several men over a period of three-and-a-half years. Following the order found in *Search the Scriptures*,¹ a Bible reading guide I used at the beginning of my Christian life, we asked two questions of each passage:

What does it say about the usual topics discussed in books on systematic theology (such as the doctrines of revelation, God, Christ, man, sin, salvation, God's people, and "the last things")?

What does it say about how we should live? That is, what does it say about what is usually called "Christian ethics"?

As time went on, I discovered that this way of looking at the Bible was quite helpful for me, since it required me to look closely at the biblical text and to search it carefully for teachings not only on doctrine – that is, general "truth" – but also on the application of doctrine to daily life. Thus, the title: "Truth and Life." Of course, all that the Bible says is true, and all of it bears upon life. Indeed, Jesus said, "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."² We cannot separate doctrine from our proper response to it.

That is why this book includes notes both about general truths revealed by God in the Bible and about ways in which we could apply these truths at home, school, work, and church, and in society. As much as possible, the advice in each "Life" section comes directly from the corresponding passage of the Scriptures.

Distinctive Features

To my knowledge, this book is unique, at least at present.

There are plenty of study Bibles, Bible commentaries of all sorts, and books on systematic theology and on Christian ethics. I am not aware that anything exists that

¹ Alan M. Stibbs, general editor, *Search the Scriptures: A Three-Year Bible Study Course* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984).

² John 6:63.

provides brief comments on what each passage of the Bible says both about the usual topics [*topoi*, or *loci*] of theology and about ethics.

As a glance at any page of this book will show, the “Truth” sections follow a topical order based on the standard theological categories, as mentioned above. The “Life” sections follow the order of the passage itself and are not arranged topically.

In treating the theology of each passage, I usually spend a large amount of time drawing out what we can learn from it about the doctrine of revelation – that is, mostly about the Scriptures themselves (“special revelation”). How God has revealed himself to us in his written Word is foundational to everything else we believe about him and his works in the world and in our lives. Sometimes we also find teaching on what is often called “general revelation” – revealed through our moral constitution, the created order, and the events of history.

You will also see that I devote significant attention to the doctrine of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – which I usually discuss under the headings of “His greatness” and “His goodness.” My goal is to draw our attention away from ourselves and this world so that we may focus again on our great, glorious, and gracious God. Such a reorientation of thinking has been very beneficial to my own soul and life.

After looking at God and his works, we examine what the passage might teach about angels, Satan and demons, mankind, sin, salvation, God’s people, and the last things.

Other Characteristics

Since the Bible is a big book and since the authors of the Scriptures, under God’s inspiration, frequently write about the same topics many times, you will encounter a great deal of repetition here. It simply could not be avoided. Please be patient with me – and with how God has chosen to present what he thinks we need to know! I have found in my own life that I need constant exposure to the same truths day after day, year after year, for them to “sink in” and then be “worked out” into my life.

I have attempted to express myself as concisely as possible. Most sections are presented in outline form for easy reading. I have not aimed for literary elegance or fullness of expression; otherwise, the book would be twice as long. My goal is to give

you as much information as possible in the briefest format. I have written other non-scholarly commentaries and thematic biblical studies in the usual expository style.³

Truth and Life is not a study Bible or a commentary in the usual sense. It is not at all meant to replace these fundamental aids to understanding the Scriptures, but to be used in conjunction with them. You will not find extensive explanations of historical or cultural backgrounds, word studies, or a verse-by-verse or even paragraph-by-paragraph running commentary.

This book is not exhaustive, but suggestive; much more could have been said. Nor is it an academic publication, though I have drawn upon the writings of learned scholars.

In addition, the wording and format of these notes are not always consistent. I wrote them over a period of several years and did not always adhere to the same format. My editorial assistants and I have tried to make the text consistent as much as possible, but irregularities remain.

In particular, some passages receive very detailed treatment, while others are discussed much more briefly. Further, some include references to a number of parallel or related passages of Scripture, while others merely cite the relevant verse(s) in the section under consideration. Again, this disparity reflects the long time I have spent writing the notes, as well as the amount of energy I had on any particular day! As I said above, the notes are meant to be suggestive, not exhaustive.

Note: When only verse numbers are given, they refer to the chapter (or psalm) being discussed. Thus, in the notes on Romans 1:1–17, “1, 5” means “1:3, 5.” If chapter and verse are given, but no book, the reference is to the book being discussed.

My Background

Though I am not now a professional biblical scholar or an academic theologian, I have had some opportunities to engage in advanced study of the Bible and theology.

³ G. Wright Doyle, *Worship and Wisdom: Daily Readings from Psalms and Proverbs with Commentary* (Durham, NC: Torchflame Books, 2015); *Christ the King: Meditations on Matthew* (Durham: Light Messages, 2011); *Jesus: The Complete Man* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2008); and *The Lord's Healing Words: Six Months of Daily Readings from the Bible on Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Health (with Commentary)* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2008).

At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I majored in Latin but also took three years of classical Greek. After graduation I attended the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria. Though it was (and is) a theologically liberal Episcopal school, the seminary faculty included some outstanding evangelicals, and I was able to learn some things even from those who did not believe that the Bible is God's Word written.

From seminary I moved to the pastorate, serving three small Episcopal churches in Eastern North Carolina for two years. This entailed careful study and exposition of the Scriptures along with daily pastoral visitation and care for the people of these congregations.

In 1971 I began doctoral studies in Classics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with the aim of equipping myself to teach in a seminary. For two years I read Greek and Latin literature under the instruction of some of the finest Classicists in the world. My doctoral exams dealt with the Greek New Testament, Hellenistic philosophy, and early Christian rhetoric – that is, preaching. My dissertation focused on Augustine's theory of the exegesis and exposition of Scripture as outlined in *de Doctrina Christiana*, as well as on how Augustine "applied" his theory to his sermons on the Gospel of John. The year that I spent with this master–student of the Bible has profoundly affected the way I read and teach the Bible. Always, Augustine aimed to communicate the truths of Scripture in a fashion that would change people's lives.

My wife Dori and I went to Asia as missionaries in 1975. After two years of Chinese language study and one year away on furlough, we returned to Taiwan, where I began teaching Greek and New Testament at China Evangelical Seminary, Taipei. Over the next seven years, I labored to help Chinese Christians understand and apply the Bible to their culture. My familiarity with the Bible benefitted immensely from the five years I spent supervising the translation of Bauer–Arndt–Gingrich's *Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* into Chinese (and then, later, from five more years spent revising the work).

Since our permanent return to the United States in 1988, I have taught intensive courses on "New Testament and Systematic Theology" for various seminaries in Taiwan and North America, preached regularly, composed the volumes mentioned in the note on page ii, and continued my daily study of the Bible. I have also learned a great deal from Carl F. H. Henry. I made an abridgment of his six–volume *God, Revelation, and*

Authority for publication in Chinese, and I authored an introduction to his *magnum opus*.⁴ From him I learned just how fundamental is the doctrine of revelation.

Sources

In addition to my own daily reading of the Bible over the past 50 years, other sources have contributed to *Truth and Life*. These are too many to list individually, but here are the main ones:

Systematic Theology

Augustine of Hippo. *Enchiridion; City of God; Confessions; and On Christian Doctrine (Teaching)*. Various editions.

John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960.

Jonathan Edwards. *Religious Affections; The End for Which God Created the World; Charity and its Fruits*; various sermons; and other works. Various editions.

Carl F. H. Henry. *God, Revelation, and Authority*. 6 vols. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976–83.

Douglas F. Kelly. *Systematic Theology*. Vols. 1 and 2. Tain, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2008, 2014.

Matthew Levering. *The Theology of Augustine. An Introductory Guide to His Most Important Works*. Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.

Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest. *Integrative Theology: Historical, Biblical, Systematic, Apologetic, Practical*. 3 vols. in 1. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.

Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott. *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Biblical Theology

Several works of biblical theology have helped to shape my general outlook and interpretative stance:

Richard Bauckham. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

⁴ G. Wright Doyle, *Carl Henry: Theologian for All Seasons. An Introduction and Guide to Carl Henry's God, Revelation, and Authority* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010).

Philip Edgcumbe Hughes. *Interpreting Prophecy: An Essay in Biblical Perspectives*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976.

George Eldon Ladd. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.

Leon Morris. *The Cross in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965.

Leon Morris. *New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.

Herman Ridderbos. *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1975.

Study Bibles

To supplement those mostly older studies, in the composition of this book I have relied heavily upon recently published study Bibles. These contain the results of the best evangelical scholarship. After writing my notes, I mined these study Bibles for further information about background, parallel passages in the Scriptures, and generally accepted interpretations. In this way, I hope that I have avoided major errors of interpretation. I freely and gladly acknowledge my debt to the scholars who have contributed to these essential guides for the understanding of the Bible.

The most useful to me have been these:

ESVSB: *ESV [English Standard Version] Study Bible*. Wayne Grudem, general editor. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008.

HCSBSB: *HCSB [Holman Christian Standard Bible] Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010.

MSB: *MacArthur Study Bible*. John MacArthur, author and general editor. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Incorporated, 1997.

NIVSB: *NIV [New International Version] Study Bible*. Kenneth Barker, general editor. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1985.

ZNIVSB: *Zondervan NIV Study Bible*. D. A. Carson, general editor. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.

Commentaries

Over the years, I have read a number of commentaries on various parts of the Bible. It would be tedious to list all the volumes that have helped me understand the Scriptures, but I shall merely acknowledge my debt to the many able scholars who have enriched my understanding of the Scriptures.

Finally, I thank Anna Barnes and Casey Houseworth for their painstaking and skillful editing of my initial draft. They have eliminated many mistakes, made excellent suggestions for improvement, and reduced the inconsistencies to a minimum.

The Purpose of *Truth and Life*

Despite all its limitations, this series of doctrinal and ethical notes on the Bible aims to help the ordinary reader discern in the Holy Scriptures what God has said about himself – his nature, will, and ways – and about how we should live in response to his Word.

I pray that God will use these notes to encourage you to read the Bible both *theologically* and *ethically*, with the goal of loving God and your neighbor by the power of the Holy Spirit.

To him be all the glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

G. Wright Doyle

JOSHUA

Joshua 1

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ Moses, the servant of God, 1; *see Exodus–Deuteronomy.*
- ◆ Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, 1; *see Exodus 24:13; 32:17.*
- ◆ Joshua, the new leader of Israel, 1–9; *see Deuteronomy 31:1–8.*
- ◆ The land which God promised to give to Abraham’s descendants, 2–4, 11; *see Genesis 12:1; 13:14–17; 15:7; 28:13; and Deuteronomy 11:24.*
- ◆ “As I was with Moses,” 5; *see Exodus 3:12.*
- ◆ “Be strong and of good courage,” 6; *see Deuteronomy 31:6–8.*
- ◆ “I will not leave you nor forsake you,” 5; *see Deuteronomy 31:6, 7; and Hebrews 13:5.*
- ◆ “The law which Moses My servant commanded you,” 7; *see Deuteronomy 31:9–13; Exodus 20–Leviticus 27, and most of Deuteronomy.* In some passages, the “Law” [Torah, teaching] referred to all of the Pentateuch.
- ◆ Meditate on the Law of God day and night, 8; *see Psalm 1:1–3.*
- ◆ “The LORD your God is with you,” 9; *see Genesis 26:24; 28:15; and Matthew 28:20.*
- ◆ Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh to live on the east side of the Jordan River, 10–15; *see Numbers 32:20–28.*
- ◆ “Until the LORD has given your brethren rest” in the Promised Land, 15; *see Joshua 21:44; 22:4; Genesis 2:2; Deuteronomy 3:20; Psalm 95:11; and Hebrews 4:1–11.*

Its roots in history

- ◆ Although the first five books of the Old Testament, called the Pentateuch, are historical in nature, Joshua is the first in a series of so-called “historical books” (Joshua—Esther). These books all relate historical events with accuracy.
- ◆ Joshua tells of events that took place beginning in 1400 B.C., forty years after the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and their subsequent wandering in the wilderness.

- ◆ The people inhabiting the land of Canaan at that time were noted for their rank idolatry, gross immorality, and cruelty. Their sins were now, in God's eyes, "complete," and ready for radical punishment by means of the Israelites, God's chosen people.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is Creator and King over the entire world and thus can give any part of it to whom he chooses, 2-4, 6, 11, 13, 15; *see Psalm 24:1*.
- ◆ He is King over all people and thus can place leaders and rulers in authority over them, 1, 2, 16-18.
- ◆ He is King over all people and thus all human rulers are his servants, 2; *see Isaiah 45:1; Daniel 4:34-37; Romans 13:1-4; and 1 Peter 2:13-14*.

His goodness

- ◆ He was faithful to his promises to Abraham and thus delivered his people from bondage in Egypt through the leadership of Moses, 1.
- ◆ He was faithful to his promises to Abraham and thus would give the land of Canaan to his people through the leadership of Joshua, 2-4, 6, 11, 13, 15.
- ◆ He revealed his will and his ways to Moses, who wrote down the words God gave him, 7, 8.

Christ

His person

- ◆ The name "Joshua" means "Yahweh is salvation," 1. The Greek form of this name is the same as the name of Jesus in English. Thus, Joshua, as the victorious commander of God's people, is a type of Christ. *See Revelation 19:11-16*.
- ◆ Jesus has given to his people the true rest that Joshua could not give. *See Hebrews 4:11*.

The People of God

Their identity

- ◆ In the Old Testament, the people of God were the descendants of Abraham, to whom God gave promises of a posterity, land, future rulers, and blessing to all the nations, 1-18. *See Genesis 12, 15, 17, 18*.

- ◆ These people were led by chosen servants of God, of whom the greatest was Moses, 1–2, 7, 13, 15, 17, and whose immediate successor was Joshua, 1–18.
- ◆ The people, including the leaders, were under the authority of God, who expressed his will clearly and comprehensively in the Law, as well as in the histories recorded in Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, 7–8.
- ◆ As God’s people, they were given the right to possess the land of Canaan, and to drive out its pagan inhabitants, 2–8, 11–15.
- ◆ In the New Testament, God’s people are those who trust in Jesus Christ and thus inherit all he has promised them. *See Hebrews 4:1–11.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for his faithfulness in keeping all his promises to his people.
- ◆ Thank God for revealing himself, including his will and his ways, to us through the Scriptures, including the Pentateuch and the historical books of the Old Testament.
- ◆ Read, study, meditate upon, and live by the words of God recorded in Scripture, 1:8. *See Psalm 1:1–3.*
- ◆ Ask God to show you what “land”—that is, what spiritual gifts and moral virtues—he intends to give you at this time.
- ◆ Be courageous to “take possession” of the “land” God has given you, strengthened by his promises to be with you.

Joshua 2

Truth

God

His greatness

- ♦ He owns all the earth and has authority to give any portion of it whomever he will, 9, 14, 24.
- ♦ He is almighty and thus could cause the waters of the Red Sea to part so that the Israelites could pass through on dry land, 10. *See Exodus 15.*
- ♦ He is powerful and enables his people to win victories over their enemies, 10.
- ♦ “He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath,” 11.

His goodness

- ♦ He fulfilled his promise to Abraham to give the land of Canaan to his descendants, 9.
- ♦ He protects his servants when they are on business for him and his people, 1–23.
- ♦ He shows kindness to those who are kind to his servants and his people, 12–20. *See Joshua 6:22–25 and Hebrews 11:31.*

Christ

His person

- ♦ He is the descendant of Rahab. *See Matthew 1:1, 5.*
- ♦ His saving work, including the shedding of his blood, is prefigured by the scarlet thread given to Rahab to protect her and her family, 18.

Salvation

Its conveyance

- ♦ Salvation comes to all, even notorious “sinners,” who sincerely believe God’s Word. *See Hebrews 11:31; Matthew 21:31; and Luke 7:36–50.*
- ♦ Salvation comes to those who identify with God’s people with true faith and total commitment, 1–21.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Trust that God will fulfill all his promises to us.
- ◆ Believe that God has his elect people even among “enemy” populations.
- ◆ Believe that God will save even those who in the eyes of society are notorious sinners.
- ◆ Believe that God can redeem a life of sin and bring good out of it, as he did by giving Rahab a husband and making her an ancestress of Jesus.

Joshua 3

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ The crossing of the Jordan River on dry ground recalls the crossing through the Red Sea. *See Exodus 15.*
- ◆ The ark of the covenant, 3; *see Exodus 25:10–22.*
- ◆ “Consecrate [sanctify] yourselves, 5; *see Exodus 19:10, 14–15.*
- ◆ “Canaanites, . . . Jebusites,” 10; *see Genesis 9:25; 10:6, 15–16; 13:7; 15:16; 23:3; Exodus 3:8; and Judges 3:3; 6:10.*

Its source

- ◆ God revealed himself not only in words, but also in mighty works, like the miraculous drying up of the Jordan River that allowed the Israelites to pass over on dry ground, as at the Red Sea forty years before.
- ◆ He also spoke words to his chosen servant, words that are recorded for us in Scripture, 7–9.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is the only living God, 10.
- ◆ He owns all the earth and can give parcels of it to whomever he wills, 10.
- ◆ He is the Lord of all the earth, 11, 13.
- ◆ He is Creator of the world, omnipotent, and thus could cause the River Jordan to stop flowing, even in flood season, which this was, 13–17.

His goodness

- ◆ He made a covenant with his people Israel, 3.
- ◆ He graciously condescended to dwell among them by his Spirit, localizing his presence over the Ark of the Covenant, 3, 6, 8.

- ◆ He instituted a sacrificial system, administered by priests and Levites, so that his people could draw near to him in worship despite their sins, 3.
- ◆ He gave his people another divinely appointed leader to replace Moses and showed himself to be with Joshua by signs and wonders, 7.
- ◆ He is holy and requires ritual and moral purity from his people, 5.
- ◆ He went with his people as they crossed the Jordan into the land which he had promised to give them, 10–11.

Christ

His person and work

- ◆ He is prefigured by Joshua, whose name is the same as the Greek Jesus.
- ◆ He is prefigured in the priests. *See Hebrews 8:1–9:17.*
- ◆ His saving work of atonement is foreshadowed in the Ark of the Covenant, especially the mercy seat, where the blood of animals was sprinkled as a sign that the sins of the people were forgiven. *See Hebrews 9:6–10:10.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Trust God to keep all his promises to us as recorded in the Bible.
- ◆ Trust God to be among his people because of the saving work of Christ, which the Ark prefigured.
- ◆ Trust God to take you into the “Promised Land,” that is, spiritual access to God now, and eventually possession of a new heaven and new earth.
- ◆ Trust God to work miracles in your life, driving out sins (represented by the pagan nations of Canaan] and bringing you into a place of spiritual flourishing.
- ◆ Sanctify yourself daily by putting away all sinful thoughts and actions and taking on the righteousness of Christ by faith, calling upon the Holy Spirit to fill you and transform you.
- ◆ Step out in faith, based on God’s clearly revealed Word, even before you see the power of God at work.

Joshua 4

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ A monument of stones, 19–24; *see Joshua 24:26 and 1 Samuel 7:12.*
- ◆ Tenth day of the first month, 19, the day the Passover lamb was to be selected; *see Exodus 12:3.*
- ◆ The two-and-a-half tribes that were to inherit the land east of the Jordan were to send their men to fight with the others until all the land had been subdued, 12–13; *see Joshua 21:44; 22:4; Genesis 2:2; Deuteronomy 3:20; Psalm 95:11; and Hebrews 4:1–11.*

Its roots in history: Biblical revelation includes historical narratives that relate incidents that really happened in human time and geographical space, 1–24, especially 19.

God

His greatness: He is the almighty Creator and King of the universe; thus, he could cause the waters of the Red Sea to part and the Jordan River to cease flowing to allow his people to pass over to the other side, 22–24.

His goodness

- ◆ He graciously condescended to dwell among them by his Spirit, localizing his presence over the Ark of the Covenant, 11, 16–18.
- ◆ He instituted a sacrificial system, administered by priests and Levites, so that his people could draw near to him in worship despite their sins, 3.
- ◆ He delivered his people from Egypt under the leadership of Moses and gave them Joshua as their leader after Moses died, 14.
- ◆ He revealed his will to his chosen servants, including Moses and Joshua, 8, 10.
- ◆ He fulfilled his promise to take his people into the Promised Land, 19.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Read the Old Testament often to see how God has dealt with his people throughout the ages and to learn his will for us now.
- ◆ Remember the great things God has done in your life.
- ◆ Make “memorial stones” of some sort to remind you and to evoke questions from the younger generation, that you may tell them what God has done for you.
- ◆ Take part in the Lord’s Supper often, as a memorial of what God did for his people in the death and resurrection of his Son Jesus.

Joshua 5

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later parts referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ Pagan nations hear what God has done for Israel and lose courage, 1. *See Exodus 15:14–15; and Joshua 2:10–11; 9:9.*
- ◆ “Circumcise the sons of Israel,” 2. *See Genesis 17:9–17 and Exodus 4:25.*
- ◆ The death in the wilderness of all the people who had come out of Egypt, 4; *see Numbers 14:29; 26:64–65; and Deuteronomy 2:14–16.*
- ◆ Forty years of wandering in the wilderness, 6; *see Numbers 14:33–34 and Deuteronomy 1:3; 29:5.*
- ◆ “They did not obey the voice of the LORD,” 6. *See Numbers 13:25–14:38; 26:23–65; and Hebrews 3:11.*
- ◆ “A land flowing with milk and honey,” 6; *see Exodus 3:8.*
- ◆ Keeping the Passover, 10; *see Exodus 12 and Numbers 9:1–14.*
- ◆ The appearance of a heavenly Man, the Angel of the Lord, 13–15; *see Genesis 18:1–2; 32:24, 30; Numbers 22:31; and Zechariah 1:8–11.*
- ◆ “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy,” 15. *See Exodus 3:5.*

Its source

- ◆ In Old Testament times, God sometimes revealed himself as a Man, who is identified as the Angel of the Lord in some passages and who speaks as if he were God and receives worship as only God can do, 13–15. *See passages referred to above.*
- ◆ He also revealed himself through direct speech to his people through his chosen messengers, 6.

God

His greatness

- ◆ As almighty Creator and King of all the earth, he dried up the waters of the Jordan, 1.

- ◆ As King and Creator, he is Lord of all the earth and can give parcels of it to whom he chooses, 6.
- ◆ He is eternal, 6.
- ◆ He deserves absolute obedience, 6.
- ◆ He can kill those who disobey him, 6.
- ◆ He was able to provide food miraculously for his people in the wilderness, 12.
- ◆ He is the LORD of hosts [Sabaoth; heavenly armies of angels], 13–15.
- ◆ He is holy, 15.

His goodness

- ◆ He promised to give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham, 6.
- ◆ He swore that he would not let unbelieving Israel into the land and carried out his threat, 6, showing that he is completely trustworthy in what he says.
- ◆ He rewards obedience with restored honor and fellowship with himself, 8–10.
- ◆ He provided manna, food from heaven, for his people in the wilderness for forty years, 12.

Christ

His person

- ◆ He is equal with God and is thus rightly worshiped and addressed as Lord, 14.
- ◆ He is prefigured in the Passover feast, 10. *See 1 Corinthians 5:7.*
- ◆ He is prefigured in the Commander of the Armies of the Lord, 13–15.

Note: This may be the same heavenly person who is called elsewhere the Angel of the LORD. See Genesis 18:1–2; 32:24, 30; Numbers 22:31; Zechariah 1:8–11.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Obey the commands of God early, and do not wait, as the Israelites did in circumcising their sons and celebrating the Passover years after they should have.
- ◆ Believe God's promises.
- ◆ Believe his threats to punish or discipline those who do not obey him.
- ◆ Ask God to circumcise the foreskins of our hearts, that is, to cleanse our hearts of all sin. *See Jeremiah 4:4 and Romans 2:25–29.*

- ◆ Celebrate the Lord's Supper often as a memorial to Christ and his saving work.
- ◆ Before attempting anything for the Lord, even that which has been promised or commanded, bow in worship before Christ, our great Commander.
- ◆ In other words, do not ask whether God is on our side, but seek to be on God's side.
- ◆ Bow before the holiness of God.

Joshua 6

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ Fear of Israel had fallen upon the inhabitants of Jericho, 1; *see Joshua 2:1, 9-11.*
- ◆ Trumpets made of rams' horns, 4; *see Exodus 19:13 and Leviticus 25:9.*
- ◆ The possessions of idolatrous pagans are accursed, 18; *see Deuteronomy 7:25-26.*
- ◆ The intention of God to destroy completely all the inhabitants of Canaan, 17; *see Deuteronomy 20:16-18.*
- ◆ The curse upon anyone who would rebuild the city of Jericho, 26; *see 1 Kings 16:34.*

Its content: Biblical revelation contains passages that are hard to reconcile with the loving and just character of God as we understand it. The complete destruction of Jericho and its inhabitants, including children, seems unjust in the eyes of some people. We need to consider however, that

- ◆ The people inhabiting the land of Canaan at that time were noted for their rank idolatry, gross immorality, and cruelty. They even sacrificed their children to idols. Their sins were now, in God's eyes, "complete," and ready for radical punishment by means of the Israelites, God's chosen people.
- ◆ Jericho may have been a center for the worship of the moon god, and its destruction announces the destruction of all rivals to God's claim to unique deity and to the total allegiance of his people.
- ◆ These people's idols and idolatrous customs would, if allowed to remain, tempt the people of Israel into the same sins. In fact, this later happened. *See Deuteronomy 20:17-18.*
- ◆ For Israel to inhabit the Promised Land, the people living in it had to be exterminated.
- ◆ This judgment, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, is a warning of the terrible destruction that will come upon all the earth when Christ returns.

Its symbolism: Biblical revelation often uses symbolic numbers to convey a message. The repeated mention of “seven” in this passage indicates the religious significance of this event and may also recall the seven days of creation.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is King and Ruler of all the earth and may give nations and their rulers into the hand of his people as he wills, 2.
- ◆ He owns all the silver and gold in the world, 19, 24.
- ◆ He is almighty and thus can cause city walls to fall to the ground, 20.

His goodness

- ◆ He gave the land of Canaan to his people, as he had promised, 2. *See Genesis 12:1; 13:14–17; 15:7; 28:13; and Deuteronomy 11:24.*
- ◆ He instituted a priesthood, so that his people could worship him, 4.
- ◆ He graciously condescended to dwell among his people, with his spiritual presence being “localized” over the Ark of the covenant, 6.
- ◆ He made a covenant with his people, to be their God and to give them the land of Canaan, 6.
- ◆ He is a holy and just God and will utterly destroy those who worship idols and commit atrocious sins, as the Canaanites did, 17.
- ◆ He saved Rahab, who had believed in him and had protected the Israelite spies, 17, 22–23, 25.
- ◆ He was with his servant Joshua, to give him fame and victory as he carried out the will of God to take the land from the inhabitants and give it to his people Israel, 27.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured in Joshua.

- ◆ Joshua’s name in Hebrew is the same as Jesus in Greek.
- ◆ “The Lord was with” him and “his fame spread throughout all the country,” 27. *See Luke 4:14; 5:17.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ When facing spiritual enemies or “impossible” tasks, ask God for guidance and following his instructions implicitly.
- ◆ Recognize that there are times when we should simply be silent and wait for God’s timing to speak (or “shout”).
- ◆ Bow before the awesome holiness of God, who will utterly destroy all wickedness on the last day.
- ◆ Do not make any compromise with sin or go along with the sinful habits of those around you; utterly destroy or avoid all occasions to sin. *See Matthew 5:27–30.*
- ◆ Keep promises you make to people, as the Israelites did with Rahab.

Joshua 7

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ The command to destroy or dedicate to God all things taken from pagan cities, 1, 15; *see Joshua 6:17–19 and Deuteronomy 7:26.*
- ◆ Sending spies to scout out a place Israel intended to attack, 2; *see Numbers 13.*
- ◆ Spies give a misleading report, 3; *see Numbers 13.*
- ◆ Complaining about God’s providence in the face of some obstacle or setback, 7; *see Exodus 16:2–3; 17:3; and Numbers 21:5.*
- ◆ Appealing to God’s reputation among the Gentiles, 8–9; *see Exodus 32:11–12 and Numbers 14:13–19.*

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is omniscient, knowing everything, including all the actions of every person, 1, 10–15.
- ◆ He governs the outcome of the casting of lots (if that is the method that was used to discover who had sinned), 17–18.
- ◆ He is omnipresent, 23.

His goodness

- ◆ He is holy and must punish sin, 1–12.
- ◆ He allows his people to fail in order to cause them to seek his face and to discover their sin, 2–12.
- ◆ He made a covenant with Israel to be their God and to give them the Promised Land, 15.
- ◆ When sin has been dealt with, he graciously withdraws his anger, 26. *See Psalm 30:5; 103:9; and 1 John 1:9–10.*
- ◆ He so identifies with his people that what is done in their presence is done in his presence, 23.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured in the death of Achan (and his family), as one person who suffers so that all of God's people may be spared God's wrath, 25–26. *See 2 Corinthians 5:21 and 1 Peter 3:18.*

Sin

Its nature: All sin is against God, 20. *See Psalm 51:4.*

It includes

- ◆ Presumption upon God's previous grace, 3
- ◆ Disobeying any of God's commands, 1, 15
- ◆ Covetousness, 21
- ◆ Stealing, 11, 21
- ◆ Deception, 11, 21
- ◆ Any compromise with evil, 11

Its consequences: The consequences of sin extend to one's family, 24–25.

The People of God

Their characteristics

- ◆ God's people are bound together spiritually, so that if one person or family sins, all are affected, 1, 10–15. *See 1 Corinthians 5 (entire chapter).*
- ◆ God's people must exercise discipline against its sinful members, lest all be affected. *See above Scriptures.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Be aware that your sins will bring trouble upon those close to you, and for their sakes forebear from evil actions.
- ◆ Remember that no sin, no matter how "secret" you think it is, will go undiscovered by God. *See Matthew 10:26; Luke 8:17; 12:2; and Hebrews 4:13.*
- ◆ Do not presume upon past victories; seek God's face for each new endeavor.
- ◆ When you encounter a defeat or setback, ask God to show you the reason; it may be sin.

- ◆ Deal ruthlessly with all sin in yourself, regardless of the cost. *See Matthew 5:28–30.*
- ◆ Exercise church discipline, lest the whole congregation be affected.
- ◆ Trust that God will forgive your sins if you confess and deal with them.

Joshua 8

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ The story of the victory over Ai presupposes the previous chapter's narrative of Israel's defeat at Ai.
- ◆ "Do not be afraid," for God has already given the city (or enemy) into your hands, 1; *see Deuteronomy 1:21; 7:18; 31:8; and Joshua 1:9; 10:8.*
- ◆ The destruction of Jericho, 2; *see Joshua 6:1–35.*
- ◆ Taking plunder from the city, 2; *see Numbers 31:25–54.*
- ◆ Setting an ambush, 4; *see Judges 20:29.*
- ◆ God's command to destroy pagan cities completely, 8; *see Exodus 33:21–33; and Deuteronomy 7:1–2.*
- ◆ "Stretch out the spear that is in your hand," 18; *see Exodus 14:16, 21, 26–27.*
- ◆ Building an altar on Mt. Ebal, 30–31; *see Deuteronomy 27:5–8.*
- ◆ Writing the Law of God on the stones, 32; *see Deuteronomy 27:8.*
- ◆ Renewing the covenant of Sinai with God, 30–35; *see Deuteronomy 27:1–10.*
- ◆ Reading the Book of the Law, with its blessings and curses, from Mts. Gerazim and Ebal, 30–35; *see Deuteronomy 27:11–28:68.*

God

His greatness: He owns all the earth and can give parcels of it to whomever he pleases, 1. *See Genesis 17:8.*

His goodness

- ◆ He promised to give the land of Canaan, including its cities, to his people, and he fulfilled his promise, 1, 7, 18, 24.
- ◆ He revealed his specific will to his people through their leaders, 1–3, 18.
- ◆ He revealed his general will through Moses, who wrote down the Law of God, 31–35. *See Exodus 20–40, Leviticus, Deuteronomy.*

- ◆ He is gracious and forgiving, the “God of the second chance,” who allows his people to recover from past sins and to gain new victories, 1–19.
- ◆ He sometimes even allows his people to turn past failures into the very means of later successes, 5–6.
- ◆ He instituted a sacrificial system, so that his people could draw near to him in worship despite their sins, 30. *See Exodus 20–40, Leviticus.*
- ◆ He graciously condescended to dwell among his people above the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant, 33. *See Exodus 25:10–22.*
- ◆ He is kind and offers blessing to those who obey his commands, 34.
- ◆ He is holy and threatens punishment for those who disobey him, 34.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Believe all God’s promises.
- ◆ Take courage and do not fear obstacles, as long as you are attempting to do what God has clearly revealed in the Bible.
- ◆ Thank God for his forgiveness and mercy in allowing us to overcome past failures and go on to new victories.
- ◆ Wait upon God for direction in all matters, even those in which you are an expert, as Joshua was in war.
- ◆ When undertaking a major project or attacking a major spiritual enemy (like a long-time sinful pattern), use multiple means (such as prayer, fasting, the Word of God, decisive action, etc.), as Joshua did at Ai.
- ◆ Follow God’s revealed instructions to the letter.
- ◆ Periodically raise some sort of “altar” to commemorate a special victory won by God’s help, as a reminder for the future.
- ◆ Combine both work (like Joshua’s going into battle) with worship (as he did after the victory); do not neglect either aspect of serving God.
- ◆ Read the Old Testament often, to learn God’s will and his ways in the past.

Joshua 9

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ All that God did in Egypt, 9; *see Exodus 7–15.*
- ♦ The defeat of the two kings Sihon and Og, 10; *see Numbers 21:21–35.*
- ♦ God’s command to conquer the Promised Land and destroy all its pagan inhabitants, 24; *see Exodus 23:31–33; and Deuteronomy 7:1–2.*
- ♦ The “altar of the LORD,” 27; *see Exodus 27:1–8.*
- ♦ “The place which He would choose,” 27; *see Deuteronomy 12:5.*

Its roots in history: The covenant, or treaty, that Israel made with the Gibeonites is very similar to so-called suzerainty treaties of that time in Near Eastern history; a great king would make a treaty with a nation that was willing to be his vassal and serve him in return for receiving his protection.

God

His greatness

- ♦ As Creator and Ruler of the world, he has the power to destroy great nations and kings and to make the waters of the Red Sea part for his people, 10.
- ♦ As King and owner of all the earth, he has the authority to give parts of it to whom he chooses, 24.

His goodness

- ♦ He is Yahweh, the faithful covenant God of his people, 9, 18, 19.
- ♦ He is holy and must punish sin with wrath, 20.
- ♦ He condescended to dwell among his people in a “house,” that is, the Tabernacle, 23; *see Psalms 43:3; 46:4; 68:16; 76:2; 84:1; 132:7, 13–14; Deuteronomy 12:11; 1 Kings 8:13; 2 Chronicles 36:15; Ezra 6:12; Joel 3:17; Acts 7:46.*
- ♦ He gave the land of Canaan to his people as an inheritance and the mandate to expel the pagan inhabitants, 24.

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Lying, 3–27; *see Exodus 20:16*.
- ◆ Not asking guidance from God before making important decisions, 14; *see Numbers 27:21*.
- ◆ Violating a solemn promise that we have made before God, 18, 20; this would include our vows made at baptism and marriage.
- ◆ Harming those whom we have promised to protect, 26

Its consequences

- ◆ Making foolish decisions
- ◆ Having to live with the results of keeping a rash promise
- ◆ Living under the consequences of our lies and deception; in this case, it meant becoming slaves to the Israelites, 27

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Make careful inquiries before entering into contracts with people whom we don't know well.
- ◆ Beware of deceiving others out of fear; our lies will eventually be discovered and we will suffer the consequences.
- ◆ Keep our solemn promises, including contracts and our marriage vows.

Joshua 10:1–27

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ The treaty with Gibeon, 6; *see Joshua 9:1–27.*
- ◆ “Do not be afraid,” 8; *see Joshua 1:5b–9; 8:1.*
- ◆ “I have given them into your hand,” 8; *see Joshua 1:2; 6:2.*
- ◆ God controls the battle and fights for his people, 10–13; *see Exodus 14:24; 23:27; Deuteronomy 2:15; Judges 4:15; 1 Samuel 7:10; and 2 Chronicles 15:6.*
- ◆ God changes the course of the sun, 12–13; *see 2 Kings 20:9–11 and Isaiah 38:8.*
- ◆ The annihilation of all enemies in the fortified city, 20; *see Deuteronomy 20:15–18.*
- ◆ “Put your feet on the necks” of conquered kings, 24; *see Psalm 110:1; Jeremiah 28:14; 30:8; and Ezekiel 21:29.*
- ◆ Put the bodies of slain rulers on poles, 26; *see Joshua 8:29.*

Its content and source

- ◆ Biblical revelation sometimes employs existing sources, such as the Book of Jasher, 13.

Note: That book may have been an existing source; it might have been a document that was compiled later, including materials from previous events. Or “Jasher” may refer to something else. Since Joshua seems to have been written not long after the events it records (6:29), the Book of Jasher may not have been an earlier document. See 2 Samuel 1:18.

- ◆ Biblical revelation contains narratives of events that surpass our understanding, like the story of the sun standing still, 12–14.

Note: Attempts to find naturalistic explanations of this phenomenon have failed. It was clearly a miracle of the first order, with implications for the sky and the earth that no one can understand. The Israelites knew perfectly well that this was a celestial wonder that only God could have worked, and simply attributed it to his love and power, 14.

- ◆ Biblical revelation includes the history of the conquest of Canaan by Israel, including the killing of many of the local inhabitants.

Note: Many believe that this invasion entailed mass genocide and fault God for such barbarity. A close look at the narrative, however, has led some interpreters to hold that the Israelite army attacked fortified positions and annihilated the armies defending them; they did not engage in wholesale slaughter of civilian populations. We know this partly because so many Canaanites survived into the next generation, to lead the people of God into idolatry. See the notes to the Zondervan NIV Study Bible.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is able to bring victory to his people over an array of enemies, 8–14, 19.
- ◆ He knows and can foretell the future, 8.
- ◆ He governs all that happens in the affairs of men and nations, 8.
- ◆ He is able to affect weather patterns and thus to cast down huge hailstones upon the earth at will, 11.
- ◆ As Creator and King of the universe, he is able to make the sun and the moon stand still in their courses, 12–14.

His goodness: As he had promised, he gave the inhabitants of the land of Canaan into the hand (power) of his people, 8, and fought their battles for and with them, 10–14, 19.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ When facing apparently insurmountable obstacles and innumerable spiritual (or even human) enemies, trust that God will give you grace to prevail and to complete his will for you.
- ◆ Keep commitments you have made to others, as Joshua did with Gibeon.
- ◆ While trusting God, do all you can to fulfill your duty.
- ◆ If necessary, call out to God to work a miracle to enable you to gain victory over sin and Satan.
- ◆ Completely exterminate all spiritual enemies, that is, completely remove all temptations to sin (when you can) and utterly root out all sinful tendencies, as Joshua totally destroyed the enemies of God's people.

Joshua 10:28–12:24

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ “Do not be afraid,” 11:6; *see Joshua 1:6–7, 9; 10:8.*
- ◆ As Moses had commanded, 11:12, 15; *see Numbers 33:50–56.*
- ◆ The Anakim—giants, 11:21–22; *see 1 Samuel 17:4.*
- ◆ The land of Canaan parceled out to the different tribes of Israel as an inheritance, 11:23; *see Genesis 17:4–6; 22:17 and Numbers 34:2–15.*

Note: In the New Testament, all believers in Christ receive the promise that they will inherit “the world,” that is, the New Earth that God will create when Christ returns. See Matthew 25:34; Romans 4:13; 8:16–17; Ephesians 1:11–14, 18; 5:5 [here called “the kingdom of Christ and God”]; Colossians 3:24; Hebrews 11:8–16; 1 Peter 1:3–4; and Revelation 21–22.

- ◆ Moses’ conquests, 12:1–6; *see Deuteronomy 2:26–3:11.*
- ◆ Two-and-a-half tribes given the east bank of the Jordan, 12:1–6; *see Deuteronomy 3:12–22.*

Its roots in history: Biblical revelation includes many narrative passages that record historical events. Archeology has shown time and again that these records are true.

Its source: Biblical revelation came from God to his chosen spokesman, and then from them to us, 11:6, 12, 15, 23.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He governs the affairs of men and nations, and he is able to give victory to his people when they are seeking to do his revealed will, 10:30, 32, 42; 11:6, 8.
- ◆ As King of the world, he knows the future, which he has already planned, 11:6.
- ◆ As Ruler of all men, he sometimes hardens the hearts of his implacable enemies so that they persist in their rebellion against him and suffer the destruction they

thus deserve, 11:20. *See Exodus 4:21; Deuteronomy 2:30; and Romans 9:14–22.*

His goodness

- ◆ He gave victory to Joshua just as he had promised.
- ◆ He fulfilled his promises to Abraham and Moses by giving the land to the Israelites.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Read the Old Testament narratives often to see how God fulfilled all his promises to his people and gave them victory over his enemies.
- ◆ Read the Old Testament often to understand God's greatness and his goodness, including his sovereign grace.
- ◆ Do your assigned part in waging spiritual warfare against all sin and against the evil that is in the world.
- ◆ Do not give up in your struggle against your sin until you have utterly exterminated the last vestiges of it in your heart, mind, and actions, that is, do not cease the pursuit of holiness until you die, or Christ returns. *See 1 Peter 4:1–5.*
- ◆ Ask God to show you what he wants you to do, and then do it completely and thoroughly, as Joshua did.
- ◆ Record God's answers to your prayers and how he has enabled you to complete tasks he has assigned to you.
- ◆ Trust God to give you the inheritance of eternal life in a new heaven and a new earth.

Joshua 13:1–15:12

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ The defeat of kings Sihon and Og by Moses, and his assigning to the two-and-a-half tribes their lands as a possession, 13:8–33; *see Joshua 12:1–6; Deuteronomy 3:12–22; and Numbers 32.*
- ◆ The division of the land among the tribes by lot, 14:2; *see Numbers 26:55; 33:54; 34:13.*
- ◆ The sending by Moses, of twelve spies into the land of Canaan, their mostly negative report back to Moses, and Caleb and Joshua’s positive report, 14:6–9; *see Numbers 13:1–10.*
- ◆ God’s promise to reward Caleb and Joshua for their faithfulness to him, 14:8–9; *see Numbers 32:12.*

Its source: God revealed his will for his Old Testament people through chosen servants, of whom Moses, “the man of God,” “the servant of the LORD,” was the greatest and most foundational, 13:8, 12; 14:5–6.

God

His greatness

- ◆ As Creator of the world, He owns all of the earth and can give parts of it to whomever he pleases, 13:1–7.
- ◆ He owns all people and can assign to them the duties he wants them to perform, as he did with the Levites, 13:14.
- ◆ He instituted the sacrificial system, and appointed priests to function within it, so that his people could approach him in worship and have their sins forgiven, 13:14.

His goodness

- ◆ He fulfilled his promises to Abraham to give the land of Canaan to his descendants.

- ◆ He gave himself as an inheritance to the tribe of Levi, 13:33.
- ◆ He rewards faithfulness and faith, 14:9.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Do not let age stop you from possessing the “land” God has given you, that is, fulfilling the ministry he has allotted to you, 13:1–7; 14:10–11. *See Colossians 4:17 and 1 Peter 4:10.*
- ◆ Be attentive to God’s voice as he tells you what work remains for you to do, and what blessings remain for you to enjoy.
- ◆ Seek to know and exercise your particular spiritual gift. *See Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12; and 1 Peter 4:9–10.*
- ◆ Don’t be afraid to tackle “giants” like the Anakim, even when you are older, 14:12.

Joshua 15:13–17:18

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ Caleb inherited Hebron (also called Kiriath–Arba) and drove out the Anakites (giants) there, 15:13–14. *See Joshua 14:11–15.*
- ◆ The Israelites could not completely expel all the pagan inhabitants of the land, 15:63; 16:10; 17:12. *See the entire Book of Judges for the baleful consequences of this failure to remove all potential sources of temptations to idolatry.*
- ◆ Moses commanded that the daughters of a man with no sons should receive an inheritance, 17:3–4. *See Numbers 27:1–11.*

God

His greatness: As Creator and King of the world, he owns all the earth and can give it to whomever he pleases.

His goodness: He kept his promises to give to Israel the land of Canaan.

Mankind

Our created nature

- ◆ Women are equally created in the image of God and deserve fair treatment in matters both material and spiritual, 15:18–19.
- ◆ At least in the Old Testament, daughters were under the authority of their fathers, who could “give” them in marriage to men, 15:16–17.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Give women their fair share, 17:3–4. In Christ, believing women are “equal heirs of the grace of life.” *See 1 Peter 3:7.*
- ◆ Do not give up in your struggle against sin until you have removed all occasions for temptation from your life, or at least all inner inclinations to sin from your heart.

- ◆ Do not fear to tackle “the hill country,” but receive difficult assignments from God with the faith that you can do his will and receive his promised blessings, 17:14–18.

Joshua 18–19

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ Shiloh, where the tabernacle [tent] of meeting was located from this time until the time of Samuel, 1; *see 1 Samuel 4:3*.
- ◆ The tent of meeting, 1; *see Exodus 26*.
- ◆ The Levites had no inheritance like the other tribes; theirs consisted of the Lord himself and certain cities within the allotted territory of other tribes, 7. *See Numbers 18:7, 20; 35:1–8; and Joshua 13:33*.
- ◆ Eleazer the high priest, son of Aaron, 19:51; *see Leviticus 10:6 and Numbers 3:1–4; 4:16*.

Its structure: Biblical revelation uses literary structure to make theological or ethical points.

- ◆ The account of the allotment of the land west of the Jordan begins with the portion granted to Caleb. *See Joshua 14:6–15*.
- ◆ It ends with the city assigned to Joshua, 19:49–50.
- ◆ They were the only two spies who brought back a favorable report to Moses and the people of Israel, and who urged the people to go up and take possession of the Promised Land. *See Numbers 13:1–14:10*.
- ◆ Joshua is named last, perhaps to emphasize that he was a humble servant of God. *See Matthew 20:25–28*.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He owns all the earth and can give parts of it to whomever he pleases.
- ◆ He is sovereign over even apparently “chance” events, such as the casting of lots, 6. *See Acts 1:26*.

Note: whether Christians should use this method to discern God’s will is debated. In any case, the passage in Acts shows that the Apostles had selected two qualified candidates and were apparently leaving the final decision to God; they did not just randomly throw dice.

His goodness

- ◆ He fulfilled his promise to give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham, 3. *See Genesis 12:1; 13:14–17; 15:7; 28:13; and Deuteronomy 11:24.*
- ◆ He fulfilled his promise to give Joshua and Caleb entrance into, and an inheritance within, the Promised Land. *See Numbers 14:30, 38.*
- ◆ He instituted a sacrificial system, with priests and the tabernacle of meeting, so that his people could draw near to him in worship, 19:51.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Ask God for specific guidance about his particular will for your life, in general and each day, that is, the “land” that he has assigned to you. *See Psalm 25:4–5; 86:11.*
- ◆ Once you know God’s will and have his promises, do not hesitate to “go and possess the land” that the Lord has given you. *See Joshua 18:3.*
- ◆ If you are a leader, serve others first and make sure that they have received what God has for them, and only then seek your own temporal welfare.

Joshua 20–21

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ Cities of refuge, 20:1–9; *see Exodus 21:13; Numbers 35:6–34; and Deuteronomy 4:41–43; 19:2, 9.*
- ◆ Provision for a “kinsman redeemer,” a close male relative, to avenge the murder of one of his family, 20:3; *see Leviticus 25:25–26; Numbers 35:19, 21; and Ruth 2:20; 3:9–13; 4:1–8.*
- ◆ The requirement of the death penalty for murder, 20:5, 9; *see Genesis 9:1–5 and Numbers 35:31.*
- ◆ Cities for the Levites, who otherwise had no inheritance, 21:1–42; *see Numbers 35:1–8 and 1 Chronicles 6:54–81.*
- ◆ The prediction that the descendants of Levi would be scattered throughout the people of God, 21:41; *see Genesis 49:7.*
- ◆ The priestly city of Anathoth, 21:18, which later became the home of Jeremiah; *see Jeremiah 1:1.*
- ◆ God’s promise to give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham, 43; *see Genesis 12:7; 26:3–4; 28:4, 13–14.*
- ◆ The promise of “rest” for God’s people from slavery, war, and from oppression by their enemies in the Promised Land, 21:43; *see Deuteronomy 12:9–10; Joshua 1:13, 15; 11:23; and 1 Kings 8:56.*
- ◆ The promise of victory over their enemies in the Promised Land, 21:44; *see Deuteronomy 7:24; and Joshua 6:2.*
- ◆ The certainty that God’s promised words will be fulfilled, 21:45; *see Joshua 23:14; Numbers 23:19; 1 Kings 8:56; Proverbs 30:5; and 2 Corinthians 1:20.*

Its content: The Bible contains statements that do not seem completely true, like the claim that God had given Israel all the Promised Land and the implication that they had defeated all their enemies, when, in fact, some land remained to be occupied, and some Canaanites remained, 21:43–44. *See Joshua 13:1; 18:3.* The statement is a

summary of the general situation: Israel had defeated its major enemies in battle and commanded the land, most of which they had occupied.

Its source

- ◆ Biblical revelation was given by God to chosen messengers, of whom, in the Old Testament, Moses was the foundational recipient, for all later revelation unfolded, fulfilled, or was measured by what God told him, 20:1; 21:2.
- ◆ The words of the Bible come from God and are therefore entirely trustworthy and reliable, 21:45. *See passages cited above.*

God

His greatness: He has the authority and power to give any part of the world to whomever he wills and to drive out the previous inhabitants, 21:43–44.

His goodness

- ◆ He provided cities of refuge for those who had unintentionally committed homicide, 20:1–9.
- ◆ He cares for “the stranger” and “the sojourner,” that is, non–Israelites who have joined themselves to God’s people, 20:9. *See Exodus 22:21; Leviticus 19:34; 24:22; Numbers 15:15; and Deuteronomy 1:16; 10:18.* This care also demonstrates his strict justice and fairness.
- ◆ He considers the motives with which we perform actions and acknowledges innocence of intent, 20:1–9. *See Exodus 21:12–13 and Numbers 35:31.*
- ◆ He saw to the spiritual needs of his people by placing Levites among them, 21:1–42.
- ◆ He fulfills all his promises to his people and his threats to those who fail to trust and obey him, 21:43–44.

Christ

His person

- ◆ He is typified by the cities of refuge, for we can run to him for protection from the righteous wrath of God.
- ◆ He is also typified in the “kinsman redeemer.”

The People of God

Their identity: Whereas, in the Old Testament, only the sons of Levi were priests, 21:1, in the New Testament all believers are priests before God. *See 1 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:6.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for giving us Jesus as a refuge and Savior from his wrath.
- ◆ Thank God for making us priests to God, with access to God through Jesus Christ and with authority not only to worship God but also to pray for others.
- ◆ Trust that all of God's promises to you in the Bible will be fulfilled.

Note: You must study these promises carefully, for not all "promises" in the Bible apply to every Christian at all times.

- ◆ Study God's Word diligently, for all of it is true.
- ◆ Especially trust God's promise to give us an inheritance in the new heaven and new earth. *See 2 Peter 3:13.*

Joshua 22

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ “All that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded, you,” especially the command to help the other ten-and-one-half tribes occupy the land west of the Jordan, 2-3; *see Numbers 32:20-22 and Deuteronomy 3:18.*
- ◆ “The LORD God has given rest to your brethren,” 4; *see Deuteronomy 12:9-10; Joshua 1:13, 15; 11:23; 21:44; and 1 Kings 8:56.*
- ◆ “The commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God,” etc., 5; *see Deuteronomy 6:6, 17; 10:12; 11:13, 22; and Jeremiah 12:16.*
- ◆ The gift of the land east of the Jordan to the two-and-a-half tribes, 7; *see Joshua 17:1-13 and Numbers 32.*
- ◆ The sin at Peor, 17; *see Numbers 25:1-9.*
- ◆ Achan’s sin, 20; *see Joshua 7:1-26.*
- ◆ The system of various sacrifices instituted by God through Moses, 27-29; *see Exodus 27:1-19; 29:38-46; Leviticus 2-7.*

Its source: Biblical revelation was given by God to chosen messengers, of whom, in the Old Testament, Moses was the foundational recipient, for all later revelation unfolded, fulfilled, or was measured by what God told him, 2, 3, 5. *See Joshua 20:1; 21:2.*

God

His greatness

- He is “God of gods, the LORD God of gods,” 22.
- He is omniscient and knows our motives, 22.

His goodness

- He is the “God of Israel,” his chosen people, 16, 24.
- ◆ He graciously condescended to dwell among his people in the Tabernacle of meeting, 19. *See Leviticus 26.*

- ◆ He identifies himself with his people, so that membership in his people entails participation in God, 24–25.
- ◆ He instituted a system of sacrifices so that his people could worship him, draw near to him, and have their sins forgiven, 28–29. *See Exodus 29:38–46 and Leviticus 1–7.*

The People of God

Their characteristics: God’s people—in the Old Testament, the nation of Israel, in the New Testament, the church—are so knit together as a corporate entity that the actions of one affect the spiritual welfare of all, 17–20, 31. *See 1 Corinthians 5:1–7.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Do not act out of fear.
- ◆ Do not think that you understand the motives of others, especially other believers, when they do something that seems wrong to you.
- ◆ When someone offends you, go to the person directly to find out what has happened, rather than taking hasting and harmful action. *See Leviticus 19:16–17 and Matthew 18:15–20.*

Joshua 23

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ Like Jacob and Moses, the aged Joshua gives a farewell speech to God's people, 1–2; *see Genesis 48–49; Deuteronomy 31–33; 2 Timothy 4:6–8; 2 Peter 1:12–15; 3:1.*
- ◆ God gave “rest” to his people from all their enemies, 1; *see Joshua 1:13, 15; 11:23; 21:44; 22:4. See also Hebrews 4:1–10 for another perspective.*
- ◆ God has “fought for” his people and given them victory over all their enemies in the Promised Land, 1.
- ◆ God will expel the pagan nations from Canaan and give the land to his people Israel, just as he had promised, 5. *See Exodus 23:30; 33:2; and Numbers 33:53.*
- ◆ “Therefore, be very courageous,” 6. *See Joshua 1:5b–9.*
- ◆ “To do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses” 6; *see Joshua 1:7–8.*
- ◆ “Do not invoke the names of their gods,” 7; *see Exodus 20:3–6; and Deuteronomy 5:7–10.*
- ◆ “Hold fast to the Lord your God,” 8; *see Joshua 22:5; and Deuteronomy 6:5.*
- ◆ “Divide the plunder,” 22:8; *see Numbers 31:25–27 and Joshua 8:2, 27; 11:14.*
- ◆ “Love the LORD your God, 11; *see Joshua 22:5; Deuteronomy 6:4–5; and Matthew 22:35–37.*
- ◆ Blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience, 13; *see Leviticus 26:1–46; and Deuteronomy 28:1–68.*
- ◆ Idolatry leads to expulsion from the land, 15–16; *see 2 Kings 17:7–8 and Chronicles 7:19–20.*

Its source: Biblical revelation was given by God to his people through chosen messengers, of whom, in the Old Testament, Moses was the foundational recipient, for all later revelation unfolded, fulfilled, or was measured by what God told him, 6. *See Joshua 20:1; 21:2; 22:2, 3, 5.*

Its purpose: Biblical revelation is meant not just for our illumination but for moral transformation; not just for knowledge, but for obedience, 6. *See Matthew 7:24–27; and John 13:17; 14:21.*

God

His greatness

- ◆ He has the power to deliver his people from their enemies and to give them the Promised Land, 1, 3, 5, 9–10.
- ◆ He has the power to bring evil on his people when they persistently disobey him, 15–16.
- ◆ He knows the future and can predict it, without overriding human action or responsibility, 15–16 (if the word is to be translated, “when,” instead of, “if ever”).

His goodness

- ◆ He kept his promise to drive out the pagan peoples of Canaan from their land and to give the land to his people, 3, 5, 9.
- ◆ He fought for his people, 3, 10.
- ◆ He graciously made a covenant with his people to be their God, 6, 8, 16. *See Exodus 6:4–5; 19:3–24:18; Deuteronomy 4–5; and often in the Old Testament.*
- ◆ He is holy and will punish all persistent and unrepentant unfaithfulness to him and his laws, 12–13, 15–16.

Christ

His person: He is typified by Joshua.

- ◆ Their names are the same in Hebrew and Greek: “Yahweh saves.”
- ◆ They lead God’s people to the Promised Land.
- ◆ Though Joshua made a rash statement to Moses (*see Numbers 11:26–29*) and unwisely made a treaty with Gibeon (*Joshua 9*), the Bible records no sin that he committed; he thus prefigures Jesus, who was without sin. *See Hebrews 4:15.*

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Participating in any way in the religion of pagans, or worshiping and serving any of the “gods” of those who do not follow the way of Christ, 7, 12, 16
- ◆ Marrying an unbeliever, 12
- ◆ Transgressing any of the written laws of God (though we are no longer under Old Testament law, we are under the moral laws written in the New Testament), 16

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Read the Bible daily and carefully, to know how God has dealt faithfully with his people in the past.
- ◆ Read the Bible to know his moral will for us.
- ◆ Be courageous to do all that God requires, regardless of the cost.
- ◆ Be alert to the “idolatrous” values and practices of the culture around you, refuse to adopt any of these sinful ways, and adhere completely to Christ and his revealed will and ways.
- ◆ Do not be surprised when God disciplines you for disobedience.
- ◆ Trust in Christ alone as the only sinless Savior and as the one who will take us to our eternal rest.

Joshua 24

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ Assembling the people at Shechem to renew the covenant, 1; *see Joshua 8:30–35.*
- ◆ The history of Israel’s ancestors, including Terah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his sons, and Esau, and the descent of the Israelites into Egypt, 2–4; *see Genesis 11:27–50:26.*
- ◆ The deliverance of Israel from Egypt by God through the leadership of Moses and Aaron, including the dramatic events of the plagues, the rescue at the Red Sea, and the wandering in the wilderness for forty years, 5–7, 17–18; *see Exodus–Deuteronomy.*
- ◆ God’s gift of Canaan to his people, as promised to Abraham; their victories over various pagan kings; the strange prophecies of Balaam; capture of Jericho, 8–13; *see Numbers 21–24 and Joshua 1–21.*
- ◆ The false gods that their fathers served, 15; *see Ezekiel 20:8, 18.*
- ◆ The necessity to choose between serving the true God and any other so-called god, 14–16, 19–24; *see Matthew 6:24.*
- ◆ “Put away the foreign gods that are among you,” 14, 23; *see Genesis 35:2.*
- ◆ “Incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel,” 23; *see 1 Kings 8:58 and Psalm 119:36.*
- ◆ The use of large stones as memorials to important commitments, 26–27; *see Genesis 41:46–53; and Joshua 4:1–9; 7:26; 8:29, 32; 10:27; 22:26–27.*
- ◆ Death at the age of 110, the age considered by Egyptians to be the ideal life-span of a man, 29; *see Genesis 50:26, where Joseph’s death at the same age is recorded.*
- ◆ Burial of Joseph’s bones in the Promised Land, 32; *see Genesis 50:25.*
- ◆ The plot of land that Jacob purchased from the sons of Hamor, 32; *see Genesis 33:19.*

Its content

- ◆ It consists of the very words of God, 1–13.
- ◆ It includes narratives of miracles to which there were credible eyewitnesses, 7, 17, 31.
- ◆ It also includes covenants between God and his people, which included statutes and laws, 25.
- ◆ Biblical revelation is the written record of what God told his chosen messengers, 26.

Its source: Biblical revelation came from God through his chosen messengers, including Joshua, 1–13.

Its structure: Biblical revelation uses literary structure to communicate theological truths. For example, the stone memorial Joshua erected, 25, was the seventh such monument recorded in the book. Seven indicates completeness, so this shows that God had completely fulfilled his promise to give the people the land.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is omnipresent and thus with his people at any place, 1.
- ◆ He is God (Elohim), Creator and Ruler of the world, 2.
- ◆ He owns all the earth and can give parcels of it to whomever he pleases, 4, 8, 13.
- ◆ He is omnipotent and can exercise wonders to deliver his people, as he did at the Red Sea, 6–7.

His goodness

- ◆ He condescended to dwell with his people and to allow them to assemble “before,” him, that is, in his presence, 1.
- ◆ He is Yahweh, the faithful covenant God of Israel, 2, 23, 24.
- ◆ He chose Abraham and his descendants to be his special people and led them from one place to another until finally bringing them into the Promised Land to dwell as their own possession, 2–13, 17–18.
- ◆ He is holy, that is, entirely separate from us and completely morally pure, 19.
- ◆ He loves his people and is jealous when they turn from him, 19.
- ◆ Being holy, he must punish transgression and sin, 1–20.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Reflect often on God’s gracious dealings in the past with his people, including yourself.
- ◆ Use ceremonies, such as baptisms and weddings, to renew your commitments to God and to his church, especially your spouse.
- ◆ Allow the Lord’s Supper to remind you of the New Covenant in Christ’s blood and our responsibility to receive his grace and reflect his love daily.
- ◆ Fear God alone—reverence, respect, trust, love and obey him, 14.
- ◆ Incline your heart to God and to serving him fully and exclusively, 23.
- ◆ Constantly renounce and forsake all other “gods,” that is, all other claims on your ultimate loyalty, service, trust, and fear, 14–16, 19–20, 23.

JUDGES

Judges 1

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ When we act in obedience to the Lord, he gives us victory over our enemies, 4.
- ◆ God repays evil deeds sooner or later, 8.
- ◆ He intends for his people to cooperate with each other in gaining the inheritance he has promised them as a people, 17.
- ◆ He does not give complete victory all at once, but leaves challenges to his people, to test them and give them opportunities to grow in faith and obedience, 19, 2:2-22

His goodness

- ◆ He guides his people when they ask him for wisdom, 1-2.
- ◆ He rewarded Caleb with the possession of his inheritance, as well as with a son-in-law like him in bravery. He is faithful to his promises, 12, 20.
- ◆ If he sets us in a desert place like Negev, he will also answer our prayers for springs of water to live and even thrive there. 15

Christ

His person: The tribe of Judah had a leading place in conquering the land; this is a type of David and then of Jesus, both descendants of Judah, 8 ff.

The People of God

Their characteristics

- ◆ When God's people follow him, people of other nations and faiths will join them, 16. The Kenites are a type of all Gentile believers who followed them.

- ◆ Some of God's people, like Judah and Joseph's tribes, will have more victory, because they trust and obey; others will only experience defeat.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ In addition to faith, we must obey God's commands to take possession of all he has given us; for us, that means spiritual blessings, such as holiness, joy peace.

Judges 2:1–3:6

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ God sends messengers to rebuke his people for sin, 2:1.
- ◆ If we do not obey, he will withhold victory from us, 2:2–3, 19–23.
- ◆ He will also fulfill his threats to punish disobedience, because of his holiness, 2:20–21.

His goodness

- ◆ He pities those who repent of their sins and cry out for help, 2:18.
- ◆ He is faithful to his covenant promises, even when his people sin, because of his pity, 2:18.

The People of God

Their characteristics

- ◆ Generations of obedient people may be followed by children who do not obey God, 2:7, 10.
- ◆ Even when we sin, we may—and must—repent and renew our relationship with God through sacrifice—though now the sacrifice is already completed, with the death of Jesus. What we offer now is our bodies, 2:5.
- ◆ God's people all too easily worship the gods of the people around them, and suffer as a result, 2:12–13.
- ◆ But God will raise up leaders to bring new victories for his people when they cry to him for help, 2:16.
- ◆ The Book of Judges shows that godly leaders are very important in God's plan, 2:16.
- ◆ God leaves "enemies" for us to fight in order to test our faith and our obedience to him and to learn how to fight in reliance on his strength, 2:22.

- ◆ Children who have not known the hardships of their parents will be given their own hardships, so they can learn to wage war in God's strength, 3:1–4.
- ◆ Living among pagans exposes God's people to temptation to worship their gods; marriage to pagans brings even more temptation, 3:5–6.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Cleave to the Lord in faith and obedience, or we will turn to other gods or the idols of the people around us; that will lead to awful behavior.
- ◆ In other words, our first priority is intimacy with God; only then can we avoid idolatry and iniquity.
- ◆ Be alert to the ways of those around us who don't know God and beware of worshiping their idols.
- ◆ Be alert to the danger of forming close relationships, especially marriage, with non-believer (unless we are already married to one; *see 1 Corinthians 7:10–16*).

Judges 3:7-31

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ When his people forsake him and do evil, he sends various trials to chastise them. Sometimes these consist of enemies who oppress them.
- ◆ If his people again fall away into sin, he will send yet more enemies and oppressors against them.

His goodness

- ◆ When his people cry out for help, he responds to their faith (not their goodness) and sends deliverance to them.
- ◆ God often uses individuals to deliver his people. These people rely on the Holy Spirit to enable them.

The Holy Spirit

His work: In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit sometimes came upon certain people temporarily to give them strength for service. The Spirit did not indwell them as he does believers now, 10.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Expect to be disciplined severely by God if we disobey him.
- ◆ Continue to call out to him for deliverance from our sins and troubles. After a while, perhaps a long while, he will again deliver us.
- ◆ Pray to God to raise up godly men to lead the church back into the ways of God; leaders are still important.
- ◆ Leaders, like all believers, must rely on God alone for strength to serve their people.

Judges 4:1–5:31

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ When we trust and obey God, he can empower us to overcome strong obstacles, 4:15.
- ◆ He uses leaders to save his people, but these leaders are meant to mobilize his people to action, not to act by themselves.
- ◆ When his people rise up to do his will in obedience to his commands, he goes with them, 4:14; 5:4.
- ◆ Any victory won by his people against sin is really won by the Lord, 4:1.
- ◆ Victory is won only when people offer themselves willingly to God, 5:9.
- ◆ He sometimes uses forces of nature to assist his people when they seek to obey him.
- ◆ He eventually punishes wicked people, especially those who oppress his people.

The People of God

Their characteristics

- ◆ When his people go astray, he sometimes uses wicked people to chastise them with harsh rule, 4:1–2.
- ◆ In the Old Testament, five women are called prophetesses, 4:4.
- ◆ Deborah not only spoke God's word but also exercised judicial authority. This shows the low state into which Israel had fallen.
- ◆ It is a shame when a man has to rely on a woman for confidence in doing his job as a leader and in gaining a military victory, 4:8.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Trust that when we see God's people oppressed by sin, he will give us the power to resist Satan and lead his people to spiritual victory.
- ◆ Men ought to take responsibility rather than shirk it.
- ◆ Give God thanks when he does answer our prayers and even sing praises to him for it.

Judges 6

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ There is only one God.
- ◆ He saved Israel and told them to serve him.
- ◆ Other gods are false idols. If we serve them, God will chastise us with oppression to them and those who serve them, 1.
- ◆ Before he would answer their prayer for salvation, God rebuked Israel for sin and called for renewed devotion to him, 8.
- ◆ When we come face to face with God, we will have a sense of awe and even fear, 22.
- ◆ Confrontation with God leads to a further sense of wonder and worship, as well as a sense of his peace, 23–24.
- ◆ After worship comes obedience, which involves destruction of idols. and then sacrificial, costly worship, 25–26.

Note: Salvation does not come without a price.

- ◆ God can work miracles of any sort to prove himself to his people, though we should not ask for them, 36–40.

His power

- ◆ God raised up a leader, to whom he first appeared, assuring him that he was with him, and that he would become a mighty man of valor, though he was in himself very timid, 12.
- ◆ God commanded him to go in his strength, perhaps referring to God's presence and promise. God formally sent him on a mission, 14.
- ◆ God deigned to show him a sign, which in itself included essential elements of worship and service: sacrifice of worship precedes service of warfare, 17–21.

The Holy Spirit

His work: When the Spirit of God comes upon a man, he can then mobilize others for service of God and dangerous encounters with God's enemies, 34–35.

The People of God

Their worship: True worship of God will bring opposition, even from God's people, but some will support us in this, 30–31.

Note: Baal and Astarte represent worship of male and female sex, as well as other powerful forces in this world.

Their characteristics: Some of God's mighty men have been inwardly very timid and afraid, 36–37.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Put away, even destroy, all our idols if we are going to gain spiritual victory or do anything of worth for God.
- ◆ Sacrifice our best to God.
- ◆ Obey his commands, no matter how much we fear to do so.
- ◆ Rely on his strength and go forward in faith.

Judges 7–8

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ God wants to use us in his plan, but in a way that leads to his glory, not ours, 7:2.
- ◆ God is able to bring about his will in a variety of ways, many times in ways that are unexpected by us, 7:21–22.
- ◆ God makes us weak in order to show his strength, 7:4–7.

Mankind

Human nature

- ◆ When leaders succeed, they tend to be seduced by power and success and live for themselves and abuse others, all of Chapter 8.
- ◆ People tend to trust too much in successful leaders, 8:22.
- ◆ Then they tend to abandon both those leaders and their God, 8:34–35.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Learn to trust God to bring victory out of weakness by means other than what we might have thought.
- ◆ Be cautious about trusting in ourselves or in other men or in other gods; these all lead us astray.

Judges 9

Truth

Mankind

Human nature

- ◆ Turning away from God leads to turning away from authority, including one's own parents and siblings, 1.
- ◆ Wicked men do not honor their parents or their parents' peers, 1.
- ◆ Other wicked men all too easily submit to wicked leaders, often because of race or relationship, 3.
- ◆ Ambitious men will stop at nothing to gain power, 5.
- ◆ Honorable men, symbolized by the olive, fig, and grape vine, will refuse to usurp authority, 13.
- ◆ Base and ignoble men will all too easily seek authority and power, 14-15.

Earthly rulers

- ◆ Wickedness will generate more evil, with people fighting against each other for power. Many innocent people will die in the process, 22-57.
- ◆ This passage points to the need for a righteous king. Only Jesus qualified. He now rules in heaven over all the earth and will finally crush all wicked men. See *Psalms 2*.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Speak the truth against evil men when they rise, though we should not organize a rebellion, 7-15.
- ◆ Do not be surprised by the temporary triumph of evil, especially evil rulers. This is a sign of the fallen world in which we live.

Judges 10:1–11:28

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ When God's people forsake him and turn to idolatry, he allows them to suffer oppression, sometimes for a very long time, 10:6–8.
- ◆ Insincere confession of sin does not lead to removal of his discipline, especially after we have often turned away in disobedience, willfully choosing to serve other gods, 10:10–14.

His goodness: When we truly repent and put away our idols, God will pity our distress and come to our aid, 10:16.

Mankind

Our nature: Sometimes, men who have been rejected by family members become "magnets" to other people who are "worthless," that is, not fit for life in normal society. They gather around them rebels and malcontents, 11:1–3.

The People of God

Their characteristics

- ◆ In desperation, God's people sometimes choose leaders who are not really spiritual men, but who seem mighty to save. This time, the people chose someone who had not been "raised up" by God, but who was a warrior. They did not look to God to be their warrior-king, 11:4–11.
- ◆ Leaders can sometimes manifest both faith and foolishness, like Jephthah. He began well, trusting in God's promise to give the people a land, 11:11, 21, 23.
- ◆ Enemies of God's people will often bring false accusations against them, to excuse their attacks and greed, 11:13.
- ◆ God's people must know the Bible well enough to answer false charges, as Jephthah did, 11:15–26.

- ◆ In the end, however, they must call on God himself to demonstrate the truth of their case, 11:27.
- ◆ Those who are intent on evil will not listen to truth, 11:28.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Remember that disobedience brings discipline, sometimes very harsh and hard to bear.
- ◆ Search our hearts to see what hidden sins or idols may be there when we are disciplined for a long time and ask for help to put these away and serve God once again.
- ◆ Be very careful in choosing leaders, religious or secular. Just because a man is powerful doesn't mean he is good or will rule well. A key indicator is the company he has kept since youth.
- ◆ Look to someone to lead us in fighting against sin, 10:18.

Judges 11:29–12:15

Truth

The Holy Spirit

His work: God's Spirit came for a time upon some Old Testament leaders, enabling them to serve God with power and to save his people from their enemies, 11:29, 32–33.

Mankind

Our nature

- ◆ Some people try to make bargains with God by promising things to him if he helps them. They do not understand that God's gifts come to us entirely by faith and need not be repaid with anything other than holiness and praise, 11:30–31. *Note: Vows of this sort are allowed in the Old Testament, but not if they involve sin. See Leviticus 22:18–20. Ordinarily, vows had to be kept. See Deuteronomy 23:21–23 and Psalm 15:4. But rash vows could be invalidated with another sacrifice. See Leviticus 5:4–6.*

The People of God

Their characteristics

- ◆ Jephthah's vow was foolish and ended in human sacrifice, which was forbidden in the Old Testament. *See Leviticus 18:21, 20:2, etc.* Lack of knowledge of the whole Bible can lead people into sin by fulfilling part of it in violation of another part.
- ◆ It is possible that Jephthah's daughter was not killed but kept in perpetual virginity. In either case, her submission to her father was a noble thing, 11:36–37.
- ◆ Virginity before marriage is the expected norm for all people, 11:37.
- ◆ Envy of another's victories and successes can lead to disastrous and self-destructive conflict, 12:1–6.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Trust God to give us his Spirit to empower us to serve him effectively.
- ◆ Study the whole Bible so that we do not misinterpret and misapply one part of it in ignorance and violation of another.
- ◆ Do not keep a promise, if the promise made entails sin, though we must admit our sin in making the rash promise in the first place.
- ◆ In this life, the only binding vow is to our marriage partner. Other promises may be broken, but we must be prepared to pay the price of shame and loss.
- ◆ Pray for wisdom and seek the counsel of others, as well as search the Scriptures, before we make any commitments. We must count the cost.

Judges 13

Truth

Revelation

Its content: In the Old Testament and in the New, major figures sometimes had unusual, even miraculous, births, like Isaac, Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist, and Jesus— especially Jesus. His was the culmination of all that the others pointed towards: the amazing birth of a unique savior, 2–3.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is omniscient, seeing all that we do, 1.
- ◆ He is transcendent and awe–inspiring, 6.
- ◆ He is omniscient and knows what he will do in the future, 3.
- ◆ He is Wonderful, beyond our full understanding or comprehension, though we may know him, 17–18.
- ◆ He is spiritual and therefore does not consume food offerings, 16.
- ◆ He can work marvels to fulfill his saving purposes; barren women giving birth is but one example, 24.

His goodness

- ◆ He is holy and must punish sin; he often uses evil people to do so, 1.
- ◆ He hears our prayers in distress 8–9
- ◆ He accepts the worship of his people, 19–20, 23.
- ◆ He keeps his promises to bless his people, especially his chosen servants, 24.

Christ

His work

- ◆ Christ sometimes appeared to people in the Old Testament as the Angel of the Lord. He may have been a pre–incarnation revelation of Christ, since he is identified with God but took human form, 3, 6, 15–18, 20–23.

- ◆ He sometimes appeared to women before he appeared to men. Mary is the prime example, as well as the women at the empty tomb, 3. *See Luke 24; Matthew 28; Mark 16; and John 20.*
- ◆ He is both God and Man, 6, 8, 10, 11, 19, 22.
- ◆ He was prefigured by Samson, 24. *See Luke 1:80.*

The Holy Spirit

His work

- ◆ The Spirit sometimes moved on Old Testament people to stir them to do great things for God, 25.

The People of God

Their characteristics

- ◆ God-chosen servants will be unusual from the beginning, even as children, 24.
- ◆ They must also have different lifestyles, marked by strict self-discipline and self-denial, as well as lifelong devotion to the mission God has given them, 5, 7, 14.
- ◆ The Spirit sometimes moved on Old Testament people to stir them to do great things for God, 25.

Spiritual Beings

Angels: The Angel mentioned above, like God himself, could not be fully understood or controlled; he issued commands and received worship, 3–5, 13–14, 16–20.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Do not despair of “hopeless” situations; God can intervene to bring new life and joy.

- ◆ Manoah's example is both good and bad: Good, in that he sought further revelations of God and that he sought more fellowship with God, he was also willing to worship, and he believed what the Angel said. Bad, in that he wasn't content with what the Angel had told his wife but kept asking for more clarification when they had already been given enough instructions. We should obey the light we have rather than seeking more first.
- ◆ If God's Spirit begins to move us in a certain direction, we should pay careful attention.

Judges 14–15

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is sovereign over all human action; he can use even our worst sins to fulfill his purposes, 14:4.
- ◆ He is all-powerful; he split the rock and caused water to come out for Samson, as he had done for his people in the wilderness, 15:19. *See Exodus 17:1–7.*

His goodness

- ◆ He is gracious to his people; his Spirit can use the worst sinners to fulfill his purposes, 14:6, 19; 15:14.
- ◆ He hears and answers the prayers of his people, 15:18–19.

The Holy Spirit

His person: As the Spirit of God, 15:14, fully divine, he has the power to enable men to do great exploits of strength, 14:6, 19.

Sin

Its expressions

- ◆ Samson violated God's law by wanting to marry a Philistine, and he violated tradition by demanding his own choice rather than that of his parents, 14:3.
- ◆ After deceiving the Philistine men, Samson wantonly killed innocent people to fulfill a promise, 14:19.
- ◆ In vengeance, he ruined the fields of the Philistines, 15:1–5.
- ◆ They burned the innocent woman and her father, 15:6.

Its consequences

- ◆ The wages of sin is death. *See Romans 6:23.*
- ◆ This marriage ended in death for many people, including the wife whom he had loved, 14–15.

Note: Women often feel insecure about being loved by their man. They often complain about not being loved. This drives the man crazy until he finally does something to try to prove his love. Frequently, this poorly motivated action (not real love but impatience, anger, frustration) leads to more trouble, 14:15–20. Sadly, the woman loses the love of the man in the process, which is what she had feared to begin with.

Marriage

Its nature and purpose: For one of God's people to marry a non-believer is not only wrong, but risky, since it inevitably results in a clash of loyalties and value systems.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Christians should not marry non-Christians. This does not apply to those who are already married when they believe in Christ.
- ◆ Even when we sin, we can—and should—repent and ask God to supply his Spirit to us to enable us to do our duty.
- ◆ Do not fret about the consequences of our sins, though they will be painful; God is still in control and can use our sins to bring about his purposes, even though we suffer many consequences of our disobedience.

Judges 16

Truth

God

His goodness: God's grace to Samson is shown in his final act of vindication and the victory over his enemies, the Philistines.

Christ

His person: In his death, Samson prefigures Christ, who also gained a great victory over Satan through his self-sacrifice on the Cross for our redemption.

The Holy Spirit

His work: There comes a time when God's Spirit just leaves a person in the Old Testament, after constant disobedience. In the New Testament, true believers are promised the enduring presence of the Spirit, but the sense of his presence is dependent upon faith.

Mankind

Our attributes

- ◆ Most men have a very strong sex drive and will do almost anything to satisfy it, 1, 4-17.
- ◆ Men are attracted to a woman's beauty; Samson "saw" a harlot, 1.
- ◆ Sometimes a man can even "love" a woman enough to form a close relationship with her outside of marriage, though it is not clear whether Delilah was also a prostitute, 4-5.
- ◆ Some men of outstanding ability or strength become so proud and confident that they repeatedly test the limits of their strength or ability, in order to demonstrate their prowess, 6-20.
- ◆ When a woman whom he "loves" keeps badgering him to show how much he "loves" her—as women often do—a man will do almost anything to prove to her that he does "love" her; he will even violate common sense and his own best interests to show this to her, 6-20.

- ◆ Relationships with people of the other sex who are not members of the people of God expose us to unusual temptations and dangers, as Samson's repeated involvements with Philistine women exemplify.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Avoid trusting in our own ability and strength and not in God.
- ◆ Avoid entanglements with the other sex, except for our marriage partner.
- ◆ Avoid close relationships with non-believers.
- ◆ Call out to God in our hour of trial, even if we have previously disobeyed him. Perhaps he will hear our prayer and do great things for his glory.

Judges 17-18

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages building upon earlier ones:

- ◆ Hill country of Ephraim, 17:1; this is where the tabernacle was located, in Shiloh; *see Judges 10:31 and 1 Samuel 1:3.*
- ◆ Hiring a silversmith to make a carved image for worship, 17:4; *see Isaiah 40:19.*
- ◆ An ephod for the priest to wear, 17:5; 18:14, 17, 18, 20; *see Judges 8:27; and Exodus 28:5-14.*
- ◆ Household idols, for purposes of divination, 17:5; 18:14, 17, 18, 20; *see Judges 8:27; Genesis 31:19, 30; Ezekiel 21:21; and Hosea 3:4.*
- ◆ “There was no king in Israel,” 17:6; 18:1; *see Judges 19:1.*
- ◆ “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes,” 6; *see Judges 14:3; 21:25; and Deuteronomy 12:8.*
- ◆ Levites, 17:7; *see Genesis 29:34; 35:22-26; and Exodus 32:25-29.*
- ◆ The tribe of Dan, 18:1; *see Judges 13:2, 24; Numbers 1:39; 10:25; Joshua 13:3; and Joshua 19:47.*

Its brutal honesty: Biblical revelation candidly records the sins of God’s people, as in these two chapters.

God

His greatness: He is LORD, Yahweh, the covenant God of his people, 17:2, 3, 13.

Mankind

Our created nature: Humans are inherently religious, seeking to worship something or someone that will give them blessings, 17:3.

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Dishonoring one’s mother, 17:2; *see Exodus 20:12.*
- ◆ Stealing, 17:2; 18:17

- ◆ Making or using any image for worship, 17:3–4; 18:31; *see Exodus 20:3–6; and Deuteronomy 27:15.*
- ◆ Installing someone other than a biblically stipulated person as a priest, 17:5; 18:14–26; *see Exodus 29:9; Numbers 16:1–40; and 1 Kings 12:31.*
- ◆ Manipulating religious people for one’s own ends, 17:10
- ◆ Allowing oneself to be used as a religious person for others’ selfish and idolatrous ends, 17:11; 18:14–26
- ◆ Imagining that false worship will bring blessing from God, 17:13
- ◆ Destruction of innocent people, 18:27

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Do not be surprised to see theft and lying even in the home.
- ◆ Do not be surprised when God’s people engage in idolatry.
- ◆ Do not be surprised when wealthy seek to manipulate God through religious articles and personnel.
- ◆ Do not call anyone a “priest” or a “father” in a religious sense, 17:10; 18:19. *See Matthew 23:9 and 1 Peter 2:9.* All believers are priests unto God now. *See Revelation 1:6.*
- ◆ Do not be surprised when religious personnel sell their services for ungodly purposes.
- ◆ Do not be surprised when nations, even those who nominally believe in God, attack, conquer, and destroy each other. The frequent religious wars in Europe testify to this sad fact.
- ◆ Thank God for giving us Jesus, a priest who is “holy, harmless, and undefiled.” *See Hebrews 7:26.*

Judges 19

Truth

Note: This horrible story shows how wicked certain people in Israel had become. After worship had been perverted, their hearts were turned to all sorts of abominations.

Sin

It includes

- ◆ All of the actions of the people in this passage
 - The Levite should not have had a concubine.
 - She should not have been unfaithful.
 - Her father should not have kept her and her husband for so long, eating and drinking.
 - The Levite should not have been so detained by bodily pleasures.
 - The Levite should not have started out so late in the day.
 - The men of the city should have welcomed the Levite into their home, rather than leaving him and his party in the plaza.
 - They should not have desired to know a man carnally—homosexual sex is an abomination in the Levitical law.
 - The old man should not have offered her and his daughter to those wicked men.
 - The Levite should not have offered his concubine to them to save himself.
 - The men should not have used and abused her unto death.
 - The Levite should not have treated her so heartlessly.
 - This all shows that when worship is perverted, and when good government (a “king”) is absent, the evil heart of man will reveal itself. The first to suffer are the women, who will be used and abused.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Be aware that people around us are capable of terrible crimes.

- ◆ Sexual passion is strong and be perverted easily.
- ◆ Guard against self-indulgence of every kind, including food and drink, as well as sex outside of marriage.
- ◆ Do not expose our women to danger and harm, even if it means putting ourselves into harm's way to protect them. The Levite was a selfish person, obviously, not willing to have a lawful wife, or taking another woman aside from his wife. He put himself first constantly.

Note: Jesus' mother and father were similarly treated in Bethlehem many years later. He knows our sense of homelessness. He, too, was abandoned by his disciples, as well as Herod, to be cruelly treated by wicked men. He knows the feeling of betrayal and abandonment.

Judges 20–21

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness

- ◆ “From Dan to Beersheba,” that is, from north to south, 20:1; *see 1 Samuel 3:20; and 2 Samuel 3:10; 24:2.*
- ◆ Burnt offerings and peace offerings, 20:26; *see Exodus 29:38–42; and Leviticus 1:1–17; 3:1–17.*
- ◆ The ark of the covenant, 20:27; *see Exodus 37:1–9.*
- ◆ “There was no king in Israel,” 21:25; *see Exodus 17:6; 18:1; 19:1.*

Its contents

- ◆ Biblical revelation includes accounts of seeking and receiving particular guidance about what to do, with God usually speaking through a priest in response, 20:18–28. *See Numbers 27:21.*
- ◆ Biblical revelation also includes frank narratives about the sins of God’s people, as in most of the stories in the book of Judges, including these two chapters.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is omniscient and omnipresent and can thus hear his people’s prayers and respond with guidance based on comprehensive knowledge and infinite wisdom, 20:18, 23, 28; 21:8.
- ◆ He is omnipotent, able to give victory to his people, 20:25.

His goodness

- ◆ He is Yahweh, the covenant God of his people Israel, 20:23, 27, 28; 21:3.
- ◆ He condescended to dwell among his people in the tabernacle, the “house” of God, 20:18, 23, 26. *See Exodus 35–36.*
- ◆ He answered his people’s prayers for guidance, 20:18, 23, 28.
- ◆ He instituted a system of sacrifices so his people could come before him in worship and prayer, 20:26.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured here in

- ◆ The burnt offering and peace offering, 20:26; 21:4.
- ◆ The mercy seat on top of the ark of the covenant, 27; *see Romans 3:25, where “propitiation” is the same word for “mercy seat.”*

Mankind

Our nature and characteristics

- ◆ We are created to be married, under normal circumstances, 21:1, 7, 14.
- ◆ The father has a responsibility to “give” his daughter in marriage, 1:1, 7, 18, 22.

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Murder, 5
- ◆ Rape, 5
- ◆ Refusing to accept responsibility for the sins of those in some ways related to us or under our authority, but defending them instead, 20:13–14
- ◆ Doing what is right in our own eyes, 21:25

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Ask God’s guidance before taking important actions, 20:18, 23, 26, 27.
- ◆ Fast and pray when we are defeated, 20:26.
- ◆ Come to God on the basis of the sacrifice he has made for us in Christ, 20:26; *see Judges 9:12–15, 28; 10:19–23.*
- ◆ Recognize and honor the authority and privilege of fathers to “give” their daughters away in marriage.
- ◆ Fast and pray and weep when the people of God suffer great loss, 21:2–3, 15.
- ◆ Keep the promises we have made to God, including our marriage vows, 21:5, 18.
- ◆ Care for the welfare even of those who were our enemies, 21:15–16; *see Matthew 5:43–48.*
- ◆ Thank God for giving us Jesus, our great Shepherd–King, to guide and govern us in righteousness; *see Psalm 23.*

RUTH *(not currently available)*

1 SAMUEL *(not currently available)*

2 SAMUEL *(not currently available)*

1 KINGS

1 Kings 1

Truth

Revelation

Its nature and contents

- ◆ Almost one-half of the Bible consists of historical narratives: Genesis–Esther, Matthew–Acts (490 pages in my Bible, out of 1095 pages).
- ◆ These narratives are noted for their accuracy as history, In contrast to all other historical documents from the ancient world.
- ◆ One major feature of these narratives is the honest and candid portrayal of the sins of the people of God. Except for Jesus, there is no fully righteous person.
- ◆ From the narratives, and especially the parts of the Pentateuch that reveal God's moral law, we learn God's will for us as his creatures; what is right and what is wrong; the benefits of obedience and the terrible cost of disobedience; and the necessity of faith and trust in God, including the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ◆ We also see types and shadows of God's plan of salvation through the person and work of Christ.
- ◆ One major type is that of David, God's chosen king for his people.
- ◆ Another type is the sacrificial system, with its offerings, temple (tabernacle) and priesthood, to be fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus; see the Letter to the Hebrews especially.
- ◆ A third type is the prophetic office, fulfilled finally in Jesus Christ.
- ◆ All these three types appear in this first chapter of 1 Kings: David the king; Nathan the prophet; Abiathar the high priest.
- ◆ *Note: In this passage, these three men are all flawed (remember how Bathsheba got into the royal family? 2 Samuel 11); they point to our flawless Savior Jesus.*

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is omnipotent, sovereign over all the world and all events; he is able to use our sin to advance his purposes. For example, Solomon, the child of an illicit union, becomes king, and God uses Nathan to foil Adonijah's plot.
- ◆ He is God, Elohim, the creator of the universe, 30, 36, 48.
- ◆ He is Yahweh, the eternally existing one (Yahweh is usually translated LORD in English Bibles, following the Greek translation of the Old Testament that used "Adonai" Lord, instead of God's personal name, which the Jews had come to consider too sacred to be pronounced aloud), 29.

His goodness

- ◆ He is Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel and of David, his chosen servant, 30, 36, 48. *See Exodus 34:6 and 2 Samuel 7.*
- ◆ He redeemed David, his chosen king, from all his enemies, 29.
- ◆ He allowed David to appoint Solomon, son of Bathsheba, as his successor, 30.
- ◆ He was constantly "with" David, as he was with all his chosen servants and people, 37. *See Genesis 28:15; Isaiah 43:10; and Matthew 28:20.*

Christ

His person and His work prefigured

- ◆ As noted above, Christ in his threefold office of prophet, priest, and king is prefigured in Nathan, Abiathar and Zadok, and David and Solomon.
- ◆ As prophet, he speaks through his chosen servants to his church. *See Revelation 1:1, 19; 2:1-3:22.*
- ◆ As risen king, he is even now seated on his throne. *See Hebrews 8:1; Revelation 5:6.*
- ◆ As priest, he intercedes for us before God the Father. *See Romans 8:34; and Hebrews 4:14-16.*

The Holy Spirit

His prefiguration: He is prefigured in the anointing of kings, 39, 48. *See Isaiah 62:1; Luke 3:22; and 1 Corinthians 1:21-22.*

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Physical intimacy with someone who is not one's spouse, 1–4
Note: Bathsheba was not David's first or only wife, but became his wife after he had committed adultery with her and had her husband killed. See 2 Samuel 11:1–27.
- ◆ Exalting oneself, 5; *see Matthew 23:12.*
- ◆ Dishonoring one's parents, 5
Note: David had clearly indicated that he had chosen Solomon as his successor, 13, 17, 30. See 1 Chronicles 22:9.
- ◆ Rebellion against authority, 5–10; *see Romans 13:1–7; and 1 Peter 2:13–17.*
Note: According to the Bible, armed rebellion is wrong.
- ◆ Failure to discipline one's children, 6; *see Proverbs 19:18 and Ephesians 6:4.*

Its consequences

- ◆ Multiple wives and marriages complicate family life and often lead to strife among children of different parents.
- ◆ Pride comes before destruction. *See Proverbs 16:18.*
- ◆ Dishonoring one's parents leads to frustration and failure; this is the reverse of the promise for obedient children. *See Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:1–3.*
- ◆ Rebellion against authority may bring ruin. *See Proverbs 24:21–22.*

The People of God

Our fallen state

- ◆ Sadly, both in the Old Testament and in the church, God's people have been guilty of awful sins.
- ◆ This sin is not limited to obviously wicked people like Adonijah, but is found among God's chosen servants, like David and Abiathar, and like too many Christians have caused discord in the church through pride, ambition, and strife.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Avoid indulging the sinful weaknesses of those in authority, even when they are old, 1-2.
- ◆ Expect some people to rebel against authority.
- ◆ Refuse to join in rebellions or revolutions.
- ◆ Be alert to danger and do what we can to forestall wicked plans of others.
- ◆ Honor our promises to others, as David did to Bathsheba.
- ◆ Thank God for giving us Jesus as our one true and eternal King.

1 Kings 2

Truth

Revelation

Its contents: Biblical revelation includes

- ◆ Historical narratives, like this book of Kings.
- ◆ The Law (Teaching) of Moses, that is, the Pentateuch; within that are the statutes, commandments, judgments, and testimonies, 3–4.
- ◆ Words spoken or written by God's servants the prophets, like Nathan, who conveyed God's promise to David, 24; *see 2 Samuel 7:11–17*.
- ◆ Words spoken by God to his servants, like the prophecy of punishment on the house of the priest Eli, 20; *see 1 Samuel 2:31–35*.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is sovereign over the universe, and can thus make promises to his people, including his promise to David, which shows that God holds authority over all human authority.
- ◆ He is eternal, and is thus the living God who can and will fulfill his promises.

His goodness

- ◆ He is gracious, revealing his will and his ways, as well as his promises, to his people through chosen servants like Moses and the prophets; see the notes above.
- ◆ He is holy, commanding obedience from his people, 3.
- ◆ He is faithful, keeping his promises to his people, including his covenant with David to establish an eternal dynasty, 24, 45, and to give it peace, 33..
- ◆ He kindly instituted a system of worship, including sacrifices, the tabernacle where he would meet with the high priest, the altar of sacrifice, and a priesthood, so that his people could have fellowship with him despite their sins, 26–29.

- ♦ He is righteous and just, and will repay evil deeds with appropriate punishment, 32, 44.

Christ

His person: As King, he is prefigured and typified by King David, 4, and by Solomon, David's son, 12.

His work: When he returns, he will repay his unrepentant enemies with eternal judgment, 5–6, 8–9, 13–46; *see Revelation 19:11–16.*

Sin

It includes

- ♦ Ruthless taking of life, 5, 32; *see 2 Samuel 3:27, 39; 18:5, 12, 14.*
- ♦ Cursing those in authority—or anyone, for that matter, 8–9; *see 2 Samuel 16:5–13; Matthew 5:44; and Romans 12:14.*
- ♦ Seeking power and position that does not belong to us, 13–24
- ♦ Desertion (defection) from our legitimate obligations and leaders, 28
- ♦ Seeking God's protection when one has forfeited the right to that protection, 28–29
- ♦ Breaking a promise made before God, 42

The People of God

Their marks

- ♦ Belief in, and obedience to, God's written revelation, including the moral law recorded in the Old Testament, 3
- ♦ A mixture of faithful and unfaithful servants of God; indeed, among us there is no one who is fully righteous before God; *see Psalm 5:9–10; 143:2; Romans 3:1–20, 23; and 1 John 1:9.*
- ♦ Church discipline that removes unrepentant open sinners from the fellowship; *see Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:7–13; and 2 John 9–11.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Read the Old Testament histories, both to understand the background of the Psalms and Prophets and the New Testament, as well as to understand how God deals with his people and with the nations.
- ◆ Read the Pentateuch—the Torah—to know God’s will and ways for us, 3.
Note: In particular, Deuteronomy forms the major source of themes and even literary features of the historical books.
- ◆ Reward loyalty and faithful service, 7, 26; see *1 Samuel 22:23; 23:6.*
- ◆ Beware of people who pretend to want one thing but really wants something much greater, 13–25.
- ◆ Hold people to their promises, 42–46.
Note: These promises include marriage vows, which should be kept.

1 Kings 3

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness

- ◆ Conducting worship to God and, often multiple pagan deities, at high places, 2; *see 1 Kings 19:10, 14; Leviticus 26:30–31; Numbers 33:52; Deuteronomy 7:5; 12:3; and 1 Samuel 9:12.*
- ◆ God's disapproval of worshiping at multiple high places; *see 2 Kings 17:7–18; 21:2–9; 23:4–25.*
- ◆ Worshiping God at Gibeon, where the tabernacle of God once was placed, 4; *see Joshua 9:3–10:15; 1 Samuel 4:11–12; 1 Chronicles 21:29; and 2 Chronicles 1:2–6.*
- ◆ “Keep My decrees and commands,” 14; *see 1 Kings 11:38; and Leviticus 18:5, 26; 19:37; 20:22.*

Its source: Revelation from God came to his people through

- ◆ The Old Testament Scriptures, starting with the Pentateuch, the books of Moses, 3, 14
- ◆ Dreams given to selected servants of God, 5; *see Genesis 20:3–7.*

Its illumination: Direct, authoritative revelation from God, as recorded in Scripture, is to be distinguished from *illumination*, by which God gives his faithful people an understanding heart and mind to comprehend what he has revealed and to apply it to daily life, 12, 16–28.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is omnipresent, able to be at any place at any time, 5.
- ◆ He possesses all things and can bestow them upon whom he will, 5, 12, 13.
- ◆ He has power over life and death, and can lengthen or shorten our days on earth, 14.

His goodness

- ◆ He graciously deigned to dwell among his people, first in the tabernacle, and then in the temple—"house"—built by Solomon in Jerusalem, 1, 2, 4.
- ◆ He was kind to David, first by choosing him and his descendants to rule his people, and then by giving him a son to sit on his throne, 8. *See 2 Samuel 7:8–16.*
- ◆ He is full of mercy, righteousness, and kindness, 6.
- ◆ He graciously chose the descendants of Abraham to be his special people, 8. *See Genesis 12:1–3.*
- ◆ He kindly instituted a sacrificial system, whereby his people could, by offerings, come to him and have fellowship with him, 15.

Christ

His person

- He is the heir of David that God promised to give his people as an eternal king, 6. *See 2 Samuel 7:8–17; and Matthew 1:1.*
- He is the Wisdom of God incarnate, prefigured in Solomon, 9, 12, 16–28. *See 1 Corinthians 1:30; and Colossians 3:2–3.*
- But he is greater than Solomon, as being the eternal Son of God. *See Matthew 12:42.*

Mankind

Our nature: We are naturally and always worshipers of something or someone, 2–3.

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Having more than one wife, 1; *see 1 Kings 14:21, 31; 11:1–3; Genesis 2:24–25; and Deuteronomy 17:17.*
- ◆ Entering into close alliances, including marriage, with non-believers, 1; *see 1 Kings 11:1–8; Exodus 34:11–16; Deuteronomy 7:1–6; Joshua 23:11–13; 1 Corinthians 7:39; and 2 Corinthians 6:14–18.*

- ♦ Worshiping in ways not sanctioned by God; in this case, building altars on high places used by the pagans for worship, 2–3; *see Deuteronomy 12:1–7*. Before the temple was built in Jerusalem, God apparently allowed his people to worship him at some high places, but after the construction of the temple, he did not.

Salvation

Its benefits

- ♦ The privilege of praying to God, 5; *see Matthew 6:5–15; 7:7–11; and John 15:7*.
- ♦ The gift of wisdom when we ask for it, 9, 12, 28; *see James 1:5*.
- ♦ The privilege of worshiping the true God, 15; *see John 4:24; 17:3; Romans 12:1–2; and 1 Corinthians 14:26–40*.

The People of God

Their identity

- ♦ In the Old Testament, the people of God were
 - The descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel; *see Genesis 12:1–3*.
 - Chosen by God out of all the nations, 8; *see Deuteronomy 7:6–8*.
 - A great, that is, numerous people, according to God’s promise to Abraham, 15; *see Genesis 15:4–5*.
- ♦ In the New Testament, the people of God are
 - All those who truly believe in and follow Jesus Christ; *see Acts 2:5, where “devout men” refers to God-fearing Gentiles; Romans 3:20–4:25; 9:6–13, 22–33; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 3:22–4:7; Ephesians 2:20–22; and Revelation 7:9–17*.
 - Those Christians chosen (elected) by God, like ancient Israel; *see Ephesians 1:4*.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Avoid the sins noted above.
- ◆ Flee all sorts of idolatry, including the “worship” of anyone or anything but God in our hearts.
- ◆ Love God, 3.
- ◆ Ask God for the power to obey all his revealed will in the New Testament, 3, 14.
- ◆ Thank God for all his mercies to us, 6.
- ◆ Ask God for wisdom to do his will and benefit others, 9.
- ◆ Worship God with all we have, 15; *see Romans 12:1–2*.

1 Kings 4

Truth

Revelation

Its nature and content

- ◆ Biblical revelation includes historical records that are true and accurate, as archaeology has repeatedly confirmed.
- ◆ The presence of names indicates God's value upon individuals; it also fills out the narratives, 2–19; 31.
- ◆ In particular, the inclusion of the names of women shows God's recognizing them as equally created in his image, even though they usually played a less important public role than did men, 15.

Its cumulative fullness

- ◆ The innumerable population of Israel, 20; *see 1 Kings 3:8; Genesis 15:5; 22:17; 2 Samuel 17:11; Isaiah 10:22; Jeremiah 33:22; Hosea 1:10; and Revelation 7:9.*
- ◆ Their enjoyment of peace and prosperity, symbolized by eating and drinking and sitting under one's vine and fig tree, 20, 25; *see Micah 4:4 and John 1:48.*
- ◆ The extent of Solomon's reign, 21, 24; *see Genesis 15:18 and Psalm 72:11.*
- ◆ Israel's enjoyment of peace (Hebrew *shalom*, signifying full-orbed peace, fruitfulness, and flourishing), 24; *see 1 Chronicles 22:9.*
- ◆ Thousands of horses, 26; this violated God's command; *see Deuteronomy 17:16.*
- ◆ Solomon's army and taxation recall Samuel's warnings to the people when they asked for a king, 26–28; *1 Samuel 8:11–18.*
- ◆ Wise men of the East and of Egypt, 30; *see Genesis 41:8; Exodus 7:11; Isaiah 19:11; Acts 7:22; and Matthew 2:1–12.*
- ◆ "He spoke . . . proverbs," 32; *see the Book of Proverbs, many of which come from Solomon.*
- ◆ "He spoke of trees, animals, birds, creeping things," 33; *see Proverbs 11:30; 27:18; 30:19, 24–31.*

Its historical setting

- ◆ The description of Solomon's administrative arrangements parallels similar imperial bureaucracies in the Ancient Middle East, 2–19.
- ◆ The comparison of Solomon's wisdom with that of the wise men of Mesopotamia ("the East") and of Egypt recalls the ancient wisdom traditions of these two regions, which included sayings about morality and prudence as well as parables taken from nature.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He rules the universe as King and indirectly through human rulers, 1–19. *See Psalm 103:19 and Romans 13:1–6.*
- ◆ He has authority over all the earth and can give parcels of it to whomever he pleases, 21.
- ◆ He owns everything and can abundantly supply all the needs of his people, 22–23.
- ◆ He is infinitely wise and can grant wisdom to his people, 29–30. *See Proverbs 2:6–7.*

His goodness

- ◆ He kindly instituted a sacrificial system for Israel, including priests, altars, and sacrifices, so that they could worship him despite their sins, 2, 4, 5.
- ◆ He keeps his promises, including his promise to Abraham that his descendants would be very numerous, 20, and his promise to David that his son would sit on his throne and rule over a large kingdom, 21.

Christ

His person

- ◆ He is prefigured in Solomon the king, 1. *See Psalm 2:6 and Matthew 2:2.*
- ◆ Like Solomon, only infinitely more, he possesses all wisdom, 29–34. *See Luke 11:31; John 8:1–12; and Colossians 2:3.*

His work

- ◆ Like Solomon, he governs his people through men chosen and appointed as officers in the church, especially deacons and elders, 2–19. *See Acts 30:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:1–3; Titus 1:5–9; and 1 Peter 5:1–5.*
- ◆ Like Solomon, he draws people from all nations to come to him for wisdom that leads to life, 34. *See Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15; John 12:32 (where “all” refers to people of all sorts, from all nations); Acts 2:5–11; and Revelation 7:9.*

Mankind

Our government

- ◆ Hierarchical government is part of God’s created order (as seen above) and reflects his sovereignty cover all things, 1–25.
- ◆ At its best, good government provides peace, safety, and opportunities for productive labor leading to abundance provision for our physical needs, 25.
- ◆ In our fallen state, government ineluctably tends toward increasing domestic centralization and a growing bureaucracy (1–19), foreign expansion (21, 24; though in this case it was authorized by God), special privileges for those who govern (22, 27), a growing military (26), and taxes for the governed (21, 27), as well as, eventually, luxury and corruption at the top (see 7:1–12).

Note: Some commentators observe that Solomon’s administrative districts did not always coincide with the tribal boundaries set by Moses and Joshua by God’s revelation, and thus paved the way for the revolt of the northern tribes under Rehoboam.

The Last Things

Christ’s return: When Christ returns, he will usher in an eternal kingdom that infinitely surpasses the glorious realm and rule of Solomon. *See Revelation 21:1–22:5.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for keeping his promises to David by giving him a son who would rule over a great kingdom and enjoy even more glory than he did.
- ◆ Obey our earthly rulers.

- ◆ Beware of increasing the size and scope of government.
- ◆ Be careful not to seek administrative “efficiency” at the expense of long-standing custom, boundaries, and loyalties.
- ◆ Wisely delegate authority, as Solomon did.
- ◆ Seek wisdom from above, as Solomon did.
- ◆ Thank God for sending Jesus, the one greater than Solomon, as our eternal ruler and King.
- ◆ Eagerly await the coming of Christ to establish his peaceable and eternal kingdom on earth.

1 Kings 5

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness

- ◆ Hiram, king of Tyre, 1; *see 2 Samuel 5:11.*
- ◆ God's promise to David that his son would build the house (temple) of God, 5; *see 2 Samuel 7:13; 1 Chronicles 22:10; and 2 Chronicles 6:9.*
- ◆ The "stones" for God's house are precious, 17; *see Revelation 21:19–21.*

God

His greatness: He is King over all nations, and has the authority to subject one nation to another, 3.

His goodness

- ◆ He is Yahweh, the covenant God of his people Israel, 4, 5.
- ◆ He deigns to become the personal god of individuals, 4, 5.
- ◆ He condescended to dwell among his people, first in the tabernacle, and then in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem; this was his "house," 3, 5.
- ◆ He kindly revealed his personal name, Yahweh, to his people, a name which referred to all his attributes and thus represented him personally, 5.
- ◆ He revealed himself to chosen individuals, 5.
- ◆ He fulfilled his promise to set David's son Solomon on his throne after him, 5. *See 2 Samuel 7:12.*

Christ

His person

- ◆ He is the final son of David, to whom God's promise to David through Samuel ultimately refers, 5. *See Matthew 1:1 and Romans 1:3.*
- ◆ He is the "house," that is, the temple or dwelling place, of God. *See John 2:19–21 and Ephesians 2:19–22.*

His work

- ◆ He is the one in whom God gives spiritual rest now and eternal rest later, 4. *See Matthew 11:28–30; Hebrews 4:1–16; and Revelation 6:11; 14:13.*
- ◆ He is building God’s “house,” that is, the church, in which God dwells by his Spirit, 5. *See Ephesians 4:11–16.*
- ◆ He brings peace between Jews and Gentiles, 12. *See Ephesians 2:11–22.*

Mankind

Our government: In our fallen condition, rulers often force their subjects to participate in public works projects, 13. *See 1 Kings 5:4–6; 9:15.* This policy often creates resentment and even rebellion. *See 1 Kings 12:1–18.*

Note: In modern countries, leaders achieve the same result by levying high taxes, so that people have to work several months a year just to earn money to pay their taxes, which finance public works and social services.

Note: Solomon also used laborers from conquered peoples who lived in his kingdom, 15.

The People of God

Their identity

- ◆ In the passage, God’s people, who are now the church, is/are prefigured by the temple that Solomon built. *See 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Peter 2:5.*
- ◆ As in Solomon’s building of the temple, so now God is using both Jews and Gentiles to build a temple composed of all sorts of people.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Like Solomon, give ourselves to the building up of God’s house, that is, the Body of Christ, the church; no matter how great the cost to ourselves. *See Ephesians 4:11–16, 29.*
- ◆ Pay workers what is due to them, 6.
- ◆ Use things supplied by pagans for the building of the church, while being careful to avoid syncretism; these could include language, buildings, technology, etc.,

- ◆ Thank God for sending Jesus to be our peace.
- ◆ Thank God for the immense privilege of being part of his temple, the church.
- ◆ Thank God for giving us Gentiles membership in the household of God.

1 Kings 6:1–7:12

Truth

Revelation

Its historical setting and nature: Much of the Bible purports to be accurate history, a true record of what took place.

- ◆ Fourth year of Solomon: From a variety of biblical and archaeological sources, we know that this was 966 B.C.
- ◆ Thus, the number 480, like other numbers for years in 1&2 Kings, is to be taken literally, and refers to the time since the Exodus, which would then be 1446. This date correlates with the statement of Jephthah in Judges 11:26 that Israel had lived in the land for 300 years in his time. *See Acts 13:17–20; and Galatians 3:16–17.*

Note: Many scholars, including some evangelicals, assert that the names of the store cities mentioned in Exodus 1:11 and other evidences from archaeology point to a later date for the Exodus, 1290–1225 B.C. This theory contradicts the clear statements of Scripture, however, and the other “evidences” can be explained in other ways.

- ◆ The overall architectural structure of the temple and surrounding complex of royal buildings reflects both the structure of the tabernacle as revealed by God to Moses and prevailing architectural patterns at that time in the Ancient Near East.
- ◆ The dimensions of the temple were double those of the tabernacle, 6:2–6. *See Exodus 26:1–25.*

God

His greatness

- ◆ As King of the universe and Savior of his people, he has the authority to command obedience to all his laws, 12.
- ◆ As King, he has the authority to decide who will reign over his people – indeed, all peoples – on earth, 12. *See 2 Samuel 7:13.*
- ◆ As Spirit, he is omnipresent, and can be in all places at the same time, as well as locally among his people, 13.

- ◆ As Savior, he “owns” his people Israel, and now the church, whom he rescued from Egypt and brought into the Promised Land, 13.
- ◆ He is eternal, and thus can promise to be with his people and not reject them forever, 13.

His goodness

- ◆ He graciously condescended to dwell among his people Israel, first in the tabernacle and then in the temple – “house” – that Solomon built, 6:1, 13.
- ◆ He graciously revealed his will and his ways to Israel through Moses, 6:12.
- ◆ He graciously promised to give David an heir to his throne and an everlasting dynasty, 6:12. *See 2 Samuel 7:13.*
- ◆ He promised never to forsake his people, 6:13. *See Deuteronomy 31:6.*
- ◆ He kept his promise to endow Solomon with great wealth and influence, as reflected in his royal place and administrative buildings, 6:1–7:12. *See 1 Kings 3:13.*

Christ

His work

- ◆ As the incarnate Son of God, he dwelt – literally, “pitched his tent,” or “tabernacled” – among us during his early life and ministry, 6:13. *See John 1:14.*
- ◆ Through his Spirit, he dwells amidst his people now, 13. *See Matthew 28:20 and Ephesians 2:21, where “the Lord” refers to Jesus.*

Mankind

Kings: Kings and other rulers tend to want to live in grand houses and to build grand public buildings. Though there is no censure of Solomon for taking longer to build his house, the opening statement of chapter seven does strike the reader forcefully.

Sin

It includes: Intermarriage between God's people and pagans, 8; though, again, Solomon is not here explicitly censured for marrying Pharaoh's daughter, readers would remember God's prohibition of such alliances, and this mention of Pharaoh's daughter prepares us for later statements criticizing Solomon for this action, 7:8; *see 1 Kings 11:1-8; Exodus 34:11-16; Deuteronomy 7:1-6; Joshua 23:11-13; 1 Corinthians 7:39; and 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.*

The Last Things

Christ's return: When Christ returns, he will usher in a new heaven and new earth, in which the new Jerusalem will be the new and eternal dwelling place of God. The beautiful and costly construction and furnishings look forward to this temple, 6:14-36. *See Revelation 21:9-21.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for dwelling among his people, the church, even now.
- ◆ Eagerly await the coming of the New Jerusalem, with its eternal splendor and glory. *See Philippians 3:20-21.*
- ◆ Beware of thinking that any earthly structure now is the "temple" or "house" of God. These terms are reserved for the individual believer in Christ, and the assembly of Christians together, and used exclusively to refer to them. In the New Testament, after the destruction of Jerusalem, there is no reference to any "church building" as we have known them for 1,700 years.
- ◆ Beware of building large and expensive residences for our rulers and governing officials, even as we reasonably can expect them to have buildings big enough for state functions.
- ◆ Avoid marrying nonbelievers.

1 Kings 7:13–8:11

Truth

Revelation

Form and content

- ◆ In the bible, form and content are inseparable; that is, the form conveys content, though usually implicitly rather than explicitly.
- ◆ In this passage, the mention of so many details about the materials used, the decorations, the items fashioned by Hiram, etc., may mean little to the modern reader, but to the original readers, they would have been of the utmost importance.
- ◆ The use of gold and precious stones, plus the intricate artwork, all convey the extreme significance of the temple and its furnishings, both to Solomon the builder and to the priests and the people as worshipers; worship was the center of their life.
- ◆ The mention of the furnishings of the original tabernacle ties this new temple to the tabernacle that God commanded Moses to make, 7:48–50.
- ◆ The inclusion of extra fabrications, like the two giant pillars, the carts, and the oxen to support the giant Sea (laver), raise the question of whether Solomon's marriage to the daughter of the king of Egypt may have triggered an incipient syncretism. The author does not condemn these, but they are glaring additions to the simple directions for worship given by God to Moses, 7:15–37.

Difficulties of understanding: Some passages of Scripture present difficulties.

- ◆ The numbers given for the diameter and circumference of the “Sea” are not geometrically correct. Some allege that this is an outright error in Scripture, but the small discrepancy can be explained by the author's using approximate, “round” numbers in his narrative, 7:23.

Its cumulative fullness

- ◆ “Filled with wisdom and understanding . . .,” 7:14; see *Exodus 31:3; 36:1; and Proverbs 3:19–20*.

- ◆ Two pillars, 7:15; *see 2 Kings 25:16-17; 2 Chronicles 3:15-17; 4:12; and Jeremiah 52:21.*
- ◆ All of Hiram's work, the construction of the temple, and the furnishings within, *see Exodus 25:10-26:19; 30:1-10, 17-21; and 2 Chronicles 4:1-5:1.*

God

His greatness

- ◆ As the great Master Builder of the universe, he has all sorts of wisdom and understanding, which he can give to people for their work. *See Colossians 1:9-11.*
- ◆ The cherubim engraved in 7:29, 8:6, and elsewhere point to God as heavenly king, attended and worshiped by angels. *See Revelation 4:6-9; 5:11-12.*
- ◆ He is so glorious – literally, “heavy” – that when his immediate presence filled the temple, the priests, overcome by his immensity and deity, could not continue their ministry, 8:10-11. *See 2 Chronicles 7:1-2.*
- ◆ At the same time, he is mysterious and not fully comprehended by humans, as symbolized by the dark cloud that overwhelmed the priests, 8:10-12.
- ◆ He is eternal, 8:13.

His goodness

- ◆ He condescended to dwell among his people in the temple as his house, 7:21, 45, 48, 51; 8:4, 6, 12, 13.
- ◆ He graciously instituted a sacrificial system that would enable his people to worship him, despite their sins, 7:48-50, 8:5.
- ◆ He made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants, to be their God, to give them the land, to multiply them, and to bless them if they would obey his commands, 8:9. This covenant was symbolized by the ark of the covenant, in which were the books of Moses, and the top of which, where he would meet with and speak to his people, was sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, 8:1, 3-9. *See Genesis 12:1-3; and Exodus 25:10-22.*
- ◆ He kindly revealed his will for us in the Ten Commandments which he revealed to Moses, 8:9. *See Exodus 25:13-15.*

Christ

His person

- ◆ His embodiment of the glory of God is prefigured by the cloud of glory that filled the temple, 10–11. *See John 1:14.*
- ◆ He dwelt among his people for more than thirty years, and he dwells in our hearts by his Holy Spirit, 8:13. *See John 1:14; 14:16–18; Romans 8:9–10; Colossians 1:27.*

Mankind

Our nature: As created in the image of God, we naturally want to worship him with all that we have, 8:5.

Sin

It includes

- Worshiping God in any way that goes beyond what he has revealed to us in Scripture. Solomon made articles for the temple that were not commanded to him by his father David, who received instructions by revelation from God. These additions included the two pillars, the bronze Sea, and the carts, 7:15–38. *See 1 Kings 7:48–51.*
- Joining with nonbelievers in worship, or perhaps even in preparations for worship. Note that David had told Solomon that there were “workmen with you in abundance: woodsmen and stonecutters, and all types of skillful men for every kind of work” (2 Chronicles 22:15). Why did Solomon employ a pagan architect and artisan?
- Allowing pagan elements into our worship. The three-part design of the temple, the two pillars, and the bulls supporting the Sea were all features of contemporary pagan temples and worship. They were probably Hiram’s creations, or perhaps Solomon wanted his temple to be like those of the nations around him. Was this part of the incipient syncretism in his reign, starting with his marriage to the daughter of Pharaoh? *See 1 Kings 7:8.*
Note: When the Babylonians captured and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, they also destroyed the extra ornaments Solomon had made – the pillars, the Sea, and the carts – but preserved, and later returned, the ones that God had

told Moses to make for the tabernacle. See 2 Kings 25:13-15; and Ezra 5:14-16; 6:5.

The Last Things

Christ's return: When Christ returns, he will usher in a new heaven and new earth, in which the glory of God will be present and seen directly by all his redeemed people. *See Revelation 21:10-11, 23.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Offer to God all we have to build his Body, the church, with the gifts he has given each of us. *See Romans 12:1-9; Ephesians 4:7-16; and 1 Peter 2:4-5; 4:10-11.*
- ◆ Avoid syncretism in our theology and worship; avoid depending on pagan resources and concepts in our worship.
- ◆ Avoid grandeur and ornateness in worship; adhere to the simplicity revealed to us in the Word of God. *See 1 Corinthians 14.*
- ◆ Thank God for revealing his glory to us in Jesus.
- ◆ Eagerly await the coming of the kingdom of God, in which we shall live with God forever in eternal glory.

1 Kings 8:14–66

Truth

Revelation

Literary structure

- ◆ This long passage is divided into four parts: Solomon’s speech, 14–21; Solomon’s prayer, 22–53; Solomon blesses the assembly, 54–61; and Solomon dedicates the temple, 62–66.
- ◆ His long prayer contains two sets of petitions: 1: two requests (a) keep your promise to David; (b) hear our prayers to you; 2. seven petitions, the number seven perhaps representing the idea of fullness, i.e., these seven requests reflect the principal occasions for prayer to God.
- ◆ In the group of seven petitions, five refer to sin and/or forgiveness; this repetition reflects our true condition before God and the major cause of all our troubles.
- ◆ Within the prayer, Solomon refers to or even quotes the words of God; see 16, 18, 23, 24, 25, 29, 53, 56, 57.
- ◆ The entire passage is replete with references and allusions to earlier parts of Scripture, making it one of the richest passages in the entire Old Testament.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is God, Elohim, the Creator of the world, 15, 23, 25, and often in this passage. *See Genesis 1:1.*
- ◆ He is all-powerful, as seen in his delivering his people from slavery in Egypt, 16, 21, 51, 53; in bringing them back from bondage in Babylon, 34; and in displaying his mighty acts of power to save and to judge, 42.
- ◆ He is unique; there is none like him, 23, 60.
- ◆ He is omnipresent; his people “walk before” him, no matter where they are, 23; his presence fills heaven and earth, 27, 57.

- ◆ He is omniscient; he hears the prayers of his people no matter where they are, 28–30, 32, 52, 59, and often in this passage; his eye is on the temple night and day, 29; he knows the hearts of men and women, 39.
- ◆ He is transcendent, dwelling in “heaven,” “high” above the universe, 30, 32, 34.
- ◆ As Maker of the universe, he owns all the earth and can give parcels of it to whom he wills, 34, 40.
- ◆ He is eternal, living before and after generation after generation, 34.
- ◆ As ruler of the universe, he governs the events of “nature,” such as rain, 35, 36; and the conditions that cause famine, such as pestilence, and disease, 37.
- ◆ As King of all nations, he governs the affairs of men, and can give victory or defeat as his will decides, 37, 44–47, 50.
- ◆ He is morally powerful, and able to incline our hearts towards himself and cause us to walk in his ways, 58. *See Ephesians 2:1–10.*
- ◆ He holds supreme governing authority, and thus can issue binding commands and laws, 58.

His goodness

- ◆ He is Yahweh – LORD – the covenant God of Israel, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, and often in this passage, for a total of 19 uses of “LORD.” *See Exodus 3:14–15.*
- ◆ He is the God of Israel, who chose the descendants of Abraham to be special people, 15, 53, 66, and altogether 20 times in this passage. *See Genesis 12:1–3; and Deuteronomy 7:6–8.*
- ◆ He graciously spoke to David, giving him the promise that he, the LORD, would build a house for himself through David’s son, 15–20. *See 2 Samuel 7:5–15; and 2 Chronicles 6:8–9.*
Note: There is also a play on the word “house” in these passages, for God also promised that he would build David’s dynasty – another meaning of “house” – through his son Solomon.
- ◆ He brought his people out of slavery in Egypt and into the Promised Land, 16, 21.
- ◆ He chose Jerusalem as the city where his name would permanently dwell in the tabernacle/temple, 16.
- ◆ He fulfilled his promises to David, as he does all his promises to his people, 20.

- ◆ He kindly made a covenant with his people Israel at Sinai, to be their God forever, and instituted a system of communion with him, centered upon the ark and the Ten Commandments that were placed in it, 21.
- ◆ He keeps his covenant with his people, regardless of their faithfulness or waywardness, 23–24.
- ◆ He shows mercy to his believing, repentant, and faithful people, 23.
- ◆ He hears and answers the prayers of his people, 30, and many times in this passage. *See Psalm 65:2.*
- ◆ He is just, repaying the wicked for their evil deeds, 31–32.
- ◆ He forgives the sins of his people when they confess and ask for mercy, 33–35, 39.
- ◆ He teaches his people how to live rightly, 36.
- ◆ He gives rain (symbol of all material blessing) to the land when his people turn from their sins, 36.
- ◆ He extends his grace and covenantal mercy to non-Jews who trust in him, 41–43. *See Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 10:34–48; and Revelation 7:9–10.*
- ◆ He inclines our hearts toward himself, 58.

Christ

His person: He is the son – descendant – of David in whom all God’s promises are fulfilled, 15, 20, 25. *See Matthew 1:1; Romans 1:3–4; Ephesians 1:20–22; and Revelation 5:6.*

His work

- ◆ Like Solomon, he prays for his people, 8:22–61. *See Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25.*
- ◆ Like Solomon, he offered a sacrifice – himself – but this was a single, once-for-all-time sacrifice that forever saves us from our sins, 8:63–64. *See Hebrews 10:26–28.*
- ◆ Like Solomon, he invites his people to a feast, 65. *See Matthew 26:17–30; John 6:1–59; 21:1–14; and Revelation 3:20; 19:6–9.*

Sin

Its extent: Sin is universal; all have sinned, 46; *see Romans 3:10–20, 23.*

Its consequences: In general, our sins will bring some sort of discipline or punishment from God, though it may be delayed because of his mercy, 33, 35, 46.

Salvation

Its benefits

- ♦ The main benefit of salvation is forgiveness of sins and therefore reconciliation to God and renewed access to him, 33–35, 39.
- ♦ The privilege or drawing near to God in worship, 22
- ♦ Answered prayers as a result of reconciliation, 30, 33–36, 38–39, 45, 49
- ♦ Instruction in righteousness, 36
- ♦ Incorporation into the people of God for Gentiles, 41–43
- ♦ “Rest,” or “shalom,” or “peace” with God and from God, 56; *see Ephesians 1:2, and often in the New Testament.*
- ♦ God’s constant presence, 57; *see Matthew 28:20 and 2 Corinthians 6:16.*
- ♦ A new heart to follow God, 58; *see Jeremiah 31:33 and Hebrews 10:16.*

The People of God

Their identity

- ♦ In the Old Testament, the people of God were the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, 30, 33–34, 36, 41, 44, 50–51, 53. *See Genesis 12:1–3; 15:5; 17:1–19; 18:9–15; 22:17–18; and Exodus 3:15.*
- ♦ In the New Testament, all those who truly believe in and follow Jesus Christ belong to the people of God, 41–43. *See Acts 2:5, where “devout men” refers to God-fearing Gentiles; Romans 3:20–4:25; 9:6–13, 22–33; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 3:22–4:7; Ephesians 2:22–23; and Revelation 7:9–17.*

Their relationship to God

- ♦ They are his, “My people,” “your people,” 16, and often.

- ◆ He saved them from Egypt, 16.
- ◆ He chose to allow his name to dwell among them in the tabernacle, 18–19.
- ◆ They are his servants, 23.
- ◆ They are allowed to pray to him, 30, and often.
- ◆ They are his inheritance, 53.
- ◆ They are under the rule of his revealed commandments, 58.
- ◆ They are led and ruled by his appointed servants, including David and his descendant Jesus Christ, 19–20, 25.

Their mission: They are to live in such a way that faraway peoples will be drawn to God, 41–42, 60.

Their experiences

- ◆ Most of this passage deals with the experiences of the people of God, but a few are stressed: They will worship God, they will sin, return to him, and they will be forgiven; mostly because of their sin, but not always so, they will experience defeat and disaster, but these will draw them back to God.
- ◆ These experiences are common to the church today. *See Romans 8:18–39.*

The Last Things

Their prefiguration: As noted above, God’s dwelling in the temple built by Solomon prefigures God’s dwelling among his people in the new heaven and new earth, only this time unmediated by a priest or king.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Read the Old Testament to understand the background of most of the words and concepts of the New Testament, including: God, temple, prayer, sin, forgiveness, David and his descendant Jesus, sacrifices, covenant, God’s people, blessing, commandments, sacrifices and offerings, joy and gladness of heart.
- ◆ Pray constantly to God through Jesus Christ; in all circumstances, bring our requests to him. *See Philipians 4:6.*

- ◆ Expect to experience what the people of Israel did; prepare to respond in repentance and faith and worship.
- ◆ Avoid thinking that God dwells in a church building, 27; the church is God's dwelling place now.
- ◆ Preach the gospel to our non-Christian neighbors and to people in faraway places, that they may also come to know our God.
- ◆ Daily offer ourselves to God as a living sacrifice. *See Romans 12:1-2.*

1 Kings 9:1–10:13

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is omnipresent and omniscient, hearing the prayers of his people wherever they are, 9:3, and seeing everything that happens, 9:3, including what goes on in the hidden hearts of men, 9:4.
- ◆ He possesses the authority to issue binding commands, 9:4.
- ◆ He is eternal, 9:5.
- ◆ He has the power to maintain a dynasty for as long as he wants, 9:5.
- ◆ He also possesses the authority and the power to destroy a kingdom and all its grand buildings, 9:7–9.
- ◆ As Creator and King of the whole world, he owns the entire earth and can give parcels of it to whom he pleases, 9:7.
- ◆ He is unique and will brook no rival in the hearts and worship of his people, 9:9. *See Exodus 20:2.*

His goodness

- ◆ He kindly appeared to Solomon a second time and revealed his will to him, 9:2–9. *See 1 Kings 3:5, 10–14.*
- ◆ He graciously consecrated the temple that Solomon built and promised to be present there with “eye” – knowledge and care – and “heart” – affection and love, 9:3, 7.
- ◆ He kept his promise to David to set one of his sons on his throne, 9:5. *See 2 Samuel 7:12, 16.*
- ◆ He kept his promise to Abraham to give the land of Canaan to his descendants, 9:7. *See Genesis 15:7.*
- ◆ He kindly brought them out of bondage in Egypt, 9:9. *See Exodus 14–15; 20:1.*
- ◆ He has set his everlasting love upon his people Israel, 10:9.

Christ

His person

- ◆ He is the everlasting king of an eternal kingdom, as promised to David and prefigured in Solomon, 9:5. *See Ephesians 1:22; 1 Peter 1:21–22; and Revelation 19:11–16.*
- ◆ He is the incarnate Word and Wisdom of God, the one “greater than Solomon,” to whom the Queen of Sheba came to hear Solomon’s wisdom, 10:1–13. *See Matthew 11:19; 12:42; John 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:18–25, 30; and Colossians 2:2–3.*

His work

- ◆ He is the eternal Priest who offered himself as the one, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for our sins, prefigured in Solomon, who offered sacrifices to God, 9:25. *See Hebrews 10:5–14.*
- ◆ He is the Savior of the ends of the earth, to whom people of all nations even now come for wisdom, 10:1–13. *See Isaiah 45:22; Matthew 28:18–20; John 12:20–22; and Revelation 7:9–10.*

Mankind

Our fallen state

- ◆ Kings tend to want to distinguish themselves by major building projects a large military, and prosperous commercial endeavors, 9:22–23, 26–28.
Note: This chapter emphasizes the great wealth, power, and splendor of King Solomon.
- ◆ All of mankind is/are divided into two types: God’s people, and all others, like Hiram, the Canaanites still living in the land, and the Queen of Bathsheba, 9:10–16, 20–24, 27, 10:1.
- ◆ Among the people who are not God’s people, some are genuine seekers after the truth, like the Queen of Sheba, 10:1–13.
- ◆ These seekers after the truth have things to offer to God’s people, gifts that are peculiar to their country and culture, 10:1–13.

Salvation

Its prefiguration

- ◆ The New Testament spread of the gospel outwards towards the nations, especially the crowd that gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost, is typified and prefigured by the coming of the Queen of Sheba to Jerusalem, 10:1–13. *See Acts 2:5–12.*
- ◆ Gentiles finding satisfaction in Jesus Christ is prefigured by the satisfaction that the Queen of Sheba received from her visit to see King Solomon, 10:2–3, 13. *See John 6:35.*

The People of God

Their identity: The people of God now includes both Israelites and believing Gentiles, as prefigured by the welcome that Solomon gave to the Queen of Sheba.

The Last Things

Christ's return: When Christ returns, he will establish New Jerusalem, to which people of all nations will bring their wealth, of which the coming of the Queen of Sheba and giving her gifts to Solomon are types and prefigurations, 10:1–13. *See Revelation 21:24.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for giving us Jesus as our eternal king on an eternal throne, based on his saving work for us, his divine–human–person, and his faithfulness to all the commandments of God, 9:4–5. *See Hebrews 1:1–14; 7:26.*
- ◆ Ask God for the grace to follow his commands as revealed to us in the New Testament, 9:4–5. *See Romans 7:1–6; 8:1–4, 9, 13–14; and Galatians 5:22–23.*
- ◆ Thank God for giving us Jesus, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden for us. *See Colossians 2:2–3.*
- ◆ Welcome non–believers who come to us to find the wisdom and wealth of God in Christ Jesus.
- ◆ Look beyond the pomp and glory of human rulers to Jesus, who is above all rule and authority. *See Ephesians 1:20–23.*

1 Kings 10:14–11:43

Truth

God

His greatness

- ♦ God is sovereign over all the nations of the earth. He puts kings in power and deposes them; he enlarges kingdoms and reduces them, 11:11–13, 31–32, 34–37.
- ♦ God is unique and will tolerate no rival in our hearts. Other “gods” are only idols—nothing, 11:5.

His goodness

- ♦ God is faithful to his promises. He kept his promise to David; he also kept his promises to Solomon, 11:13, 32, 34, 36.
- ♦ God has communicated his will to us clearly in the Bible, 11:2, 10–11, 33–34, 38.
- ♦ God is also faithful to his threats: he will carry out his warnings to those who ignore them and disobey him, 11:11, 31.

Mankind

Our nature

- ♦ When men become wealthy and famous, they tend to forget God. They also tend to think they deserve more than one woman, 10:14–11:8.
- ♦ Wealth is not bad, but it is dangerous. We tend to spend it on ourselves rather than on the poor, and to indulge in luxuries, as Solomon did.
- ♦ Our hearts will be turned towards the opposite sex, especially our marriage partner, but also anyone else whom we “love.” If these people are not godly, they can draw us away from God.

Our purpose: To enjoy the most of God’s earthly blessings, we must obey him.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Constantly review God's commands, to remind ourselves of his will for us and thus of our greatest priorities in life. These are to love him first and foremost, and to love others as ourselves.
- ◆ Read his promises and warnings, to encourage us to hold fast to him in our hearts and turn to idols.

1 Kings 12:1–24

Truth

God

His greatness

- ♦ God overrules all events, including the reign of kings (and all in authority). He even rules over the actions of foolish men like Rehoboam's young advisers, 12:15.
- ♦ God fulfills his threats and his promises, 12:15. (Threat to Solomon, promise to Jeroboam)

Righteousness

Its substance: True leadership is servant leadership, 12:7. It produces willing obedience. Jesus is the perfect example. *See Philippians 2; John 13; Mark 10:45; etc.*

Sin

Its consequences

- ♦ The consequences of our sins reach to our children, as Solomon's did to Rehoboam and his descendants, 12:15.
- ♦ Young men often ignore the counsel of their elders, to their harm and that of others, 12:8.
- ♦ Abuse of authority results in resentment and eventual rebellion, 12:16–19.
- ♦ Young men, especially when in authority, tend to abuse that authority, 12:10–14.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Take God's warnings against sin seriously; otherwise, we will suffer serious consequences, which will affect our families and all those around us.
- ♦ Listen to the counsel of our elders.

- ◆ Rule with gentleness and meekness.
- ◆ When we encounter God's discipline, we should accept it and not fight against it. *See Hebrews 12.*

1 Kings 12:25–13:34

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ God will not tolerate the worship of other “gods,” especially from people who claim to be his.
- ◆ God will not tolerate worship that involves images.
- ◆ God will warn his people to repent and turn from their sins, 13:1–6. He often uses prophets; today, he uses the Scripture and the promptings of the Holy Spirit, but also faithful preachers.
- ◆ God will not tolerate rank disobedience from his people, even if they are leaders who have done great things in his service, 13:17–24.
- ◆ Sometimes, for various reasons, God allows his people to be tempted by others who believe in him, 13:11–19. One purpose of this is to test their degree of loyalty to him.

Mankind

Our nature: Rulers tend to use religion to establish their political authority and power. They create “gods” and “priests” and places of worship for their own ends, 12:25–33.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Do NOT create “gods” to serve our purposes.
- ◆ Do not worship God in ways which he did not ordain in Scripture.
- ◆ Do not let other believers lead us astray, but we must obey the clearly revealed will of God.

1 Kings 14

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ God knows all things, including both the present and the future. He sometimes communicates both sorts of knowledge through his prophets, 5, 10–16.
- ◆ Therefore, we cannot deceive him, 5–6.
- ◆ God is angry with all idolatry, which consists of turning away from God to another “god” and casting him behind our back, 9.
- ◆ God will severely punish idolatry, 10, 16.
- ◆ God raises up rulers and casts them down; even resolutions motivated by ambition or lust for power can be his work, 15.
- ◆ God even destroys entire nations because of their sins, almost always using other nations, perhaps even more wicked than the first, 16. (In this case, the cruel Assyrians destroyed Israel in 722 B.C.)

Mankind

Our nature

- ◆ Some young people already have a heart for God, 13.
- ◆ People are always only too willing to commit idolatry; if their leaders encourage them, they plunge into all sorts of wickedness, 22–24.
- ◆ Disobedient fathers like Solomon usually have a bad influence on their sons, like Rehoboam, who imitated his father’s idolatry.
- ◆ Non-believing mothers usually have a bad influence on their children, 21, 31.

Our fallen state: In the end, no matter how great our accomplishments (e.g. wars and acts of rule), we die, 19.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Leaders should be careful not to encourage their people to turn from God. Disaster will result if they fail in this.
- ◆ Do not follow evil rulers into sin.
- ◆ Parents should be very careful of the example they set their children.
- ◆ See world events and human history in the light of God's revelation in the Bible.

1 Kings 15:1–16:7

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ God will not tolerate sin, especially idolatry. He puts down kings and destroys kingdoms if they fail to worship him. Often, sin will result in constant conflict with others; this is part of God's response to our idolatry, 15:6.
- ◆ God will carry out his threats to evil men, 15:28–30; 16:7.

His goodness

- ◆ He will be gracious to those whose hearts are loyal—literally, “at peace”—with him, as David's was. We can see from many psalms that David trusted God, longed for God, and sought to please God. Thus, even though he sinned horribly by committing adultery with Bathsheba and having her husband Uriah killed, God still saw his heart, which really wanted to know and serve God. For this, God forgave him and remained faithful to his promises to David, 15:3–5.
- ◆ In other words, God answered David's heartfelt prayer in Psalm 51 and extended mercy to him. What a great God we have!

The Christian Life

Its elements

- ◆ Loyalty to God will be expressed by doing all in our power to put away idols and perverted conduct from our sphere of influence, 15:11–12.
- ◆ Loyalty to God may require putting limits on the authority of our parents, even our mother, 15:13.
- ◆ Love for God will also show itself in generous worship of him, 15:15.
- ◆ Frequently, followers of God will be inconsistent in their lives and sometimes fail to honor or trust him. This is a great shame, 15:14, 18–21.
- ◆ The sins of the fathers are often inflicted on their children, 15:28–30; 16:3.

Note: Or, can we interpret Asa's treaty with Ben-hadad as a prudent alliance with a pagan to defend against the attack of apostate people of God?

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Set our heart on God, and on him alone.
 - Long for him
 - Seek to know him and to serve him
 - Freely to confess our sins and failures to him, trusting in his mercy
- ◆ Sin is terrible and carries awful consequences, but we can have fellowship with God if we are humble and contrite before him.
- ◆ Put away from ourselves and our environment all temptations to sin when possible. Of course, we can't distance ourselves from our spouse and children, but we may to have distance ourselves from parents and friends.
- ◆ Avoid all material things, including TV, movies, novels, art, and music, if they tempt us to turn our hearts from God.

1 Kings 16:8–34

Truth

God

His righteousness

- ◆ Even though it may take a while, God’s warning of punishment for sin will be carried out, 12, 34.
- ◆ When God said that he would “visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me” (*see Exodus 20:5*), he wasn’t joking. This passage shows how
 - The sons imitate their father’s sins
 - Even young children, who have not yet done anything bad (though they are born with a sinful heart), suffer the consequences of the sins of their parents and even grandparents, 11–13, 34.

Sin

Its nature: Frequently, children’s sins will surpass the sins of the fathers in degree and extent; evil tends to grow worse with each generation. What starts “small” in the father may grow to be very big in the son, 25–26, 30, 33. For another example, David’s several wives lead to Solomon’s hundreds of wives and concubines.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Parents must be on guard against even the “smallest” of deviations from God’s Word, lest their children not only imitate them but also do worse than they did.

1 Kings 17–18

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ He will chastise his people when they turn from him to idolatry, as he did Israel when he brought a drought and then a severe famine, 17:1; 18:2.
- ◆ He speaks to his chosen prophets, both to give them a message for others and to lead them to safety and to care for their material needs, 17:2–16.
- ◆ At the right time, God will provide a confrontation between evil rulers and evil religion, on the one hand, and his faithful follower(s) and true religion, on the other, 18:1–46.
- ◆ God can do miracles in response to bold faith, if the purpose is to glorify himself or to show that he is superior to idols, 18:30–39.
- ◆ God will utterly destroy false religion and its prophets and priests when the time comes, 18:40. But this was done in Israel by force only because God had commanded that all paganism be rooted out of his kingdom; we are not to do this now.

His goodness

- ◆ If his people sacrifice for others, he will provide for them, 17:10–16.
- ◆ He cares for widows and orphans, even when the world neglects them, 17:8–14.

Mankind

Earthly rulers

- ◆ Wicked rulers will fear and therefore hate faithful spokesmen for God; they will eventually seek to kill them, 18:10.
- ◆ They will blame the prophet(s) for troubling the land, when they are really the cause of trouble, 18:17.

The People of God

Their lives

- ◆ God frequently has some faithful followers hidden within the structures of society; he gives them the duty and the privilege of protecting his other faithful followers, 18:3–4, 13. *See the book of Esther.* God will take care of these people as long as they bravely serve him, unless their time to die for him has come.
- ◆ The world looks at the power of kings and the number of his religious functionaries, but God looks at the faith of one faithful follower, 18:19. Eight hundred fifty pagan prophets would be no match for one true prophet, 18:25–40.

Righteousness

Its substance

- ◆ True faith believes God's promises and sees his grace coming even when signs of it are small, 18:41–45.
- ◆ True faith can sometimes strengthen someone to perform outstanding feats of physical endurance, 18:46. *See the next chapter.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Trust God to take care of us when we boldly stand up for him and his truth.
- ◆ Follow God's leading, even if it seems strange at times.
- ◆ Care for widows and orphans.
- ◆ Give of our goods to needy believers, and we must give to support God's messengers.
- ◆ Risk public shame, if necessary, in order to take a stand for God and his truth.
- ◆ Pray boldly and trust God to work miracles to take care of us and to vindicate his name. *See James 5:13–20.*

1 Kings 19

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ God is ruler of the nations. He puts down one king and raises up another at his will, 15–17.
- ◆ God is also ruler of the forces of creation, such as wind and storm and earthquakes, 11.
- ◆ God often speaks in great events, such as storms and earthquakes, but he often also speaks in a still small voice, 12.

His goodness

- ◆ God will supply the needs of his faithful servants, sometimes through angels; he knows when they are exhausted and will give them rest and sustenance at the right time, 5–8.
- ◆ God sometimes calls upon his weary servants to ask themselves, “What are you doing here?” and to reevaluate their lives in his presence, 9, 13.
- ◆ God preserves his faithful servants during times of persecution, always leaving enough (in this case, 7000) to serve as a “critical mass” for later witness to him, 18.
- ◆ God provides for the succession of servants—in this case, Old Testament prophets—as one generation passes the torch to another, 15, 19.
- ◆ God renews the strength of his servants and sends them on to other tasks, thus getting their minds off themselves, 15–17.

The People of God

Their lives

- ◆ Great spiritual and physical “highs” are often followed by great spiritual and physical “lows,” 3–14.

- ◆ Even God's greatest servants can succumb to fear, unbelief, and self-pity, as Elijah did, 3, 4, 10, 14.
- ◆ We usually don't know the full extent of God's people; many are unknown to us, 14, 18.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Be prepared for great temptations after a great victory.
- ◆ Take care of our body; it influences our spiritual life.
- ◆ Avoid self-importance and self-pity. There are others who serve God and who suffer even more than we do.
- ◆ Leave everything behind, when God calls us to serve him, including parents and property (except spouse and children), and dedicate ourselves entirely to him, 20-21.

1 Kings 20

Truth

Revelation

Its source: God speaks to his people through chosen messengers.

- ◆ Sometimes it is through their writings, as in the Bible.
- ◆ Sometimes it is through people who are “sent” by God to us, either as “prophets” or as people in authority over us or under us, like the elders of Ahab.
- ◆ There are no authoritative prophets today, but God still “speaks” to us through all sorts of people; we should be listening for his voice, 7–8, 13, 22, 28, 35–42.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He rules over the affairs of men and nations.
- ◆ He can bring victory in various ways.
 - Sometimes, as at the first battle, the enemy is overconfident and gets “drunk” or otherwise lets down his guard and is defeated.
 - Other times, the enemy confides too much in his “gods” and despises the God of Israel and is unexpectedly defeated by a much smaller force.
 - In any case, God rules the affairs of men and nations, ordinarily through men who trust him and men who don’t, 1–30.
- ◆ God will even punish his prophets if they do not fully obey him, 35–36.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Trust God to deliver us from spiritual enemies, including temptations, that are too strong for us; he can use various means to protect us and save us.

- ◆ Beware of making treaties with unbelievers. They will inevitably drag us into sin, 31–42.

Note: This does not apply when we have believed in Christ after marrying an unbeliever. In that case, we are bound by our vows.

1 Kings 21

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ God is holy, and will not tolerate sin, even when committed by a king, 18–24.
- ◆ He punishes nations, too, for their wickedness, 26.

His goodness

- ◆ God is amazingly merciful and will forgive even the worst of sinners who truly repent, 25–29. He can do this because Jesus has paid the penalty for sin for all believers. *See Romans 3:25.*

His authority as Judge: God's law stands above both kings and common people. Naboth understood this and would not risk God's anger by disobeying the Mosaic laws about the inheritance of property. The fear of God made him courageous, 3.

Mankind

Our nature

- ◆ Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely, as Lord Acton said. A ruler with total authority will stop at nothing to get what he wants, especially if he does not fear God, 1–16.
- ◆ A pagan spouse will try to get his/her partner to disobey God in order to fulfill his desires, 5–7.
- ◆ Men are so corrupt that they will even distort the justice system to work injustice, especially when pressured by a ruler, 11–14.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Put God's law before our own wishes or the wishes of those in authority over us, even if it means death.
- ◆ If God calls upon us to rebuke sinners, even powerful ones, we must obey, as Elijah did.
- ◆ If we have committed terrible sins—and we all have!—we should trust that God will forgive us if we truly repent. This is no excuse for sinning, but a comfort to those who are brokenhearted because they have displeased God.

1 Kings 22

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ In his rule over the nations, God ordinarily uses people to accomplish his purposes, even wicked people, like false prophets, 19–23.
- ◆ God will preserve some true prophets to communicate his will to those who will listen, 14–28.
- ◆ God will fulfill the words he has given his true prophets, 36–38.
- ◆ God rules even “chance” events like the flight of an arrow shot “at random” to accomplish his purposes, 34.
- ◆ Therefore, nothing we can do to escape God’s wrath will work for us, 34.

The People of God

Prophets

- ◆ Prophets of God must expect to be persecuted, as Jesus was, 26–27.
- ◆ False prophets will ordinarily say what people want to hear, which is usually that they may do what they want and they will prosper, 6, 11–12.
- ◆ Jesus applied Micaiah’s prophecy of “sheep without a shepherd” to what he saw in his own time. *See Matthew 9:36*. He responded in four ways
 - He told us to pray that God would raise up people to work in the kingdom as messengers of truth.
 - He trained and sent his own disciples.
 - He became the Good Shepherd, laid down his life for his sheep, and now cares for us as Good Shepherd.
 - He raises up men to be pastors for the church.

Mankind

Our lives: It is foolish for believers to join in alliances with unbelievers, for it will usually end in disaster, 29–40.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Look to Christ alone to be our Shepherd and entrust ourselves to his care.
- ♦ Do not be afraid to speak God's Word to our neighbors, both Christian and non-Christians, even if it is not what they want to hear.
- ♦ Trust in God's providence; nothing is "chance" to him.

2 KINGS *(not currently available)*

1 CHRONICLES

1 Chronicles 1–9

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and fulfilling earlier ones. These genealogies show this as they build on and expand earlier lists in Genesis and elsewhere and prepare the way for the genealogies of Jesus found in Matthew 1 and Luke 4.

It roots in history: Biblical revelation is rooted in history, as seen by genealogies. The people whose stories it narrates lived in history; this is not myth.

Its content

- ◆ Though this passage does not totally neglect the histories of other peoples descended from the sons of Noah after the Flood, it focuses sharply upon the chosen people of God (descendants of Seth and then of Abraham), Isaac, and Jacob), and on their near relations, such as the descendants of Ishmael and Esau.
- ◆ In particular, this chronology highlights the family of David the king and of the descendants of Levi, who became priests and Levites serving in the tabernacle and then the temple in Jerusalem. These two offices of king and priest were joined closely together in God's plan for Israel, and later converge in Jesus, who was also a prophet.
- ◆ This passage emphasizes the leading role of men as heads of families, but does not completely neglect to mention women, as wives, sisters, and mothers, and especially some women who became ancestors of Jesus, such as Tamar, Bathsheba, and Ruth.
- ◆ It contains some passages the details of which appear to disagree with each other, or which at least pose problems of understanding, like this genealogy, which in some small details does not match up completely with other genealogies in the Bible. These discrepancies do not prove that the Bible contains errors; they only show that we lack sufficient knowledge to understand everything.

- ◆ It is selective, so that that the names of some people in a line of descent may be omitted in a genealogy, which might skip over a generation or more for purposes of conciseness or theological emphasis.

Its literary forms: It is very often presented in an intentional literary form in order to highlight themes which the author wants to emphasize, as in this genealogy, which is arranged in a complex concentric pattern in order to draw attention to the pivotal role of the family of David. See the *ESV Study Bible* for details.

Its structure: It contains lists which may appear to be monotonous, but usually have names or events which stand out because of their departure from the pattern.

- ◆ The sin of Er, 2:3
- ◆ The incest of Judah with his daughter-in-law, 2:4
- ◆ The sin of Achan (Achar), 2:7
- ◆ The multiple wives of David, 3:1–9
- ◆ The mention of women within the genealogy
- ◆ The effectual prayers of Jabez, 4:9–10, and of the sons of Reuben, 5:18–22
- ◆ The incest committed by Reuben, and the consequent loss of his birthright, 5:1–2
- ◆ The unfaithfulness of the family of Manasseh and the disastrous consequence of this turning from God, 5:25–26
- ◆ The Syrian concubine of wicked King Manasseh, 7:14
- ◆ A few groups of mighty men of valor, 5:18; 7:40

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is powerful and able to save and prosper those who call upon him in prayer, 4:9–10; 5:20.
- ◆ He is holy and therefore must punish sins, sometimes immediately in the sinner's lifetime, as with Er, 2:3, and others here, and sometimes in a later generation, as with Solomon and all of Israel.
- ◆ He is sovereign ruler of the world, including his people, and he will fulfill his plans for the salvation of his people and the judgment of unrepentant sinners, regardless of their sins and rebellion.

His goodness

- ◆ He is merciful and gracious, using sinners like Judah, David, Solomon, and all the others to fulfill his gracious purposes for the redemption of mankind.
- ◆ He is willing to meet with his people in worship if it is properly conducted, as the work of the priests and Levites illustrates.
- ◆ He is faithful to his covenant promises, as seen in the many descendants of Abraham, as promised (*see Genesis 12:1; 15:5*), and to David, that he would be the first in a line of kings that would never cease to hold authority (*see 2 Samuel 7:8-16*), as well as other referred to in this genealogy.
- ◆ He is eager to answer prayers offered in faith, 4:10; 5:20.

Christ

His humanity: He is a real man, descended from historical people, and therefore in every way like us, except without sin. *See Matthew 1; Luke 1:26-38; 3:23-28; and Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15.*

Mankind

Our created nature

- ◆ We are created in the image of God and thus endowed with the privilege of bearing offspring in the image of the parents, each of whom is of utmost value in God's eyes.
- ◆ Every individual is created in God's image and therefore possesses immense intrinsic worth, regardless of conduct, sex, or social standing.
- ◆ We are not as "old" as evolutionists say; as this generation from Adam down to post-Exilic Jews proves. No matter how these lists are interpreted, the time period cannot be greater than about four or five thousand years, perhaps a bit longer, but certainly not the millions posited by evolutionists.

Our fallen state: We have fallen into sin and are thus subject to all sorts of passions and folly, leading to often catastrophic consequences, many of which affect later generations.

Salvation

Its conveyance

- ◆ It comes to us through God's chosen people, the descendants of Abraham by Sarah, and later the descendants of David the king.
- ◆ Special revelation was given to no other people, but this genealogy shows that God has incorporated Gentiles (like Ruth) into his people at key points, showing that his ultimate plan was always to extend his saving grace to all nations, as he revealed to Abraham (*see Genesis 12:3*) and later repeated through the words of Jesus. *See Matthew 28:18-20.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for being faithful to all his promises, even using sinners to accomplish his will.
- ◆ We who are Gentiles should thank God for bringing us into his chosen family through faith in the promised Messiah, Jesus.
- ◆ Treat all people as worthy of respect and honor, as created in the image of God.
- ◆ Expect all people, including ourselves, to commit sins, as did even the people whom God selected to be recipients of his special revelation and grace, and bearers of salvation to all of mankind.
- ◆ Imitate people like Jabez, who prayed for the right kind of prosperity, and the sons of Reuben who called on God to help them as they fought against the enemies of God (though ours is a spiritual warfare).

1 Chronicles 10–11

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later writers drawing upon earlier ones, as does the Chronicler, who assumes that his readers are familiar with the stories of Saul and David in 1 & 2 Samuel.

- ◆ Narrative portions are selective, with each author including those elements which matter most to the themes that God has inspired him to communicate.
 - For the Chronicler, these themes are the kingship of David and his dynasty, joined with the priesthood and temple in Jerusalem.
 - He leaves out the civil war between David and Saul's son Mephibosheth, recorded in 2 Samuel, in order to focus on David's affirmation as king of "all Israel" at the end of the civil war, 11:1–3.
- ◆ Biblical narrative shows the results of obedience to God and acts of virtue, as with David and his mighty men, and of wickedness, as with Saul.
 - In other words, it describes in detail the outworking of God's providential and sovereign rule of the world, by which he brings both salvation and judgement.
 - This gives us the key to the interpretation of all history, both sacred and secular, and demonstrates the forward movement of history as it moves toward the fulfillment of God's ordained will, in contrast to the circular view of history held by many pagans.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is able to strengthen his people to do valiant and mighty deeds, overcoming enemies much stronger and more numerous than themselves, 11:11, 14, 20, 22, 23.
- ◆ He is sovereign over kings and kingdoms, taking thrones from one and giving them to another, 11:14.
- ◆ He is also holy and will fulfill his threats to those who disobey him, 11:13–14.

His goodness: He is faithful to his covenant promises, such as the one to David, 11:2. *See 2 Samuel 7:7.*

Christ

His person: He is prefigured in the person of David, the anointed king of Israel, who is called a shepherd, 11:2–3, 9. *See Psalm 23; Matthew 1:1; John 10:11; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4; and Hebrews 13:20.*

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Spiritual unfaithfulness towards God, 10:13
- ◆ Not keeping or obeying God's word, 10:13
- ◆ Consulting mediums and witches, including fortune-tellers, 10:13
- ◆ Not sincerely seeking God, 10:14

The Church

Its members: The church is foreshadowed in the list of David's mighty men, who include both Jews and Gentiles, such as Zelek the Ammonite, 11:39, and Uriah the Hittite, 11:41.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Count on God to fulfill his plan of redemption, though it may take a long time and include tyrannical rule by bad kings and the temporary victory of God's enemies over his people.
- ◆ Avoid the sins of Saul and imitate the virtues of David, who possessed a truly "great soul," as seen in his refusal to drink water obtained at the risk of life itself.
- ◆ Imitate the valor of David's mighty men, who risked their lives and accomplished great things in battle in service to David their king. Courage is a Christian virtue also. *See 1 Corinthians 16:13.*

- ◆ Do not fear the power of Satan, demons, or even people who serve Satan and oppose God and oppress his people; instead, we should “be strong in the Lord,” and imitate the faithfulness to God, faith in God, and perseverance in duty unto the end exemplified by Christ and his apostles. *See Ephesians 6:10–20.*

1 Chronicles 12

Truth

Revelation

Its source

- ◆ God spoke in Old Testament times through his chosen prophets, 23.
- ◆ He also spoke through men upon whom the Spirit came temporarily utter a word from God, 18.

God

His Triune nature: He exists as Father (usually called “God”), 12:17–18, and his Spirit, the Holy Spirit, 12:18; also exists as eternal Son of God, who became Jesus the Christ, the anointed savior, here foreshadowed by David the King, 12:18.

His greatness

- ◆ He is all-powerful, stopping the flow of the Jordan River so that Israel could pass over on foot on dry land, 15.
- ◆ He rules over a huge army of angels, and in Old Testament times exercised his power through the armies of his people, 22.
- ◆ He rules sovereignly over the hearts of kings in order to advance his plan of redemption and judgment, and protecting his people in the process, 19.
- ◆ He will eventually judge all men according to their works, especially according to their loyalty to his chosen Messiah, of whom King David is a type, 17. *See Matthew 25:31–46.*

His goodness

- ◆ He is faithful to his covenant promises, including his promise to make David king of Israel, 23. *See 1 Samuel 16:11–13.*
- ◆ He supplies help to his faithful servants, 18.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured here in David, the anointed king of Israel, 18, 23.

Mankind

Our created nature

- ◆ Mankind is divided into two—and only two—sexes: male and female.
- ◆ Though equally created in the image of God and therefore of equal value, they differ in many important respects.
- ◆ From this passage, we see that men (males) are (or should be) characterized by strength, competence, and courage, 1, 2, 4, 8, 21, etc.
- ◆ Women are typically depicted as helpers of the men, providing essential support, 40. *See Genesis 2:18 and 1 Corinthians 11:8–9.*

Our fallen state: In our fallen state, wars will be frequent, and armies are necessary (leaving aside the question whether Christians should fight in them); there is hierarchy in society, which reflects God's own kingship, and which is necessary for the proper order of society, 14.

The Church

Its members: The church is foreshadowed by David's army:

- ◆ Which contained men from all sorts of tribes and places
- ◆ Which grew gradually
- ◆ Which was composed entirely of volunteers, not conscripts, 1, 8, 15, 16, 19, 22, etc.
- ◆ Which had leaders of various ranks
- ◆ Which was united under one king, David, their acknowledged sovereign, 18; *see John 1:49; 20:28.*
- ◆ Which was united and orderly, 33, 36; *see Colossians 2:5.*
- ◆ Which was composed of people with different skills and abilities, who played vital roles in the total mission, 2, 8, 24, 32, 40
- ◆ Which enjoyed meal fellowship with other members of the army and with their king, 40, a foreshadowing of the Lord's Supper

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Give our loyalty and our lives, including our strength, skill, and material wealth, all to the service of Christ.

- ◆ “Defect” from, desert, and renounce our previous loyalty to Satan and the world, and turn entirely to Christ, 16, 20; if necessary, we may have to separate ourselves from family (not divorcing our spouse, however) in order to serve Christ, 29.
- ◆ Seek to have “understanding of the times, to know what Israel should do,” like the men of Issachar, 32.
- ◆ Seek to be of one mind with other believers in our service of King Jesus, 38; *see Philippians 2:1–2*.
- ◆ Do not expect women to serve in combat roles in the military, much less to be in command.

1 Chronicles 13–14

Truth

Revelation

Its content

- ◆ Biblical revelation is selective, with each author including or excluding material, and arranging the content, to convey the message(s) given him by God.
- ◆ Here, the order of events differs from that in 2 Samuel, and material in the books of Samuel is omitted, in order to focus on the establishment of David's kingdom and the establishment of proper worship of God under the leadership of David.

Its veracity: Biblical revelation is credible partly because it so frankly relates the faults and failings of key leaders, including David, whose failure to seek God resulted in the death of Uzzah and affected his relationship with God, turning his zeal into anger and fear.

Its structure: Biblical revelation uses literary structure as one way of communicating God's truth.

- ◆ In general, form and content are inseparable (like the deity and humanity of Christ). Here, the Chronicler contrasts David with Saul in various ways, especially their relationship with God and their success (David) and failure (Saul).
- ◆ A strong contrast also is made between David's seeking the counsel of everyone, except God and the Levites (who were in charge of the Ark), 13:2, and his seeking God twice, 14:10, 14. The first led to failure, the second to success.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is powerful enough to kill a man instantly for violating the Law's instructions about handling the Ark, 13:10.
- ◆ He is as wise as a divine Warrior and able to guide David to victory, 14:10, 14.
- ◆ He is the ruler of the phenomena of nature, 14:15.
- ◆ He is able to defeat his enemies, 14:16.

- ◆ He is holy, and thus must respond in anger to violations of his clearly revealed will, 13:7, 9–10. *See Exodus 25:12–15 and Numbers 4:15.*

His goodness

- ◆ He is willing to dwell among his people Israel, especially over the Ark of the Covenant, 13:6.
- ◆ He is willing to bless those who give hospitality (even upon orders of the king) to his Ark and his presence, even though they might not be Israelites (Obed-Edom, a Gittite, might have been a Philistine, for Gath was one of their cities), 13:14.
- ◆ He is faithful to his promises to David to establish his kingdom, 14:2. *See 2 Samuel 7:8, 10–11.*
- ◆ He is willing to give wisdom to those who ask, 14:10, 13–15. *See James 1:5.*
- ◆ He is willing to give victory to those who seek and do his will, 14:10–17.

The Church

Its membership

- ◆ It is foreshadowed here as a people with the privilege of having God present among them, 13:6.
- ◆ It is foreshadowed as people who must worship God according to his revealed will in Scripture, not according to what they think is pragmatically best or right in their own eyes, 13:10–11. *See 1 Corinthians 11:2–14; 14:1–40, which includes the proper use of gifts and the role of women in Christian meetings.*
- ◆ It is also foreshadowed as God's people, whom he will enable to defeat their (spiritual) enemies by relying on his wisdom and power, 14:8–17. *See Acts 3:1–4:37; 5:12–42; and Ephesians 6:10–20.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Imitate David's example of whole-hearted zeal for God and for his proper worship.
- ◆ Do not imitate David's example of serving God according to what he thought was right and prudent, rather than according to his revealed will in Scripture.

This includes worship, the use of spiritual gifts, and the role of women in Christian assemblies.

- ◆ Do not exaggerate the holiness of God's great servants, for even David was guilty of unrestrained sexual lust.
- ◆ Consult God's Word, as well as godly elders and those under our care, when making any decision, especially important ones.
- ◆ Give God all the glory, as David did, when we succeed, 14:11.

1 Chronicles 15:1–16:6

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is wise and intends for us to consult him before making any decision, 15:13.
- ◆ He is holy and requires holiness and consecration from those who serve him, 15:12.
- ◆ He is holy and will punish/discipline those who disobey him, 15:13.
- ◆ He is holy and must have sins dealt with before he can have fellowship with us, 16:1.
- ◆ He instituted a system of sacrifices so that his people could draw near to him and worship him, 16:1.

His goodness

- ◆ He chose Israel to be the people to whom he would reveal himself and among whom he would especially dwell, 15:1–2, 14, 16:1.
- ◆ He revealed himself and his will for all aspects of life in the Scriptures, starting with the Books of Moses, 15:15.
- ◆ He chose the Levites to serve him by caring for and carrying the Ark, 15:2.
- ◆ He gives great joy to those who serve him with their whole hearts, 15:25.
- ◆ He helps those who serve him to do their duty, 15:2, 28.
- ◆ He deserves our remembering and thanking him for all his blessings to us, and our praise for his excellent goodness and greatness, 16:4.

Christ

His person

- ◆ He is prefigured here by the priests who lead the worship and offer sacrifices. *See Hebrews 4:14–16.*
- ◆ He is prefigured by David the King who led the people in worship. *See Matthew 2:2; 27:37; Hebrews 7:1; and Revelation 19:16.*

The Church

Its prefiguration

- ◆ It is prefigured here by priests and Levites, 15:4. *See 1 Peter 2:9.*
- ◆ It is prefigured by the consecration and sanctification of the priests and Levites, 15:12–15. *See 1 Peter 1:15–16.*
- ◆ It is prefigured by the worship in which all Israel joined, 15:16–16:6. *See Ephesians 1:18–21 and 1 Peter 2:9.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for choosing us to know and worship him.
- ◆ Thank God for giving Jesus as our Priest and our King.
- ◆ Consecrate ourselves daily, setting ourselves apart to serve God with all our hearts and denouncing all sin.
- ◆ Gather with believers to worship God with song and with joy, and with our whole being.
- ◆ Do not despise those who worship God with all their hearts, as Michal despised David.

1 Chronicles 16:7–43

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon earlier ones.

- ◆ David's psalms incorporate portions of several other psalms he had written or would write later. *See the Psalms.*
- ◆ The passage refers to God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, 15–18.
- ◆ It refers to the patriarchal history, 20–22.
- ◆ It refers to his revelations to and through Moses in the Law, 14.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He works wonders, 24.
- ◆ He created the heavens and the earth, 26.
- ◆ He owns the world and can give lands to whom he wills, 18.
- ◆ He can protect his chosen people, 21–22.
- ◆ He is majestic and strong, 11, 26–27.
- ◆ He is essentially and intrinsically great, 25.
- ◆ He is uniquely God, unlike other so-called “gods,” who are merely idols, the creation of men, while he alone is Creator of the world, 25–26.
- ◆ He established the world and causes us to tremble in awe, 30.
- ◆ He rules as Judge of the world and will come to judge it, 33.
- ◆ He is eternal and will receive eternal praise, 34, 36.

His goodness

- ◆ He works marvelous works of revelation and salvation for his people, 12, 24.
- ◆ He allows us to seek his face and receive his strength, 11.
- ◆ He chose Israel to be his own people, 13.
- ◆ He made a binding covenant with Abraham and his seed, and keeps it, 16–18.
- ◆ He protects his people from others who are stronger than they, 19–22.
- ◆ He is glorious, 23.

- ◆ He is fundamentally and intrinsically good, 34.
- ◆ He is eternally merciful to his people, 34.
- ◆ He is beautiful, honorable, majestic, glorious beyond description, 27–29.
- ◆ He allows his people to have fellowship with him on the basis of sacrifices which he himself ordained (in the Old Testament, various sacrifices of animals and food, in the New Testament the sacrifice of Jesus Christ), 29.
- ◆ He brings great joy to his people, 31 and to all the world, 31–33.
- ◆ He will come to judge the world in justice and truth, 33.
- ◆ He brings salvation to his people, 35.

Salvation

Its conveyance

- ◆ In the Old Testament, it came as
 - God’s sovereign choice of Abraham and his descendants, 15–17
 - His promise to give them the land, 18
 - Protection from enemies, 19–20
 - Occasional anointing with the Holy Spirit sometimes and the revelation of himself to them, so that they could be called “prophets,” 14, 22
 - Joy in the knowledge that he alone was God, ruler of all idols and therefore fully able to save them, 23–24, 31
 - A sacrificial system which allowed their sins to be forgiven and therefore for them to have communion with him, 29
 - A gathering back to the Holy Land after having been scattered by the Exile, 35
- ◆ In the New Testament, it comes to us in similar ways
 - Revelation from God
 - A promise that we will inherit the earth after Christ returns
 - Protection from spiritual enemies
 - The anointing by the Holy Spirit and the consequent ability to know God’s will and to speak for God
 - Constant forgiveness of sins through the one-time sacrifice of Christ
 - A gathering into one Body of Christ from many tribes, tongues, peoples, and nations

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Constantly thank and praise God for all he has done for us, 8, 23, 34, 36.
- ◆ Call upon his name in worship and in prayer, 8.
- ◆ Make known his saving deeds among all the nations, 8, 24.
- ◆ Study God's revealed Word and often recall his promises to the patriarchs and to all who trust in him.
- ◆ Trust God to take care of us and save us from all enemies.
- ◆ Look forward to the fulfillment of his promises to us.

1 Chronicles 17

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a progressive and cumulative whole, given as God gradually unfolded his truth more clearly through the ages.

- ◆ In the Old Testament, the plan of God to install a kingdom from David's line and to have a temple built in Jerusalem was revealed only in David's time, 6, 9, 11-14, 19, 25.

Its source: Revelation came through God's chosen prophets, like Nathan, 3-14, 23, 25-26.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is sovereign over nations and kings, raising up one and taking down another, 7-14.
- ◆ He is unique among all the "gods" worshiped by men, 20.
- ◆ He works great wonders for the salvation of his people, 21.
- ◆ He is Lord of hosts (heavenly armies), 24.
- ◆ He is eternal, as his kingdom, his covenant relationships, his name, and his praise, 12, 22-24, 27.

His goodness

- ◆ He made various covenants with his people, and kept them, 1.
- ◆ He dwelt among his people in the tabernacle for centuries, 4-6.
- ◆ He chose David to be a kingdom and the founder of an everlasting dynasty ("house"), 7-8, 11-14, 16-17, 23-24.
- ◆ He chose Israel as his own special people, 9, 21-22, 24-25.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured in David, the shepherd-king, and later in his son Solomon, chosen by God for an eternal kingship and called “Son” of God, 7, 11–14, 17, 25.

Salvation

Its conveyance

- ◆ It came
 - To the Jews as God’s sovereign election of them, of himself as their God in a uniquely intimate and covenantal relationship, 21–22
 - As redemption from Egypt by the blood of the Passover lamb, instead of their firstborn sons, 21
 - Through the expulsion of pagan nations from the Promised Land, 21
 - In dwelling among them in the Ark and tabernacle, 5–6
 - By providing shepherd-leaders, first the judges and then the sons of David, 6, 7–10
 - By subduing all their enemies under the leadership of judges and kings, 6, 8, 10.
- ◆ It comes to us in similar ways, but through the final Son and King, Jesus Christ.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Read the Old Testament to understand the background of the New Testament and especially of Christ, his person and his work.
- ◆ Thank God for being faithful to all his promises.
- ◆ Thank God for giving us a Shepherd-King, Jesus.
- ◆ Respond to God’s grace, as David did, with humble gratitude, submission, praise, and prayer that his will would be fulfilled in our life.
- ◆ Do not assume that our thoughts about what we should do to serve God, and the timing of what we should do, are the same as God’s thoughts; he may have a different plan.
- ◆ Ask God for wisdom about our own unique role in his kingdom, for it will differ from that of others, including, probably, our children.

1 Chronicles 18–20

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Here, the Chronicler directly quotes the words from 2 Samuel 11:1, “In the spring of the year, when kings go out to war...,” 20:1, but does not repeat the story of David’s sin with Bathsheba or his order of the murder of her husband Uriah.

God

His greatness: He enables his people to defeat enemies stronger than they are, either armies, 19:15, or giants, 20:4–8.

His goodness

- ◆ He fulfilled his promise to Abraham and then to Moses and Joshua to give the Promised Land to his children, and that kings would be among his descendants. *See Genesis 13:14–17; 15:7, 18–21; 17:6–9.*
- ◆ He fulfilled his promise to David to overcome all his enemies, 18:1–3; 19:8–19; 20:1–3. *See 1 Chronicles 17:9.*
- ◆ He inspired the Chronicler to omit the story of David’s sin with Bathsheba, as if it had not happened, focusing instead on the divine blessings to David as king, thus reminding readers of God’s mercy and grace to repentant sinners and his willingness not to bring up sins that are passed, as if they had not taken place, 20:1. *See Jeremiah 31:34 and Habakkuk 3:2.*

Christ

His person: He is prefigured here as the victorious King who defeats all his enemies (*see also Revelation 19:11–21*), and in whose name and authority his people can also overcome their spiritual enemies. *See Ephesians 6:10–20.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ When we are faced with spiritual enemies, even “giants,” (the world, the flesh, the devil) who are stronger than we are, then we should “be of courage, and be strong,” trusting that “the LORD will do what is good in His sight,” 19:13.
- ◆ When we sin, as David did, we should repent, confess our sins, and then trust in God’s forgiveness; later, we should not wallow in guilt, but go on to serve God, knowing that he is with us.
- ◆ Thank God that Christ has overcome Satan, and that in him we, too, can have victory over our sin, Satan’s wiles, the power of demons, and the temptations of this world.
- ◆ Thank God that Christ will eventually return and put all his enemies to flight, casting them into hell for eternal destruction. *See Revelation 19:11–21.*

1 Chronicles 21:1–22:1

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Here, the punishment for the census follows the threat in Exodus 30:12 for a census taken without also levying a temple tax on each man counted.
- ◆ The angel with the sword outstretched over Jerusalem, 21:16, recalls Abraham, with his knife held out over Isaac. *See Genesis 22:9–10.*
- ◆ It mentions the location of the threshing floor of Ornan (Araunah) as Mt. Moriah, where God provided a ram in the place of Isaac, and where the Temple was to be built, 21:28–29. *See 2 Chronicles 3:1.*

Its content

- ◆ The Bible contains passages that seem to differ from other passages, such as the numbers in 1 Chronicles 21:5 and 2 Samuel 24. Some discrepancies can be reconciled, while others cannot. One solution for numerical differences is the possibility of scribal error. Still, these discrepancies present a difficulty for the doctrine of inerrancy, but do not prove that it is wrong, for (1) we have other reasons to believe that the Bible is inerrant, and (2) we can assume that we lack enough information to resolve the problems we see in the current text.
- ◆ Some numbers in the Bible seem impossibly high, such as the 600,000 men who left Egypt (with wives and children and parents), and the total of fighting men in 21:5. Again, we must assume that we lack enough information to understand the text properly.

Its source: Revelation also came to people through God's chosen prophets, like Gad, 21:9–13.

Its veracity: Biblical revelation includes narratives of the sins of major characters, thus enhancing the credibility of their writings, 21:1–4, 7–8.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He can command famine, warfare, and plagues to take place, 21:12.
- ◆ He can command a plague to cease suddenly, 21:15.
- ◆ He also commands mighty angels to do his will, 21:15, 16, 18.

His goodness

- ◆ He responds to confession of sin and pleas for mercy with forgiveness and sometimes cessation of punishment, 21:17.
- ◆ In the Old Testament, he provided sacrifices for sins on the altar, 21:29; 22:1.
- ◆ In the New Testament, he provided Jesus as our sin-bearing sacrifice. *See Matthew 1:21; John 1:29; Ephesians 1:7; and Hebrews 9:11, 28.*
- ◆ He can overrule, and even use, our sins to advance his redemptive purposes through Christ, 21:18, 29; 22:1.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured by David, the shepherd-king, who was willing to suffer rather than have his people (his “sheep”) suffer God’s wrath, 21:17, and by the sacrifices themselves, 21:26, 29; 22:1. *See 1 Peter 3:18.*

Spiritual Beings

Satan: Under God’s sovereign control, Satan is allowed to tempt people to sin, 21:1. *See 2 Samuel 24:1.*

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Pride in one’s strength and resources, 21:2–3
- ◆ Disregarding counsel from wise people, 21:3–4
- ◆ Disobeying God’s revealed Word, as Joab did when he failed to collect the temple tax from the men whom he counted, 21:5

Its consequences

- ◆ Disunity between God’s people, as with David and Joab, 21:4

- ◆ A guilty conscience, 21:8
- ◆ Harm for others around us and under our care, 21:12–14

Salvation

Its conveyance

- ◆ It came to Israel as forgiveness of sins, cessation of the plague, and God's redemptive provision of a sacrificial system in Jerusalem.
- ◆ It comes to us now as forgiveness, (sometimes) lessening of temporal pain, and the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ, by which we are enabled to enter into God's presence.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Beware of making our strengths (like David's military prowess and success) become an occasion for the sins of pride and presumption.
- ◆ Heed godly counsel.
- ◆ Do all according to God's revealed Word.
- ◆ Confess immediately when we know we have sinned and ask for God's mercy.
- ◆ Trust that God's chastisement for our sins is always just and fair.
- ◆ Be willing to offer everything to God's service. *See Romans 12:1–2.*
- ◆ Thank God for Christ our sacrificial Lamb and come constantly into God's presence through faith in his blood.

1 Chronicles 22:2–19

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Solomon's succession of his father David bears many similarities to the transfer of leadership from Moses to Joshua, including this charge by David to his son, 22:7–16.

Its content

- ◆ Biblical revelation includes narrative portions which differ in some details from other narratives of the same event or time period, usually in order to group material according to a theme rather than according to their chronological order.
- ◆ Here, the Chronicler rearranges his sources (Samuel and Kings) to focus on the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, first on David's preparations for the construction, chapters 22–29, and then Solomon's early reign, when he oversaw the actual building of the Temple, 2 Chronicles 1–7.
- ◆ Biblical revelation sometimes includes numbers that appear to be almost impossibly large, like the amount of gold and silver David had set aside for the Temple. They can either be taken as round numbers, or perhaps as instances of scribal errors in copying, numbers being very easy to copy wrongly.

Its source

- ◆ It came through Moses and the laws revealed to him, 22:13.
- ◆ It came through prophets like Nathan and Gad, 22:8.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He can give thrones to men as he wishes, 22:10.
- ◆ He is eternal, 22:10.
- ◆ He is all-wise, 22:12.
- ◆ He can defeat the enemies of his people, 22:18.

His goodness

- ◆ He dwelt among his sinful people in the tabernacle and later in the Temple in Jerusalem, 22:5.
- ◆ He loves people and seeks to be worshiped by those who love peace and make peace, 22:8–9.
- ◆ He gives rest to his people, 22:9, 18. *See Matthew 11:27–30.*
- ◆ He called the king of Israel his “son,” as an indication of special favor as the leader of the chosen people, 22:10.
- ◆ He gave a throne to the dynasty of David forever, 22:10.
- ◆ He gives wisdom to those who ask, 22:12. *See James 1:5.*
- ◆ He is with his people when they seek to serve him, 22:18.
- ◆ He made a covenant with his people, which included the making of an ark with a mercy seat on which blood was sprinkled to indicate God’s forgiveness of their sins, 22:19.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured here in the person of David, the victorious king, and through Solomon, the king of Peace, the son of God, who brought peace and rest to the people of God, 22:9, who built a “house” for God, 22:10, and who rules over an eternal kingdom, 22:10.

The Church

Its prefiguration

- ◆ It is prefigured as the house of God, constructed with many different types of stones and materials, as the Body of Christ has many members. *See 1 Corinthians 12:12–27.*
- ◆ It is the temple of the living God, even now being built up by the addition and placement of complementary “stones,” that is, believers in Christ. *See 1 Corinthians 3:9–17; 12:1–31; Ephesians 2:19–22; and 1 Peter 2:4–8.*

The Last Things

Their foreshadowing: The last things are foreshadowed here in the words about Solomon, the king with an everlasting throne who would bring peace and rest to his people, and by the precious stones which would comprise the temple. *See Revelation 21:9–21.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Seek God first and foremost, 22:19.
- ◆ Seek to worship and serve God with the most valuable “things” we have, including our time, our money, and all our resources.
- ◆ Work together with other believers to build, or grow together into, the dwelling place of God in Christ by the Spirit.
- ◆ Seek the glory of God’s name above our own name, as David sought to build a temple that would bring glory to the name of God.
- ◆ Gather wealth as much as we can to pass on to our children; even more, we should seek to leave our children a godly example and godly teaching, that they also may serve God with all their heart.

1 Chronicles 23–24

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, building on earlier passages, as these genealogies of the names of the descendants of Aaron demonstrate.

Its content

- ◆ It is selective, to fit the purpose of the divinely inspired authors, as the omission of the conflicts surrounding the accession of Solomon to the throne, 23:1. *See 1 Kings 1:5–53.*
- ◆ The reasons for the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, and other omissions, show this selective nature, 24:2. *See Numbers 3:1–4.*
- ◆ It is suited to the needs of the people at the time each book was written; in the post-exilic period, Israel needed to have a well-ordered priesthood to offer sacrifices according to God's Word, and these lists and David's instructions would provide this information for the reforming community.

God

His greatness: He is a God of order, seeking order in all aspects of his worship, like the regular rotations of priests and Levites, and the regular celebration feasts, as well as the explicit directions for the manner in which he was to be worshiped, 23:28–32.

His goodness

- ◆ He is gracious and merciful, allowing sinners and their descendants to serve him and worship, as these genealogies of the sons of Moses and Aaron demonstrate.
- ◆ He is faithful to his promises, as he fulfilled his promise to give Israel rest through David and Solomon, 23:25.
- ◆ He cares for each family and for each member of each family, as shown by the names in these lists.

The Church

Its prefiguration

- ◆ It is foreshadowed in the description of various duties of priests and Levites, with each having a distinct part to play, 23:4–5, 13, 26–32.
 - In the New Testament, each Christian has a particular gift to offer to the service of God, as part of the Body of Christ. *See Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12, 14; and 1 Peter 4:10–11.*
- ◆ It is foreshadowed also in the office of priest, though now in the New Testament every true follower of Christ, male and female, young and old, Jew and Gentile, is a priest unto God, authorized and commanded to worship him with praise, thanks, material gifts to the poor, and service in the church. *See Romans 12:1–2; Hebrews 13:15–16; 1 Peter 2:5, 9–11; and Revelation 5:9–10.*

Life

Ethical imperative

- ◆ Thank God for making us priests unto him, with full and free access to his throne of grace at all times to worship him and to pray for others.
- ◆ Offer thanks and praise to God at all times, and especially in the morning.
- ◆ Make worship of God the first priority in our lives and in the life of the church gathered, as the prominent place of priests and Levites in Chronicles shows.
- ◆ Ask God to show us what particular duty or duties he would have us perform as members of the Body of Christ.
- ◆ See all our service of God and of other believers as worship that is only due and proper to such a great and gracious God.
- ◆ Keep careful records of our family tree and of believers and leaders in the church.
- ◆ Seek to have personal, family, and church lives that are ordered and regulated.

1 Chronicles 25–27

Truth

Revelation

Its source: In the Old Testament, Biblical revelation sometimes came through some Levites who were singers and poets, composing songs (psalms) that later were incorporated into the Psalter.

- ♦ Asaph, 25:2; *see Psalms 50 and 73–83.*
- ♦ Jeduthun, 25:3; *see Psalms 39, 62, 77.*
- ♦ And perhaps also Heman, 25:4; *see Psalm 88.*

God

His greatness

- ♦ He wants his people to be well-ordered, in family life, worship, and civil service. *See 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40.*
- ♦ He desires the worship of his people, instituting the Temple and its ministries as central to the life of his people.
- ♦ He kept his promise to increase greatly Abraham's descendants, 27:23. *See Genesis 15:5; 22:17; 26:4.*
- ♦ Keeping his promise was the partial fulfillment of his mandate to Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. *See Genesis 1:28.*
- ♦ He is sovereign. He alone decides whether we will have children, and if so whether they will be sons or daughters, 25:5.
- ♦ He is holy and therefore wrathful when men disobey his revealed Word, 27:24.

Mankind

Our purpose

- ♦ In both his unfallen and fallen state, the male was/is authorized by God to exercise loving leadership over family, religious affairs, government, and the military, 26:6, and all of these chapters.
- ♦ This principle also holds true in the New Testament, despite the fundamental equality of men and women as created in the image of God and saved by grace through faith in Christ. *See 1 Corinthians 11:7–12; Ephesians 5:22–33; 1*

Timothy 3:1–12 [where elders and deacons are men]; Titus 1:5–9; 2:4; and 1 Peter 3:1–7.

- ◆ People differ with respect to skill, 25:7; ability, 26:6, 31; wisdom, 26:14; gender, either male or female (unambiguously, and for life), 25:5.

The Church

Its prefiguration

- ◆ The church is foreshadowed in passages like this, where religious, governmental, and military duties are assigned differently to different people.
- ◆ In the New Testament church, these distinctions include gender, leadership roles (elder or deacon), spiritual gifts (*see Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 & 14, 1 Peter 4:10–11*), and special missions (*see, for example, Acts 13:2*).

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ See children as a gift from God.
- ◆ Teach boys to seek to be capable, skilled, and wise in their lives and work.
- ◆ Order family, church, and state well, under stable leadership vested in the hands of godly men (where possible).
- ◆ Make regular worship and praise a priority.

1 Chronicles 28

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ The ark of the covenant, 28:2, refers to the ark which God told Moses to have made, and which was the place where God chose specially to dwell among his people. *See Exodus 25:10–22.*
- ◆ God's choice of David to be king, 28:4; *see 1 Samuel 16:6–13.*
- ◆ Judah as the tribe from whom the royal line would come, 28:4; *see Genesis 49:8–10.*
- ◆ Choice of Solomon as David's successor, 28:6; *see 2 Samuel 7:13–14.*
- ◆ The commandments of God, referring to the Ten Commandments and all the Law of Moses in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, 28:8
- ◆ The inheritance of the land promised by God to Abraham, 28:8; *see Genesis 12:7; 15:18.*
- ◆ The obvious parallels between Moses–Joshua and David–Solomon, including the charge to be strong and obey God's commands, 28:9, 20; *see Deuteronomy 31:6 and Joshua 1:6–9.*

Its source: Sometimes God revealed his will by his Spirit in very specific ways and caused it to be written down, 28:19.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He rules the world as king, with the ark as the footstool of his throne, 28:2.
- ◆ He has authority to appoint kings, 28:7.
- ◆ He is eternal, 28:8.
- ◆ He knows the hearts of men, 28:9.
- ◆ He is holy and will thus punish those who disobey him, 28:9.

His goodness

- ◆ He dwells among his people, 28:2.

- ◆ He chose Israel, then David, then Solomon, 28:4–5, 10.
- ◆ He treated the king as his own son, 28:6.
- ◆ He established his kingdom forever, 28:7.
- ◆ He gave clear commands, 28:7.
- ◆ He will never forsake those who trust and obey him, 28:9.
- ◆ He will always be with those who fear him, 28:20.
- ◆ He provides all that we need to worship and serve him—the whole chapter and all this section of 1 Chronicles.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured in the person of Solomon, who is both son of David and “Son” of God.

Note: In the case of Christ “son of God” means divine Son, who became incarnate in the man Jesus, 28:6. See Matthew 1:1, 18–25; 3:17; and Hebrews 1:5. He has an eternal kingdom, 28:7. See Hebrews 1:12–13. And by God’s help he finished the work he was given to do, 28:20. See John 19:30.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for keeping all his promises to David and to Solomon and also to Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Thank God for giving us Jesus as our King forever and look forward to his coming kingdom on earth.
- ◆ Seek the Lord our God with all our heart.
- ◆ Thank God that he has revealed his will to us and seek to obey his will.
- ◆ Teach the Word of God to our children, set them an example of faith and obedience, and urge them to put God first in their lives.
- ◆ Try to leave an inheritance of godliness, faithful instruction, and good name, and—if possible—material resources to our children.

1 Chronicles 29

Truth

Revelation

Its source: In the Old Testament, it came through the writings of prophets like Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, 29:29, and through the writings of men like the Chronicler, who drew upon earlier sources to compose his sacred record.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is LORD and God, eternal and eternally blessed, 29:10.
- ◆ He possesses all greatness, power, glory, victory, majesty, and all that is in the entire universes, 29:11.
- ◆ He rules as king, exalted over all, 29:11–12.
- ◆ He has power and might, 29:12.
- ◆ He can give greatness and strength to whomever he wishes, 29:12.
- ◆ He is glorious—beautiful, lovely, unique, holy, exalted, magnificent—in his name, that is, his intrinsic character and his revelation to his people, 29:13.
- ◆ He is the source of all good gifts to his people and to his creatures, 29:14, 16.
- ◆ He is holy, 29:16.
- ◆ He alone sees the heart of man, for he is omniscient, 29:17.
- ◆ He is upright, and loves uprightness, 29:17.
- ◆ He deserves all that we have, 29:16–17.
- ◆ He rules the earth through kings (and those with kingly authority, such as presidents and prime ministers), 29:23.
- ◆ He can exalt rulers of his choice and give them honor and wealth—he did this especially and uniquely in Israel with Solomon, 29:25.

His goodness

- ◆ He chose Solomon to be king after David, even though Solomon was born of Bathsheba, whom David had stolen from Uriah after he had him killed and after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba, 29:1.
- ◆ He gives riches and honor to those whom he chooses, 29:12.
- ◆ He gives greatness and strength, 29:12.

- ◆ He allows sinful people to worship and serve him, 29:14.
- ◆ He chose Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob as his own special people and gave them promises, to which he is faithful, 29:18.
- ◆ He can, and will, grant a change of heart to sinners, making us loyal to him and obedient to his commands, 29:18–19.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured in the person of Solomon, king of Israel who brought peace to the land, along with unprecedented wealth, power, and honor, 29:23–29. *See Matthew 1:1; 2:1–2, 11; 25:31–34; 27:11, 37; 28:18; etc.*

Mankind

Our purpose

- ◆ We are created for God’s glory and honor, and finds greatest joy when he offers himself, his heart, and all he has to God, 29:6–9.
- ◆ We are entirely dependent upon God for all things, 29:14.
- ◆ We live only for a brief time on earth, and then must die (this is true even of great men like David), 29:15, 28.
- ◆ We cannot serve God from a loyal heart unless God changes the heart and sustains good motives, 29:18–19.

The Last Things

Their prefiguration: The last things are prefigured by the Temple and by abundance of precious stones prepared for it by David and given by the chief men of Israel, 29:2–8. *See Revelation 21:21.*

The Christian Life

Its elements: Joy comes to us when we see others, especially wealthy leaders, giving themselves and their wealth to God, and when we ourselves offer ourselves willingly to God for his service in the world, 29:9.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Imitate David and set our affection on God's house, which is now the church—not a building, but the people of God, 29:3. See *Ephesians 2:18–22* and *1 Peter 2:4–8*.
- ◆ Learn to praise God as David did; in our praises, we can use the words of Scripture.
- ◆ Ascribe thanks to God for all that he has given us.
- ◆ Consecrate ourselves to God, and show this consecration by giving to God, through his chosen representatives, as much as we can of what he has given to us. This giving should be for the building of the house of God, which now means for the work of evangelism and edification of the church – not for church buildings necessarily or primarily, or perhaps not at all.
- ◆ Submit to our rulers.
- ◆ Read histories of times past, to learn from them; we should, if God gives us such an ability, also record our own doings for posterity.

2 CHRONICLES *(not currently available)*

EZRA

Ezra 1–2

Truth

Revelation

Its roots in history: God's revelation includes historical records of various sorts, including lists, inventories, official decrees, genealogies, etc., all of which root the truth of God in history and demonstrate the outworking of his plan to save his people.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He rules over all the affairs of mankind, prompting kings to fulfill his plan and his promises for his people, 1:1–4; and prompting individuals to make decisions that will glorify God and benefit his people, 1:5; 2:68.

His goodness

- ◆ He cares about personal property and individual persons, causing them to be named and numbered in the Bible, 1:9–2:70.
- ◆ He fulfills his promises through the prophets, 1:1.
- ◆ He will preserve a remnant of his people and ensure that they will be gathered together to serve him, even after the most severe discipline and suffering for their previous sins, 2:2–61.
- ◆ He requires holiness and obedience among those who serve him, 2:62–63.
- ◆ He will supply all the resources needed for his worship and service, 2:68–69.

Salvation

Its source

- ◆ It came to the Jews who had been exiled in Babylon for their sins in the form of a return from exile to the Promised Land, recalling the first Exodus from Egypt in several ways, especially the gift of good things from the local pagans to the departing Jews, 1:6.
- ◆ It will come to us as a “return” to our true home, heaven, when Christ returns.

Mankind

Our fallen state: Even in his fallen state, he is able to do good, as demonstrated by Cyrus' decree and the careful inventory made by Babylonians of the captured Jewish temple articles, as well as the generosity of Babylonians to the Jews who returned.

The Church

Its membership: It is composed of people of various ranks and responsibilities, each with a key duty to perform, as the various categories of service here illustrate—priest, Levite, governor, singer, leader of a family, etc.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Trust God to deliver us finally from sin, Satan, and death, and gather us to himself in heaven as his redeemed people.
- ◆ Trust God to use pagan rulers to accomplish his purposes, whether they be severe discipline for his people or salvation from their enemies and sufferings.
- ◆ Give as much as we can for the worship and service of God.
- ◆ Be very careful stewards of the material things God gives us.
- ◆ Study the Scriptures, including the book of the Revelation, to draw courage from the promises of God's eventual victory and our ultimate hope and salvation.
- ◆ When our precious treasures—represented here by the gold and silver vessels of the Temple—are taken from us for a long time, seemingly never to be restored, we should not think that God is unable to restore them to us, or perhaps to our children.

Ezra 3

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is progressive, in that Old Testament regulations for worship do not apply to us now, but they are fulfilled in Christ and his people (see below).

Its content

- ◆ It contains directions for worship, 2.
- ◆ It contains examples for us to follow, like the zeal of these Jews for their worship and service of God, and it contains frank narratives of both joy and sorrow, 12–13.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is everlasting, 11.
- ◆ He desires and deserves our worship, 2.

His goodness

- ◆ He is good, showing steadfast love to his people from one generation to another, 11.
- ◆ He desires and deserves our worship, 2.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured by the priests, Levites, altar, burnt offerings and other sacrifices, all of which he fulfilled in his life, death, resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand, and constant intercession for his people. *See 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 5:2; and Hebrews 4:14–16, 7:24–8:6, 9:11–15, 10:5–18.*

Salvation

Its conveyance

- ◆ It came to the Jews as return from exile and restoration of pure worship in the Promised Land.

- ◆ It comes to us now as reconciliation with God and a spiritual worship through Christ our High Priest and sacrificial Lamb who took away our sins. *See Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 10:19-25, 13:15-16; and 1 Peter 2:6-9.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Seek first of all to worship God from our hearts, both individually and in company with other believers.
- ◆ Make the welfare of the worship of God's people a chief cause of both our joy and sorrow, as the Jews did, 12-13. *See also Philipians 1:18, 2:1-2, 12-18, 26-29, 3:18, 4:1.*

Ezra 4

Truth

Revelation

Its content

- ◆ The Bible contains many passages that, standing alone and without regard to the total context, are very hard to understand; some, even in context, present mysteries of God's dealings with us, as this one does: Why did God allow the stoppage of the work on the Temple?
- ◆ The Bible also contains some passages quoting pagans, like kings and the enemies of God, which are all a part of the divine record. The Hebrew way of narration also differs from ours, as here, when events in the future are included as a parenthesis (6–23) before the author returns to the narrative in v. 24.

God

His greatness: God sometimes allows the enemies of his people to gain the upper hand and thwart the plans and desires of his people, as the enemies of Israel were allowed to stop work on the Temple.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured here in the apparent defeat of God's purposes by the enemies of God's people; just as Jesus died and was buried, apparently totally defeated, the work on the Temple "died" for almost twenty years, as a result of a cabal of local enemies and the pagan government of Cyrus, 4–5.

The Church

Its membership

- ◆ It is composed of those who truly worship God.
- ◆ It must not be mixed with people who worship other gods also, 2–3.

Its purpose: It is centered around the worship of God and does not need church buildings, as here, when there is no mention of cessation of worship at the altar even though there was no temple housing it.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Do not be surprised by temporary, though apparently final and total, defeats at the hand of the enemies of God.
- ◆ Do not assume that we know everything about God's plans for his people; perhaps he will allow a personal or a corporate defeat or setback in order to magnify his later mercy, or test their faith, or prove his faithfulness to them, or for any other reason. Here, perhaps he was showing that buildings are not necessary for the worship of God.
- ◆ Do not imagine that church buildings are necessary for the true worship and service of God.
- ◆ Read large sections of the Bible, so that we can get the "big picture," rather than being confused by single sections that are, in themselves, confusing.

Ezra 5–6

Truth

Revelation

Its content

- ◆ Official documents or words from pagans, who speak the truth about God probably without intending to, at least not in its full meaning, as King Darius here speaks of God, 6:9, 10, 12
- ◆ Both contain narrative, as here, with the Law of Moses, referred to in 6:18, as well as prophetic speech and writings, 5:1–2

Its purpose

- ◆ It is meant to encourage God's people to work and serve him, 5:2; 6:14.
- ◆ It is meant to teach them his will and help them understand his dealings with them, 5:11–12.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He superintends and directs all the affairs of men and nations, including the actions of pagan rulers, like Tattenai, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Darius, 5:3–5, 12; 6:1–12, 22.
- ◆ He dwells in heaven, where he rules the universe, 5:12; 6:9, 10.

His goodness

- ◆ He is holy and therefore wrathful against sin, 5:12.
- ◆ He remains faithful to his people and his promises, allowing them to return to their land and to rebuild the Temple, as he had promised through Jeremiah in Jeremiah 25:11–12; 29:10 (if we take the 70 years as referring to the rebuilding of the Temple rather than the return from exile, which also took place almost exactly 70 years from the first deportation to Babylon).
- ◆ He caused his name to dwell in Jerusalem, 6:12.
- ◆ He is Yahweh, the God of Israel, 6:22.
- ◆ He allows his people to worship him, despite their sins, 6:17–22.
- ◆ He gives joy to those who trust in him, 6:22.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured here through

- ◆ The three offices of prophet, priest, and “king” (here, “governor”), 5:1–2; 6:16
- ◆ Through the sin offering and the Passover lamb, 6:17, 19
- ◆ The Temple, 6:15; *see also John 2:19–21*.

Salvation

Its conveyance

- ◆ It came to the Jews as the right and privilege of worshiping God, who dwelt graciously in their midst through his word spoken by the prophets and his presence in the Temple and offerings, 6:16–22.
- ◆ It comes to us now as reconciliation with God and the right to approach him individually and corporately, assured of his grace towards us. *See Romans 5:1–10; 8:15–16; Ephesians 2:14–22; and Hebrews 4:14–16.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Read the Old Testament, including the books of Moses, the histories, and the prophets, in order to understand how it all fits together and how it is fulfilled in the New Testament.
- ◆ Trust that God is ruling over our lives and over the life of the church worldwide, working out his good purposes through evil men and good or bad rulers.
- ◆ Worship God with joy, following the instructions in his Word on how to do so.
- ◆ Find joy in God, in worshiping him and following his laws.

Ezra 7

Truth

Revelation

General revelation: It comes to all men as the assumption that there is a God of some sort who

- ◆ Rules the world and who must be worshiped and obeyed
- ◆ Answers prayer
- ◆ Punishes those who do not worship and obey him
- ◆ Is recognized even by such people as King Artaxerxes, 12, 14, 23

Note: This knowledge of God (such as Artaxerxes') is sometimes incomplete and often faulty, for he believed that Yahweh was only the God of the Hebrews and lived only in Jerusalem, 14, 15, 16, etc.

Special revelation

- ◆ It is contained in, and confined to, the Scriptures.
- ◆ It is cumulative, comprehensive, and coherent: Ezra, living about 1,000 years after Moses, studied the revelation given by God to Moses, 6, 10, 14, 21.
- ◆ It was given by God through human messengers like Moses, 6.
- ◆ It is meant to be not only known, but obeyed, and then passed on to others, 10.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He moves men, including both pagan kings and his faithful servants, to do his will, 6, 10, 11–26, 27–28.
- ◆ He establishes magistrates and political rulers in order to execute justice among men, 25.

His goodness

- ◆ He revealed himself and his will to his people, 6.
- ◆ He is essentially, intrinsically, and fundamentally good, 9.
- ◆ He empowers and prospers his servants to accomplish his will (“the hand” of God was upon Ezra), 9, 28.
- ◆ He will provide all that his people need to worship and serve him, 15–24.

- ◆ He gives wisdom to his servants, 25.
- ◆ He is Yahweh, the God of the patriarchs of Israel, 27.

Salvation

Its conveyance

- ◆ It came to the post-Exilic Jews as
 - Restoration to their land
 - Resumption of worship at the altar and then in a rebuilt Temple
 - Presence of God in Jerusalem and in the Temple
 - Protection from enemies and provision of all material needs
 - Teaching of the Law of Moses and leaders of different ranks
- ◆ It comes to us as
 - A “return” to God
 - Worship of him, centered on his sacrifice and empowered by the Holy Spirit
 - Instruction of the Scriptures
 - Distribution of spiritual gifts among the members of the Body of Christ
 - Provision of all our spiritual and material needs
 - Presence of God among us
 - Promise that all this is only the beginning of an eternal life that will be ours in a new heaven and new earth after Christ returns

The Church

Its prefiguration: It is prefigured here by the various groups of people who performed different services, including ruling, teaching the will of God, singing, serving at the Temple, and guarding the Temple, 7.

Its purpose: It must be built up by teaching as well as worship, 10, 25. *See also Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; Ephesians 4:7–16; and 1 Peter 4:10–11.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Imitate Ezra and set our hearts to know, to do, and to teach the Word of God.

- ◆ Acknowledge the “good hand of God” when we see him working to enable us to fulfill the ministry he has given us to serve his people.
- ◆ Pray for the political rulers of our world.
- ◆ Trust God to work his will by moving men to accomplish his best purposes for us and other believers, even if we have to wait a long time, as the Jews did.
- ◆ Imitate Ezra and gather around us people who can work as a team, when we set out to accomplish some great task, 27.

Ezra 8

Truth

Revelation

Its content

- ◆ The Bible contains lists of names, both in genealogies and here, which show
 - The importance to God of individuals
 - The historical nature of the Biblical revelation
 - The continuous history of the people of God through the birth of Jesus Christ
- ◆ Here and elsewhere there are also lists of sacrifices and building materials for the Temple, which reveal the great dedication of the people of God to his worship; these lists are not without meaning.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He rules over the affairs of history, including the availability of people to serve in ministry, 8:18.
- ◆ He rules over the heart of the king, 8:25.
- ◆ He rules over the activities of the enemies of God, 8:31.

His goodness

- ◆ He protects, provides for, and prospers those who seek him in faith, and pours out his wrath on all those who forsake him, 8:22.
- ◆ He answers prayer, 8:23.
- ◆ He is the God of the fathers of his people, the one who has made promises to them and will keep those promises, 8:28.

Salvation

Its conveyance

- ◆ It came gradually to the returned exiles and those who had been left in the land of Israel, in the form of several different groups of people who made the long trip from Babylon to Jerusalem over a period of many years (537–458 B.C.).
- ◆ Likewise, deliverance from the power of sin, made possible as soon as a believer is truly born again, is experienced gradually throughout the Christian life, and the church grows gradually as various people contribute their gifts to its upbuilding. *See Ephesians 4:11–24.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Keep careful records of both people and financial resources involved in the life and ministry of each church.
- ◆ Write careful and accurate histories of God's dealings with his people in different times and places.
- ◆ Be very careful to use our property in a way that is open and transparent, with nothing to hide.
- ◆ Fast and pray on special occasions when we need God's guidance or help. *See Ezra 8:21-23.*
- ◆ Give sacrificially from our resources to the work of God's church and the expansion of the kingdom. *See Ezra 8:35.*
- ◆ Trust God to protect us from enemies while we are on his business.

Ezra 9–10

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness

- ◆ Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.
 - The Law of Moses against intermarriage with pagans; *see Exodus 23:32; 34:15, 16; and Deuteronomy 7:3.*
 - A remnant left by God after severe judgment; *see Isaiah 10:20–21 and Jeremiah 24:4–7.*
 - The references to sacrifices at specified times, 9:5
 - The making of a covenant before God, 10:3; *see 2 Chronicles 34:31 and the covenants at Sinai.*
- ◆ Biblical revelation is both consistent and progressive.
 - Paul, writing to a different context, where people had become Christians after they were marriage to pagans, told the people not to divorce their non-believing spouses; *see 1 Corinthians 7:10–16.*
 - Peter also assumes that Christian wives will not divorce their pagan husbands, (*see 1 Peter 3:3*), but also affirms the principle of marrying only those who share the same faith. *See 1 Corinthians 7:39 and 2 Corinthians 6:14–18.*
- ◆ Biblical revelation is meant to be met with reverence and awe, even trembling, 9:4; 10:3, and to evoke sincere repentance from those who see their sins and the sins of their people, 9:3–15; 10:1–2.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is the God of the patriarchs and their descendants, 10:11.
- ◆ He is Yahweh, the LORD, 9:5.

His goodness:

- ◆ He is the God of Israel, 9:4.
- ◆ He is holy and totally opposed to sin in any form, 9:6.

Salvation

Its conveyance: It came to the Jews as

- ◆ Restoration to the Promised Land
- ◆ Renewal of worship to God
- ◆ Rebuilding the Temple and “revival,” 9:8–9
- ◆ Sincere repentance for sin, followed by decisive actions to cease from sinning, regardless of consequences, 10:1–17

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thoroughly and sincerely repent, trembling before the holiness of God, when we are aware of sin in ourselves.
- ◆ Our repentance should lead to decisive action to break off from sin, regardless of the cost.
- ◆ Mourn, fast and pray, and ask God to have mercy, when we see sin in God’s people.
- ◆ Speak out boldly and call upon Christians to repent and cease from sin.
- ◆ Do not marry non-believers, lest they lead us away from God.

NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah 1

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Nehemiah refers to the Law of Moses, 6, including the self-description of God in Exodus 20:6; 34:6–7.
- ◆ The commands and ordinances of the law, 5, 7
- ◆ The warning of punishment and exile for disobedience, 1:8; *see Leviticus 26:33*.
- ◆ The promise of forgiveness and return if the people would repent, 9; *see Deuteronomy 4:29–31; 30:2–5*.
- ◆ The great events of the Exodus from Egypt, 10; *see Deuteronomy 9:29*.

Its roots in history: It is rooted in history and deals with historical events, 1–11.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is Yahweh, 5.
- ◆ He is great—the God of heaven, and thus ruler from heaven over all the world, 5.
- ◆ He is great and awesome, 5.

His goodness

- ◆ He is good—merciful and gracious and faithful to his covenant promises, 5, 9.
- ◆ He hears prayer, 6.
- ◆ He deigns to dwell among his people, 9.
- ◆ He exercises his power to redeem his people from bondage of all sorts, 11.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured here in the reference to God's redeeming his people from Egypt, which he did by allowing them to sacrifice the Passover Lamb rather than having their firstborn sons killed like the Egyptians, 10.

The People of God

Their identity

- ◆ In the Old Testament, they were Israel, whom God brought out of Egypt into the Promised Land and to whom he revealed his will through Moses and the prophets, and then he restored them to the land after punishing them with exile for sin.
- ◆ In the New Testament, the church is composed of all those who through repentance and faith receive the redemptive work of God in Christ and seek to follow his revealed will.

Sin

It includes: Not keeping God's revealed laws and commandments—in the Law of Moses for Old Testament Israel and restated in the New Testament for Christians, 7

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Seek to know God's written revelation as well as possible, in order to understand God's ways with us and to know how to pray.
- ◆ Appeal to God's character and his promises, when we pray, as well as to his redemptive grace to his people in the past, as Nehemiah did.
- ◆ Grieve, when we see the ruin of the church through disobedience and oppression and mourn for others' sins as well as our own—for who has no sin?—and pray to God for revival and deliverance.
- ◆ Fasting at such times is also appropriate.
- ◆ Be specific in our requests, when we pray, as Nehemiah was, 11.

Nehemiah 2

Truth

God

His greatness

- ◆ As the God of heaven, 2:20, he rules the hearts of kings, 1–9, 18.

His goodness

- ◆ He moves his servants to do his will, 1–3, 12.
- ◆ He answers prayer, 1:11; 2:2, 4–6, 7–8.
- ◆ He prospers, protects, and provides for his servants when they seek to do his will, 8, 9, 18, 20.
- ◆ He specifically provides all they need to worship him, 8.

Christ

His work

- ◆ He is prefigured in Nehemiah, who was sent by God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, for Jesus also was sent by God to restore his people, to protect them, to give them all they need to worship him—only his work, for now, is spiritual, not earthly and material.
- ◆ Like Nehemiah, Jesus first stayed for a while among his people, silent but observant, until the time came for him to speak and to lead.

Mankind

Our fallen state: In our fallen state, we are opposed to God's work and to his people, unless and until God changes our minds, 10, 19.

The Church

Its leaders: Like the people of Israel, the church today is led by men raised up and gifted by God, whose major work is to motivate, equip, and guide them to work together to build the Body of Christ, 17–20. *See Ephesians 4:11–16.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ When faced with difficulties, either in our own lives or in the life of the church, we should pray for God to guide us and provide for us.
- ◆ When praying, we should be specific, and should pray about each aspect of the work God has given us to do, like Nehemiah.
- ◆ When seeking to lead others, we should first “live” with them a while, seeking to understand the challenges they face, and keeping silent until we are equipped and ready to speak to their condition. We should also identify with them, as Nehemiah did, speaking of the distress “we” are in, the reproach “we” are in, of God who will prosper “us,” and of “we His servants.”
- ◆ When undertaking a large and difficult project, we should ask God for wisdom to know
 - How long it will take, 6
 - What material resources will be required, 8
 - What human help we will need, 1:11; 2:8
- ◆ We should enlist the help of others, motivating them by
 - Appealing to their own felt needs, 17
 - Reminding them of God’s past and promised help, 18
- ◆ We should also expect opposition, 10, and meet it firmly, confident in God’s assistance, 20.

Nehemiah 3–4

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Eliashib, related to Nehemiah's enemies, 3:1; *see Nehemiah 13:28.*
- ◆ The high priest, the priests, 3:1; *see Exodus 28:1–29:37.*
- ◆ Some of the names in this list also appear in Ezra 2 and are repeated in Nehemiah 7.
- ◆ Shallum's daughters, 3:12; he may have had no sons; *see Numbers 26.*
- ◆ City of David, 15; *see 1 Chronicles 11:7 and 1 Kings 3:1; 8:1.*
- ◆ Levites, 3:17–18; *See Exodus 6:25; Leviticus 25:32; Numbers 35:2; and Joshua 21:3, 41.*
- ◆ Hill of Ophel, 3:26–27; *see 2 Chronicles 27:3; 33:14.*
- ◆ Offer sacrifices, 4:2; *see Ezra 3:1–7.*
- ◆ Opposition to re-building the wall leads to loss of morale, 4:1–8; *see Ezra 3:23–24.*
- ◆ “God brought their plot to nothing,” 4:15; *see Job 5:12.*
- ◆ “Our god will fight for us,” 4:20; *see Exodus 14:14, 25; Deuteronomy 1:30; 3:22; 20:4; Joshua 23:10; and 2 Chronicles 20:29.*

Its historical setting: All the names and actions in these chapters, including the references to Israel's past and to the city, reflect the historical setting and nature of Scripture.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is omnipresent, hearing his people's prayers from any place, 4:4.
- ◆ He is great and awesome, 4:14.
- ◆ He is able to frustrate the evil schemes of the enemies of his people, 4:15; *see Psalm 2:1–6.*
- ◆ This also shows that he is omniscient, knowing what people think and plan.

His goodness

- ◆ He fulfilled his promises to re-gather his people and settle them in a rebuilt Jerusalem, 3:1–32; 4:6; *see Deuteronomy 30:1–5; and Jeremiah 29:10.*
- ◆ He is jealous for his people and angry with those who attack or hinder his people, 4:5.
- ◆ He fights for his people, 4:20; *see references above.*

Christ

His prefiguration: Christ as leader of his people is prefigured in the person and work of Nehemiah, who mobilizes God’s people to build the city walls, using the distinctive contributions of each person and family, 3:1–4:23; *see Ephesians 4:7–16.*

Mankind

Our social organization

- ◆ As embodied creatures, we are members of families, both nuclear and extended, as the names in Chapter 3 indicate.
- ◆ Each family is – or ought to be led – or headed – by the father, 3:3, 6, 8, 9, 11, etc. *See Ephesians 3:14–15; 5:22–6:4.*

Note: This patriarchal system, when ordered according to Scripture, does not involve domineering, much less enslaving, by the men over the women and children.

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Not doing our part in the work of building up the church, the Body of Christ, 3:5
- ◆ Despising God’s people, 4:1–4
- ◆ Conspiring to harm God’s people and hinder their service to God, 4:7–8

Its consequences

- ◆ Shame and dishonor, 4:4
- ◆ Loss of everything, 4:4
- ◆ Punishment from God, 4:5
- ◆ Frustration of our plans to do wrong, 4:15

The Church

Its organization: The organization of the people under Nehemiah points toward the organization of the church under the headship of Christ, ruling through elders and deacons, who help each believer to express his unique gifts and fulfill his unique role, 3:1–32; 4:13–23. *See Ephesians 4:7–16.*

Its enemies: God's people will always face opposition, sometimes deadly, from those who hate him, 4:1–9. *See John 15:18–25; and the Book of Acts.*

The Last Things

At the end of the age

- ◆ When Christ returns, he will settle his people safely in a New Jerusalem. *See Revelation 21:9–27.*
- ◆ In contrast to the rebuilt Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem will have twelve glorious gates instead of the ten that Nehemiah and his men repaired. *See Revelation 21:21.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Mobilize ourselves and our families to do our part in the work of edifying God's church.
- ◆ Pray to God for help when Satan brings opposition to God's work in and through us, 4:4–5, 9. *See Ephesians 6:18–20.*
- ◆ Be willing to bring some projects to half-completion before returning to complete the entire job, 4:6.
- ◆ Remember God's greatness and power to help his people when we are confronted with enemies, spiritual and human, 4:14.
- ◆ Be spiritually alert and always ready to stand against Satan's devices, even when we are engaged in our ordinary work or in our ministries in the church, 4:21.

Nehemiah 5

Truth

Revelation

Its content: The Old Testament contains not only regulations for personal and social conduct (the Law of Moses), and prophetic denunciations of disobedience to the Law of Moses (as in Amos and Isaiah), but also historical narratives about how abuses were dealt with by godly leaders, as in Nehemiah 5.

God

His goodness: He cares for righteousness and justice. He cares especially for the poor and widows, who are often oppressed by the rich, showing this care not only by legislation and prophetic warnings, but also in this narrative of Nehemiah's response to oppression among the Jews.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured here in Nehemiah's excoriation of the rich who oppressed the poor, 1-13, and in his own life of self-denial, hard work among the people (servant leadership), generosity, and hospitality, 14-18. *See also Matthew 23:14, 23, 25; and Luke 6:24-26; 12:23; 16:19-31; 18:1-8, 22-25; 22:27.*

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Getting rich at the expense of the poor
- ◆ Imposing high taxes
- ◆ Enslaving others; indulging oneself when others around us are in great need, 1-5, 8, 15

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Be angry when we hear of abuse of power and authority, and the suffering of the weak, powerless, and poor, 6.
- ◆ Think carefully before we act to correct these abuses, 7.
- ◆ Speak plainly and frankly to those who we think are in the wrong, but we must do so from an example of personal integrity, 7–18.
- ◆ Do not indulge in luxury while our “brothers”—that is, fellow Christians around the world and in our own neighborhood, are suffering.
- ◆ Reduce our own standard of living in order to help others.
- ◆ All those in leadership, including parents, bosses at work, teachers, administrators, church leaders, and government officials, should set an example of hard work, self-denial, strict integrity, caring for those under their charge, and generosity.

Nehemiah 6

Truth

God

His goodness

- ◆ He allows his people to be tested and tempted, for many reasons, including letting them exercise faith and demonstrate his care for them, 1–19.
- ◆ He gives strength, both moral and physical, to his people when they pray to him, 9 (in the context of this chapter).
- ◆ He dwelt among his people in the Temple in Jerusalem, called “the house of God,” 10.
- ◆ He gives wisdom and insight to those who seek to serve him, 12.
- ◆ He will repay wicked men for their deeds, 14.
- ◆ He helps his servants to complete the tasks he gives them, despite difficulties and dangers, 16.

Christ

His prefiguration

- ◆ He is foreshadowed in the career and actions of Nehemiah.
- ◆ Like Nehemiah, Jesus was tempted by Satan to abandon the way of the Cross to do Satan’s will in the wilderness. *See Matthew 4:1–11.*
- ◆ He kept steadfastly to his sense of mission, even when others asked him to engage in other work. *See Mark 1:35–39.*
- ◆ He was advised by others to avoid danger. *See John 11:5–9.*
- ◆ He was falsely accused of rebellion against Caesar. *See John 18:32–37; 19:1–3, 12.*
- ◆ He was betrayed by one of his inner circle (Judas).

Spiritual Beings

Satan

- ◆ He is represented here by Nehemiah’s enemies, who used all sorts of wiles and stratagems to distract him, dissuade him from his work, discourage him, and discredit him.

- ◆ Satan mostly works through deceit and lies, appealing to our fear rather than our faith in God.

The Church

Its membership: In its visible form, it contains some who are not true members of the people of God, like the Jewish nobles who were in league with Tobiah.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Seek to know God's will as revealed in Scripture, and not be distracted or deterred from it by any of Satan's deceptions, even when they come to us through people who belong to the visible church.
- ◆ Pray to God for strength when we are tempted.
- ◆ Do not be afraid, but persevere in the mission God has given us, trusting in his protection.
- ◆ Like Nehemiah, who would not go into the Temple for safety (which, since he was not a priest, he was not allowed to do), we should avoid disobeying God's Word, even if to do so would seem to bring us safety.

Nehemiah 7

Truth

Revelation

Its historical setting: Biblical revelation is set within history and much of it is history, including the genealogies here and elsewhere. *See Genesis 5, 10; Numbers 1-2; 1 Chronicles 1-11; Ezra 2; Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-39; and the lists of names in Romans 16:1-23.*

God

His greatness: He is able to communicate his will to people who are created in his image, 5.

His goodness

- ◆ He cares about each individual person among his people and he knows them by their names.
- ◆ He is holy and cannot let those who are considered defiled – morally or ritually – to enter his presence or serve in his temple, 64; *see Ephesians 5:5 and Revelation 21:8; 22:15.*
- ◆ He is the personal God, “my God,” of each true believer, 5.
- ◆ He grants practical wisdom to leaders and, indeed, to all who ask for it, 5; *see Proverbs 2:1-9; and James 1:5.*
- ◆ He is faithful: He carried out his warnings that he would banish his people from the land for their disobedience, and kept his promise to bring them back to the land after a period of time, 6; *see Nehemiah 1:8-9.*
- ◆ He sometimes communicated his will through the Urim and Thummim, whose meaning is unclear to us today, 65.
- ◆ He instituted a priesthood and sacrifices so his people could draw near to him despite their sins, 63, 65, 72.

Christ

His person: In his work as Lord and Governor of the church, he is prefigured by Nehemiah, the governor of Judah appointed by the Persian king, 1-5.

Mankind

Our created nature: We are brought into this world by birth into a family, and we live and serve as heirs of our forefathers; see the list of names of people who were “sons” and “daughters,” 8–72.

The Church

Its members

- ◆ As in ancient Israel, so in the church, the basic unit is the individual, and the second unit is the family; *see Luke 4:38–39; 10:38–42; John 1:40–42; and Ephesians 5:22–6:4.*
- ◆ God often works through families and close relatives, 2.

Note: The difference in the New Testament is that “family” is now broadened out to include brothers and sisters in Christ. See Luke 8:19–21; Romans 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:1.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Delegate authority and responsibility to others, 2.
- ◆ Choose our helpers and successors on the basis of merit, 2.
- ◆ Be faithful to God and to his people, 2.
- ◆ Fear God, 2.
- ◆ Be on guard at all times against the enemies of God, his people, and our souls, 3. *See Ephesians 6:10–20; and 1 Peter 5:7.*
- ◆ Record the names of people in our congregations.
- ◆ Try to learn people’s names.

Nehemiah 8

Truth

Revelation

Its content

- ◆ It contains the written Law of Moses as well as historical narratives of how the Law was obeyed or disobeyed, 1, 13–18.
- ◆ It often needs explanation by people knowledgeable in the Scriptures, 7–8.

Its purpose

- ◆ It is intended to lead us to worship God with awe and reverence, 6.
- ◆ It is meant also to lead us to deep repentance for our sins, 9.

God

His greatness: He is the great God, 6.

His goodness

- ◆ He is Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God of Israel, 6, 9.
- ◆ He gives joy and strength to those who sincerely repent and turn from their sins, 10, 17.

Christ

His person

- ◆ He is prefigured by Ezra, who expounded the Law of God from a high place, 4. *See Matthew 5–7.*
- ◆ He is also prefigured in the booths, temporary dwelling places, which the people made at the Feast of Tabernacles, for he “tabernacled among us” (*see John 1:14*) for a while and then told his disciples to “abide (dwell) in [him].” *See John 15:1–5.* He is the Tabernacle in whom we live and dwell as we follow him in a pilgrim life on this earth.

Salvation

Its conveyance

- ◆ It came to Israel as
 - Forgiveness of sins
 - Fellowship with God

- Fellowship with each other
- Joy in the Lord as they heard the Word of God, worshiped God, and repented of their sins
- ◆ It comes to us as we
 - Hear the gospel of Jesus Christ
 - Repent of our sins and believe in him
 - Receive the Holy Spirit, who gives us assurance of reconciliation with God, membership in his family, and true joy; *see Romans 5:1–5; 8:1, 13–16; and Galatians 3:2, 5; 5:22.*

The Church

Its prefiguration: It is foreshadowed here as God’s people who gather to hear the Word of God, worship him, repent of their sins, receive his forgiveness, and joyfully share his love and communion together. *See also Acts 2:42–46.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Have the Word of God read and explained in Christian meetings regularly.
- ◆ Have some gifted people to explain the meaning of the Bible to us (men in public gatherings, women in gatherings of women and children).
- ◆ Respond to God’s Word with worship, awe, repentance, and joyful trust in his forgiveness.
- ◆ Keep portions of God’s Word that direct us to enjoy life with each other as well as those which tell us how to please God by ethical conduct.

Nehemiah 9

Truth

Revelation

Its content: Biblical revelation includes many prayers and psalms in which God's dealings with his people in the past are rehearsed, either to stir up the people to repentance, faith, and praise, or to "remind" God of his covenant and appeal to his mercy to come to their aid despite their sins, as here.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is eternal, 5.
- ◆ He is personal, with a name, 5.
- ◆ He is glorious (beautiful, majestic, splendid, radiant, awesome), 5.
- ◆ He is unique, the only true God, Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel, 6.
- ◆ He is "great, mighty, and awesome," 32, having created the universe by his almighty power, preserving it daily, 6, and overruling the affairs of nations, 7–31.

His goodness

- ◆ He is the God who made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants forever, 7.
- ◆ He is faithful to his covenant promises, 8.
- ◆ He is pitiful towards his suffering people, 9.
- ◆ He is immanent, dwelling among his people at Sinai and revealing his will to them, 13–14.
- ◆ He provides for his people, 15.
- ◆ He is merciful and gracious and ready to forgive his people, and he never forsakes his people completely, 18, 31.
- ◆ He gave his Spirit to lead, guide, and teach his people, 20, 30.
- ◆ He is good, with a good Spirit, 20.
- ◆ He is holy, just, and righteous, punishing and chastening his people for their sins, 27, 33.
- ◆ He is willing to hear and answer prayers from his people in distress, 27–28.
- ◆ He is patient, bearing with and warning his people year after year, 30.

Mankind

Our fallen state: In our fallen state, we respond to God's mercies with constant rebellion, as this entire prayer shows.

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Afflicting subject people, 9
- ◆ Stiff-necked, presumptuous disobedience to God, 16
- ◆ Forgetting God's great deeds for his people in the past, 17
- ◆ Making and serving other leaders, 17
- ◆ Idolatry, 18
- ◆ Blasphemy, 18
- ◆ Rejection of God's law, 26
- ◆ Not heeding God's written revelation or his warnings, 30, 34
- ◆ Not serving God, 35
- ◆ Refusal to repent and turn from evil ways and works, 35

The Church

Its prefiguration: It is foreshadowed here as a people who not only gather to hear God's Word read and explained to them, but also to pray corporately to God in sincere confession of sin and pleas for mercy.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Confess our sins often to God and ask for mercy, both privately and in corporate worship.
- ◆ When we pray, we can and should use words from Scripture, appealing to God's character and to his covenant promises.
- ◆ Take heed from the history of Israel: Sin brings suffering, often very bitter and painful to bear. Even if God forgives, he also allows us to endure consequences for our disobedience. The results can be terrible.
- ◆ Take heart when we sin, for God will forgive us if we confess to him and plead the work of Jesus on our behalf. *See 1 John 1:9.*

Nehemiah 10

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: It is progressive, with certain parts no longer pertaining to New Testament believers, such as the Mosaic regulations about worship and tithes to priests, etc., because they are now fulfilled in Christ in the New Testament and in New Testament regulations about worship.

Its content: Biblical revelation is verbal and plenary, extending to all its parts and every word, as these lists of names, exact words of the covenant which the people made with God, and references to specific statutes and ordinances in the Law of Moses demonstrate.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel, 29.
- ◆ He is the Lord (Adonai) of his people and of all the earth, 29, as shown by his authority to command obedience to his rules for all of life, including
 - Marriage, 30
 - Time (the Sabbath and the seventh year), 31
 - Relationships with non-believers, 30
 - All matters of finance and property, 31
 - Worship and the material support of those who are leaders in worship, 32–39

His goodness: He is merciful, gracious, and kind, providing atonement for sin in the Old Testament sacrifices and in the offering of Christ for our sins in the New Testament, 32. *See also 1 John 2:1 and the Book of Hebrews.*

The Church

Its prefiguration: It is foreshadowed here as all those who

- ◆ Have separated themselves from the practices of unbelievers, 28
- ◆ Have knowledge and understanding to make a covenant with God through believer's baptism, 28; *see Acts 2:27–28, 41.*

Note: Baptism was for those received the Word and who repented and believed. See Colossians 2:11, where “circumcision” is the spiritual state of those who have faith in the powerful working of God and 1 Peter 3:21, where baptism saves as an act of the conscience.

- ◆ Commit themselves and their families to obedience to the written revelation of God, 28–39, acknowledging his lordship over all of life, including marriage, money, relationships with others, and worship

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Come together with other believers to affirm our faith in God and to commit ourselves to complete obedience, by God’s grace, to his revealed will.
- ◆ Do not baptize people who do not have “knowledge and understanding” of the commitment which baptism represents.
- ◆ Do not marry unbelievers.
- ◆ Offer a tenth of our income to the work of God in spreading the gospel and in worship.
- ◆ Observe the Sabbath principle by resting and worshiping one day a week.

Nehemiah 11–12

Truth

Revelation

Its content

- ◆ In lists of people and numbers of crowds or populations sometimes only men are named or counted, 11:1–12:26, 31–36, 40–42, showing that in God’s eyes, men are to represent their families, including wives and children.
- ◆ Women and children are also frequently mentioned in narratives of this sort, however, showing that they, too, form an essential component of the people of God, having equal value with men, 12:43.

God

His goodness

- ◆ He is faithful to his promises to bring his people back to Israel, restore worship, and repopulate the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding lands, 11:1–12:26, 29.
- ◆ He gives joy to his people, causing them to worship him, 12:43.

The Church

Its prefiguration

- ◆ It is prefigured here in the various groups of people who participated in the dedication of the wall, each group with its distinctive function, such as
 - Levites and singers, 12:27–28
 - Priests and Levites, 12:30
 - Leaders, 12:31
 - Women and children, 12:43
 - Those who looked after the rooms of the storehouse for the offerings, 12:44
 - Gatekeepers, 12:45
 - Chiefs of singers, 12:46
- ◆ Worship is foreshadowed with
 - Singing, 12:27; *see 1 Corinthians 14:26; Ephesians 5:19–20; and Colossians 3:16.*

- Self-purification (now spiritual, *see 1 Peter 2:1-5*), 12:30
- Sacrifices (now the sacrifice of praise; *see Hebrews 13:15*), 12:43
- Choirs for special occasions, 12:31, 38

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Trust God to fulfill all his promises, though we may have to wait decades, centuries, or even longer, perhaps even until the Lord returns to establish a new heaven and a new earth.
- ♦ Praise and thank God together in word and songs when we gather as Christians.
- ♦ Give thanks and worship God at all times for all he has done for us.
- ♦ Apportion different responsibilities to different people within the church; no one person or small group can do everything.

Nehemiah 13

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Later passages of Scripture refer to and build upon earlier ones, as God's plan of salvation unfolds.

- ◆ Public reading of the Book of Moses, 1; *see Nehemiah 8:3; Deuteronomy 31:11–12; and 2 Kings 23:2.*
- ◆ Ammonites and Moabites forbidden to come into the assembly of God, 1–2; *see Deuteronomy 23:3–4; Numbers 22:1–40; and Joshua 24:9.*
- ◆ Eliashib the priest; *see Nehemiah 12:10.*
- ◆ Tobiah, 4; *see Nehemiah 2:10; 10:28.*
- ◆ Support of the Levites, 5, 10; *see Numbers 18:21.*
- ◆ “Remember me, O my God,” 14, 22, 31; *see Nehemiah 5:19.*
- ◆ Violation of the Sabbath command, and other commands, 15–19; *see Exodus 20:10; Ezra 9:13; and Jeremiah 17:21–23, 27.*
- ◆ God's great mercy [lovingkindness], 22; *see Exodus 34:6; Psalm 103:8, 11; and Ephesians 2:4, 7.*
- ◆ Marriage to pagan women, 23–27; *see Exodus 34:16; Deuteronomy 7:3–4; and Ezra 9:2.*
- ◆ Solomon's foreign wives, 26; *see 1 Kings 11:1–8.*

Its contents

- ◆ The Book of Moses, possibly Deuteronomy here but “Moses” and “the Law” refer to the entire Pentateuch in many places of Scriptures, 1, 3.
- ◆ The narratives of the Old and New Testaments, including this book of Nehemiah and the histories of the books of Kings and Chronicles, 26.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He is powerful, and was able to turn Balaam's curse into a blessing for his people, 2.
- ◆ He is omnipresent and omniscient, hearing the prayers of his people wherever they are, 14, 22, 31.

- ◆ He is the Creator and Lord of time, with authority to govern our use of it, 15–18.
- ◆ He has the power to destroy cities and kingdoms that defy his will, 18.
- ◆ He has the authority, as Creator and King of all men, to establish kings and other rulers, 26.

His goodness

- ◆ He graciously revealed his will and his ways to his people through Moses, 1.
- ◆ He kindly condescended to dwell in the tabernacle and then in the temple that Solomon built, 4, 7, 9, 11, 14.
- ◆ He instituted a sacrificial system, administered by priests and Levites, so that God’s people could have fellowship with him, 5, 29.
- ◆ He kindly instituted the Sabbath, so that his people could rest and also have time to worship him, 15–16, 18–19, 21.
- ◆ He is holy, and must punish sin, 18, 29.
- ◆ He justly and kindly remembers and rewards good deeds done by his faithful servants, 14, 22, 31. *See Psalm 62:12 and Ephesians 6:8.*
- ◆ He is great in mercy, 22.
- ◆ He is the personal God – “my God” – of all his faithful people, 29.

Christ

His work

- ◆ The cleansing of the temple two times is prefigured by Nehemiah’s throwing out all of Tobiah’s household goods, 8–9, 30. *See Matthew 21:12–13; and John 2:13–22.*
- ◆ Nehemiah’s cleansing the people of “everything pagan” prefigures Jesus’s constant cleansing of his repentant followers from their sins, 30. *See 1 John 1:9.*
- ◆ The appointment of officers to care for the temple prefigures the calling of his disciples by Jesus and also his appointment of officers to guide and care for the church, 13, 31. *See Matthew 4:18–22; and Ephesians 4:11–12.*

Mankind

Our fallen state

- ◆ We are so related to our ancestors that their sins affect us now, 1.
- ◆ We are now divided into two kinds of people: God’s people, who in this age are those who trust in and follow Jesus, and all others, 23–27. *See 2 Corinthians 6:14–15.*

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Allowing non-believers to have positions of privilege within the church, 7–8.
- ◆ Not supporting the ministers of the gospel, 10–11; *see 1 Corinthians 9:13–14.*

Note: It is true that in the new covenant all believers are “priests,” but some are set apart for the ministry of the Word and prayer. See 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6; and Acts 6:1–7.

- ◆ Violating God’s clearly revealed will, 13–18.

Note: Most Christians have believed that the Lord’s Day is the new Sabbath and that we should rest on that day. Others believe that every day is the same and that Moses’s Sabbath regulations do not apply to us. Either way, however, the “Sabbath” principle of resting one day a week as a “creation ordinance,” was observed by God himself at the beginning, so we should take one day of rest a week. See Genesis 2:2.

Its consequences

- ◆ Exclusion from the people of God, 3
- ◆ Consequences even for our children and grandchildren, 1–3; *see Romans 5:12.*

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ See to it that the Bible is read publicly and comprehensively in meetings of the congregation, 1. *See 1 Timothy 4:14 and Colossians 4:16.*
- ◆ Obey what is written in God’s Word, with the command of the New Testament as our rule, 3.
- ◆ Limit full membership in the congregation to those who are committed and consistent followers of Christ, 1–3.
- ◆ Keep unbelievers or unfaithful believers from access to church office, 7–9.
- ◆ Support ministers of the gospel, 10–13. *See 1 Thessalonians 5:17–18.*
- ◆ Observe one day in week as a Sabbath to God, 15–22.
- ◆ Do not marry unbelievers or nominal Christians, 25–27.
- ◆ Be zealous for the purity of the people of God, though with gentleness. *See Galatians 6:1; and 2 Timothy 2:24–26.*

ESTHER

Esther 1

Truth

Note: Esther presents major problems for students of the Bible. It does not mention God, the Law of Moses, the covenants, or the temple. Esther and Mordecai are morally problematic characters. Some major persons in the narrative, such as Vashti, Esther, and Mordecai, are not mentioned in secular sources.

This book, nevertheless, is a literary gem with profound theological meaning. The flow of the plot leads to several amazing reversals, which in turn bring about the deliverance of the Jews, prefiguring the Great Reversal when Jesus was raised from the dead.

God's sovereign control over all events, large and small, also comes out clearly in this book, as does his promise to Abraham never to let his people become extinct.

Revelation

Its content

- ◆ Biblical revelation sometimes poses historical problems, such as the absence of the name of Vashti from secular sources. But her name may mean “beautiful,” and would therefore not conflict with historical records.
- ◆ Otherwise, the great gathering in Susa fits historical accounts of a grand war council there called by Xerxes before his invasion of Greece.

God

His greatness

- ◆ Though he is not mentioned, God's grand kingdom is mirrored in the wealth, magnificence, and power of the Persian empire.
- ◆ The vast extent of the Persian empire looks forward to the universal spread of the gospel and then the rule of Christ over the entire world, 1.
 - The beauty of heaven is reflected in the beauty of the palace, 4. *Compare with Psalm 145:5, 11.*
 - The absolute authority of God as King is seen in the absolute authority of the Persian king, 19–22. *See Psalm 103:19.*

Christ

His person: He is foreshadowed by the authority and magnificence of King Xerxes, with a beautiful, resplendent wife, the church.

Mankind

Our created nature

- ◆ Created in God's image, man (and woman) was given dominion over all the earth, as reflected in the dominion of the Persian kings.
- ◆ The man was created to have authority over his wife and over his household, 20–22. *See Ephesians 5:22–23 and 1 Timothy 3:5.*

Our fallen state: In our fallen state, husbands tend to abuse their authority, and wives tend to rebel against their husbands, 11, 18, which is why the Bible tells husbands to love their wives, nourish and cherish them, and sacrifice for them, and tells wives to submit to their husbands. *See Ephesians 5:22–33 and Titus 2:4–5.*

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Extravagance, excessive wealth, drunkenness, pride, lust, 4–7, 10–11
- ◆ Disobedience toward husbands, 12
- ◆ Wrath and fury, 12
- ◆ Giving, and listening to, bad advice, 13–22

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Avoid pride, especially if we prosper and succeed.
- ◆ Do not use our wives to build our own ego.
- ◆ Wives should obey their husbands, even when they don't want to.
- ◆ Husbands should nurture and cherish their wives, and not respond to their disobedience with wild anger and rash retribution. Xerxes should have realized he was wrong to order his wife's appearance and should have asked her what was wrong.
- ◆ Read all of Scripture, in order to be able to interpret any part of it in context. This chapter only begins a story that must be read to the end, and it is part of the larger story of God's ways with his people.

Esther 2

Truth

Revelation

Its content

- ◆ Biblical revelation includes records of events in pagan lands, like the book of Esther, but it is always focused on God's people, as the introduction here of Mordecai and Esther, both Jews, indicates, 5–8.
- ◆ Scripture includes problems, such as the genealogy of Mordecai, who could not have been the literal grandson of Kish, the father of King Saul, since it would make Mordecai too old for the events of the book of Esther, 4–6. Most likely, this Kish is not that same as the father of Saul, but another, later man.
- ◆ Scripture records both the courageous refusal of some of God's people to compromise with the world, like Daniel and his companions (*see Daniel 1–3*) and the compromise of hiding one's identity, as Mordecai and Esther did, 10.

God

His greatness

- ◆ God's purposes for his chosen people are worked out within his larger sovereignty over the nations of the world, like the Persian empire, from the domestic life of the king, 1–4, 8–18, to plots against his throne, 21–23.
- ◆ He exercises sovereignty over individual lives, as with the death of Esther's parents and her adoption by Mordecai, the nephew of Esther's father, 7.
- ◆ He rules over the affairs of nations through the smallest incidents, like Esther's being loved by the king more than all the other women, 17–18; and Mordecai's overhearing a plot against the king, 21–23.

His goodness: He positions individuals among his people in places where they can become useful to all of his people, as Esther was made queen and Mordecai had access to the inner citadel of Susa, 17–18, 19, 21.

Christ

His person: He is prefigured here in the person of the king, for whom a lovely bride was prepared for a long time in order to be presented to him all glorious, without and physical flaw, 8–13. *See Ephesians 5:25–27.*

Mankind

Our created nature: Men and women were created as two distinct sexes, male and female, and were meant to be together in monogamous marriage. A huge part of the process of bringing men and women together in marriage is the beauty which God has bestowed on women, and the strong attraction which men have for feminine beauty.

Sin

It includes

- ◆ Having sex with women other than one's wife, as kings do with their harems
- ◆ Misusing women, as kings do when they gather large harems, thus denying young men of a wife, and all the women in his harem the happiness of normal marriage
- ◆ Degrading women as image-bearers of God by putting an excessive value on beauty rather than on character
- ◆ It is also sinful to plot violent revolution, 21–23.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Trust God to take care of his people and guide all aspects of their life.
- ◆ Appreciate feminine beauty, but not value it more than character and godliness. *See Proverbs 31:10–13; 1 Timothy 3:11; and 1 Peter 3:1–6.*
- ◆ Do not imitate the ways of the world, including its obsession with beauty, sex, and power.
- ◆ Honor marriage, as the king did by giving a huge banquet to celebrate his marriage to Esther, his new king.

Esther 3–7

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, as the reference to Haman's being an Agagite shows.

- ◆ Agag was an Amalekite, and Saul's failure to kill him as God had ordered, in return for their ancient enmity towards God's people, brought the end of Saul's kingdom, 3:1. *See Numbers 24:7 and 1 Samuel 15:8.*
- ◆ This fact may explain why Mordecai refused to bow before Haman. Haman's decree goes out on the eve of Passover, the feast that commemorates the deliverance of God's people from their Egyptian enemies, 3:12–13. *See Exodus 12:18; Leviticus 23:5; and Numbers 28:16.*
- ◆ Esther's proclamation of a fast recalls the language of prophets, 4:3. *See Joel 2:12–14.*
- ◆ The "third day" often symbolizes a day of deliverance. *See Genesis 22:4; 31:22; Hosea 6:2; and Jonah 1:17.*
- ◆ The scene in which the plot against the Jews is revealed resembles Nathan's prophetic indictment of David, 7:3–7. *See 2 Samuel 12:1–7.*

Its roots in history: The Bible is also set within secular history: Xerxes had been disastrously defeated in his expedition against the Greeks, and his treasury was exhausted, so Haman's offer to pay him a large sum in return for permission to kill the Jews would have been attractive to him.

God

His greatness

- ◆ He rules sovereignly over both men and nations, working through the smallest apparently "random" incidents to advance his redemptive plan for his people and throughout the world, as this entire story demonstrates, including
 - The king's insomnia and "chance" reading of the record of Mordecai's and Esther's part in foiling the attempted coup, 6:1–3
 - The presence of Haman in the court just at the time the king wanted to honor Mordecai, 6:4–11

- The king's sudden discovery of Haman when he had in terror allowed himself to come closer to the queen than the law allowed, 7:8

His goodness

- ♦ He places some of his people in positions where they can be used to benefit many others, as he did with Esther.
- ♦ He uses government authority to protect them from vicious enemies like Haman.
- ♦ He opposes the proud, but exalts the humble, as he did with Mordecai and Haman. *See James 4:7-10 and 1 Peter 5:5-6.*
- ♦ He rewards everyone according to his deeds, as he rewarded Mordecai, 6:10-11 and punished Haman, 7:10. *See Psalm 62:12 and Romans 2:6.*

Christ

His person: He is obliquely foreshadowed by Esther, who risked her life to save God's people.

Spiritual Beings

Satan: He is represented here by Haman, who stood next to the king, lusted for royal honor and glory, and accused God's people before the king.

Mankind

Our fallen state: In our fallen state, we tend to desire earthly honor and power, and resent those who fail to show us honor to us, like Haman, and fear danger and death, as Esther did.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Avoid pride and lust for power and honor, for these will eventually destroy us.
- ♦ Humble ourselves, pray, and fast, asking God for guidance, when we are faced with extreme danger or perplexity, 4:1-3, 16.
- ♦ Use wisdom and tact in responding to danger, especially in our dealings with those in authority, as Esther did.

- ◆ Do not allow the fear of death to prevent us from identifying with God's people and doing all we can to be a blessing to them.

Esther 8–10

Truth

Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to or building upon earlier ones.

- ♦ The edict of punishment upon Haman and his sons reflects God's pronouncement against the Amalekites. *See 1 Samuel 15:2–3.*

Its literary forms: Biblical revelation employs literary skill and techniques, such as climax and reversal, shown in seven pairings of reversed fortunes: 8:2 and 3:10; 8:9 and 3:12; 8:10 and 3:12; 8:11 and 3:13; 8:13 and 3:14; 8:14 and 3:15; 8:15 and 4:1 (ZNIVSB).

God

His greatness: He is able to overturn the policies of absolute monarchs, to raise the lowly and place them in positions of power and prestige, and to protect his people from extinction. Like King Xerxes, he possesses absolute authority, and no one can approach his throne without special permission.

His goodness: He is faithful to his covenant promises to Abraham that ensure that God's people would not be extinguished but would become a blessing to all nations.

Christ

His person: He is foreshadowed here in the person of Mordecai, who was despised and doomed to death and later elevated to the king's right hand, with honor and power, and in the Jews themselves, who were doomed to die, but were saved "on the third day," 5:1.

The Last Things

Their foreshadowing: The last things are foreshadowed in the salvation of the Jews and the destruction of their enemies, as well as by the exaltation of the Jews to honor.

Life

Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Trust God to preserve his people, even bringing them through terrible persecution.
- ◆ Trust God to save us from Satan and death and bring us to eternal life.
- ◆ Resolutely stand against our spiritual enemies—the world, the flesh, and the devil—confident in the authority given to us by King Jesus to resist temptation and fulfill God's will for us.
- ◆ Do not use the example of the Jews to kill all those who seek to harm us. The physical survival of the people of God was necessary at that time, and necessitated the destruction of their enemies, but the church now lives by the power of God in hope of eternal life and does not need to use force to defend itself. *See Matthew 5:43–48; Romans 8:35–39; and 1 Peter 3:13–4:2.*
- ◆ Do what is in our power to protect the innocent, including innocent Christians, from harm.