

# Bible Challenge 2017

## Week 19: May 7-13

### **Prayers (Psalm 56-58)**

We continue with psalms from David; in this case, a series of Mikhtams (note that we do not know what a Miktam is apart from a liturgical term that indicates a kind of song to be sung). The first two also give us the historical incidents behind the psalms: Psalm 56 from 1 Samuel 21:10 and Psalm 57 from 1 Samuel 22:1. These are psalms of provision and worship to the glory of God.

### **Gospel (Matthew 26)**

We now arrive at the eve of Jesus' arrest. The Pharisees had been looking for an opportunity to arrest Jesus without the crowds all around (to prevent a riot) and Satan delivers Judas into their hands. They offer him a payment of 60 pieces of silver (enough to buy a small field today (perhaps the equivalent of \$15,000 today), but not enough to betray anyone, let alone the Lord of Life. Lots of people speculate as to Judas' motives, but in the end, Judas' heart was hardened and led by Satan and he was used to fulfill God's eternal redemptive plan.

Jesus was anointed at Bethany. We know that this woman was Mary of Magdalene (one of the hostesses) through John's Gospel (John 12:3) and she applies the expensive oil to his feet as part of the burial preparation to come. And then Jesus celebrates Passover with his disciples, foretelling Peter's denial and predicting Judas' betrayal.

After the meal, Jesus retired with his disciples to Gethsemane where he would commit himself to prayer and then later be arrested. The initial trial would be held at the house of Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas. Annas had been a former High Priest and still exercised a great deal of influence in Jewish affairs, thus, we know also from John that Annas is present at this illegal nighttime trial. According to Jewish law, trials had to be completed while the sun was up. From the beginning, Jesus' trial was a fraud and a sham. Then, to multiply the sadness of the night, Peter denies that he knows Jesus 3 times (as Jesus prophesied) then flees in grief.

### **Wisdom (Job 16-18)**

Job begins his response to Eliphaz with wonderful words of rebuke: "shall windy words have an end?" How often we allow ourselves to be drawn into arguments and debates that are truly meaningless. Empty words are just that: Empty. We might rebuke someone for using empty words, but they cannot be debated. How can one be debated if they have nothing substantial to offer. Indeed, "Miserable Comforters" are the lot of them. As Job finally says to Eliphaz, how can empty words provide hope for me as I go down to the grave. Indeed, this is a truth we need to remember when speaking with those who are dying. There is only one place where truth is substantial enough to comfort those preparing to die — God's word.

Bildad then begins his second monologue, truly offended by Job's previous rebuke. He essentially raises the question, "does our grief and anger do us any good?" In other words, what is, is. Put on a good face and stand before God's judgment. Indeed, he speaks for many of us at times.

### **History (Joshua 24; Judges 1-4; 6-8)**

Joshua closes with the renewal of the covenant at Shechem and the death of Joshua. This leads us into the book of Judges where the first two chapters really give us a brief recap of the events of the latter half of the book of Joshua — even Joshua's death. Then, starting with chapter 3:7, we begin the cycle of sin and redeemer Judges.

Recognize that the Judges are meant to be Types (or foreshadows) of the coming Christ. They redeem the people but also serve as prophets, priests, and kings at times when there is a need. The need, of course, is caused by sin. Our English Bibles do not capture this well, but the text repeatedly states that the people engaged in "the Evil" (that is a literal rendering of the Hebrew). Largely this is idolatry, but it is a reminder that God singles this sin out and gives it a definite article. The cycle of the book is 1) the people do The Evil, 2) God gives them over to an oppressor, 3) the people repent and cry out for help, 4) God sends a Judge to deliver them, 5) the land has peace. There will be 12 judges in the book and a few variations on the cycle, but each time the people (and the Judges) just get a little worse.

The first three judges we meet are Othniel (the paradigm of the judge and the younger brother of Caleb), Ehud (the left-handed judge who stabs the fat Eglon in the upper chamber, and Shamgar (who killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad — a long, pointy stick!). Chapter 4 we meet Deborah, the only female judge. Note that Deborah is presented as an exception to the rule to shame the men into action, not as the basis for female leadership in the church. Chapter 5 we will skip for now and come back to it in June when we see it as a prayer. But needless to say it is a recapping of chapter 4 in poetic form.

Chapters 6-8 contain the call and Judgeship of Gideon and his overthrow of the Midianites and his failure to walk in integrity by allowing the people to make an Ephod (a kind of idol) of him. We also have the account of Gideon's death and the lead-in to Abimelech's conspiracy, a break from the normal cycle of the Judges.

### **Prophets (Jeremiah 26-30)**

Once again God sends Jeremiah to confront the people, demanding that they submit to His Law and be obedient to the Lord. And once again we have the people and their leaders rejecting the Word of the Lord...this time declaring that Jeremiah should die for speaking such things. Indeed, as Jesus says, Jerusalem is the city that kills its prophets. Sadly, how often the church falls into the same trap. Yet, though the other prophet, Uriah, did not make out so well.

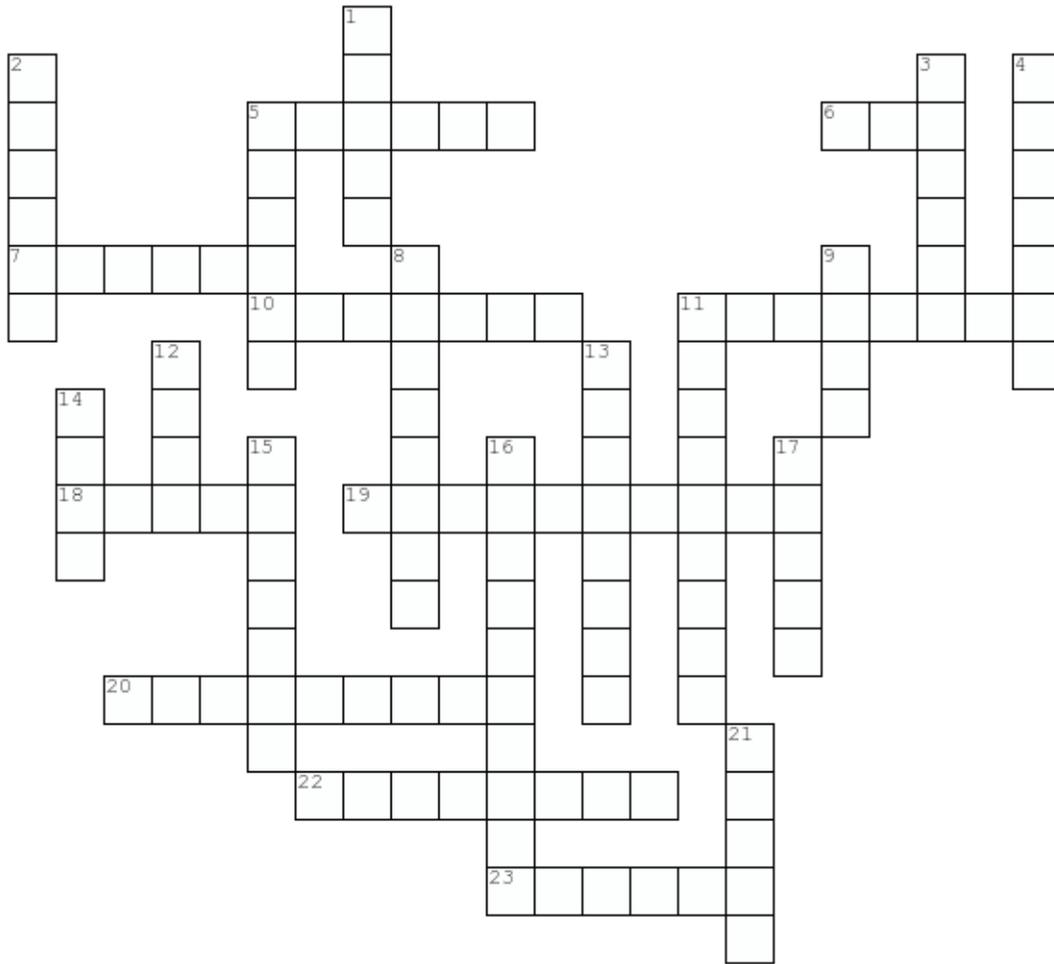
Chapters 27-28 deal with the false prophecies being given to the people and God's judgment on those who do give such false prophecies. Chapter 29 is technically an Epistle — a letter — to the Elders of the Jews in exile giving them a promise that the exile will not be forever, but that God will restore them to the land in its time.

### **Epistles (Galatians 1-2)**

Galatians functions as a kind of "mini" book of Romans. Many of the themes found in Romans can be found in Galatians as well. Galatians is earlier (probably Paul's first letter) and some consider it Paul's "trial-run" at writing Romans. This book also contains one more repetition of Paul's conversion story.

The language is clear and strong, though. There is only one Gospel. Period. Anyone (even an angel) who speaks a different Gospel is to be accursed. Thus, when Mohammed and Joseph Smith both claim to receive a message through the Angel Gabriel — as their gospels differ from the Bible and are really no gospels at all, their words should be considered accursed and anathema.

# Week 19



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## Across

5. 'It is no longer I who live but \_\_\_\_\_ who lives in me.'
6. God allowed some Canaanite groups to remain in the land to teach Israel this.
7. The name of Caleb's daughter.
10. One who brings a false gospel is to be considered \_\_\_\_\_.
11. God made Shemiah priest in place of this man.
18. Uriah fled here for safety.
19. How did Paul receive his knowledge of Jesus?
20. '\_\_\_\_\_ Comfortors are you all.'
22. This encouraging gentleman took Paul to meet the Apostles.
23. Jeremiah writes a letter to these leaders of the Exiles.

## Down

1. This was the general under Deborah.
2. A Liturgical term.
3. Paul went here before he returned to Damascus.
4. This Judge killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad.
5. Peter is known by his Aramaic name when Paul confronts him.
8. Jeremiah says do not listen to this group of people for they are false.
9. Eglon was the fat king of this region.
11. This king seeks to have Uriah killed.
12. Who anointed Jesus' feet at Bethany?
13. This false prophet opposes Jeremiah by breaking his yoke.
14. This woman gains the victory over Sisera.
15. This is he paradigm of the Judge.
16. The garden where Jesus is arrested.
17. The father-in-law of Caiaphas.
21. 'As for me and my \_\_\_\_\_, we will serve the Lord.'