

Bible Challenge 2017

Week 24: June 11-17

Prayers: Deuteronomy 32-33

At the close of Deuteronomy, just before Moses' death, he sings a song in the presence of the people. It is essentially the story of God's sovereignty, redemptive history, beginning with Abraham's call to faith and then to the Exodus from Egypt. Moses closes and offers words of blessing on the tribes of Israel (in a way that echoes some of Jacob's blessings on the twelve sons).

Moses' song ends with powerful language at the end of chapter 32, that these words of redemptive history were their very life-blood. They could not live without the living Word of God. And sadly, how often people fall into this same trap today and even call themselves "Christian." Yet, how often the church today falls into this trap even still.

Gospel: Mark 4-6

Mark 4 contains a string of parables taught by Jesus that we also find paralleled in other Gospel accounts. There is the Parable of the Sower and the seed along with its explanation, the parable of how one displays a lamp to illuminate the house and that one does not hide it under a basket (which in itself is both a refutation of Gnosticism and Secret Societies!), the parable of the church's growth like a tree and the nature of faith being like a mustard seed.

What follows Jesus' parables is a series of miracles...the calming of the storm, casting out the Legion of Demons, the woman with chronic bleeding (probably hemophilia — which meant she was not only perpetually sick, but perpetually unclean), and the raising of Jairus' daughter. We see that Jesus is Sovereign not only the lessons to be taught, but over the natural world and the supernatural world as well (in casting out the demons).

Chapter 6 concludes with his hometown rejecting him because they were too familiar with him (though note that four of Jesus' brothers are named in verse 3!). Then we see the first of Jesus' sendings...sending the Apostles out to preach with the death of John the Baptist in tow. It concludes again with two well-known miracles (the feeding of the 5000 and the walking on water) as well as a general statement of Jesus' healings.

Everything that Mark portrays, presents Jesus as on the move. He is in action and engaging with his father's business.

Wisdom: Job 31-33

In chapter 31 we find Job completing his argument against Bildad...then, instead of continuing the cycle by shifting to Zophar, Elihu steps in and interrupts things while at the same time, rebuking his elders. Bible scholars through the ages have debated over who this Elihu happens to be. His name means, "He is my God," which doesn't help us a great deal in knowing the heritage of this man or why he just pops into Job's life. It should also be noted that there is an Elihu in the lineage of Samuel (1 Samuel 1:1), so it could be possible that Elihu was a distant ancestor of Samuel, placing the account of Job during the account of the Judges. We are simply not told enough to be sure.

What we know for sure about Elihu is that he has been present for the preceding arguments as he is certainly aware of what it is that these three friends have said. What we also know is that when God shows up, he disappears once again from the story and is not mentioned again. In fact, when God demands that Job offer a sacrifice on behalf of the three friends because of their insolence, again Elihu is not mentioned amongst those who are under God's wrath.

This has led some scholars to suggest that Elihu reflects a later tradition or a character that has been added to an older text. This is a position that is hard to defend if you are going to take a stance on Biblical inerrancy, so you will find that most of the advocates of this position hail from liberal schools of thought.

My suggestion is that Elihu is Job's secretary or the author of Job's account. And one can imagine him taking down what these false

counselors are saying and getting angrier and angrier with every step. Finally, he gets mad and shuts the three down, interrupting the pattern of their assault on Job. Such, is of course, my opinion and opinions of the nature of Job abound.

Thus in chapters 32-33, we find Elihu apologizing for interrupting his elders, but also taking them to task for the falsehoods they are making. One of the most profound statements that Elihu makes, though, is found in 32:8 — that while there is indeed a spirit in man, it is only the breath of God that gives man understanding. Many think that wisdom and understanding come with age...Elihu is clear that wisdom and understanding come from the work of God giving us spiritual rebirth.

History: 1 Samuel 17-24

When people think of the adventures of David, his slaying of Goliath is typically one of the first that comes to mind. But notice a few things that are different than the way the story is normally told. First David is not a little child. Most scholars date him around sixteen or seventeen by the time he engages with Goliath. This is based on the fact that he was old enough to be tending sheep when he is anointed and then he has entered into the service of Saul long before Goliath shows up. The second element is tied to the first, and that is that Saul knows David well as David has been working in Saul's court, calming Saul with music. Finally, David indeed is offered Saul's armor, but David's rejection of the armor is not because it is too big (though it might have been, as Saul was a very tall man), but it is because David has not tested the armor — David is skilled at war as well as shepherding, and like any good soldier, will not go into battle with equipment he does not trust. Hence, he goes with sling and with stones.

Shortly after this event, we see the beginning of David's friendship with Jonathan, but also of Saul's jealousy of David. Saul wants to build a dynasty, but it is clear that God had rejected him. Then the court intrigue begins in earnest, with marriage proposals (David and Michal), Saul throwing a spear at David and then setting him on the run. Even Michal ends up deceiving her father to give David a chance to flee.

The chase culminates in Saul going into a cave to "relieve himself" while David is there and David got close enough to cut off the corner of Saul's robe (something he almost immediately regrets). David' sparing of Saul's life brings peace between the men, at least for a short time.

Prophets: Ezekiel 1-5

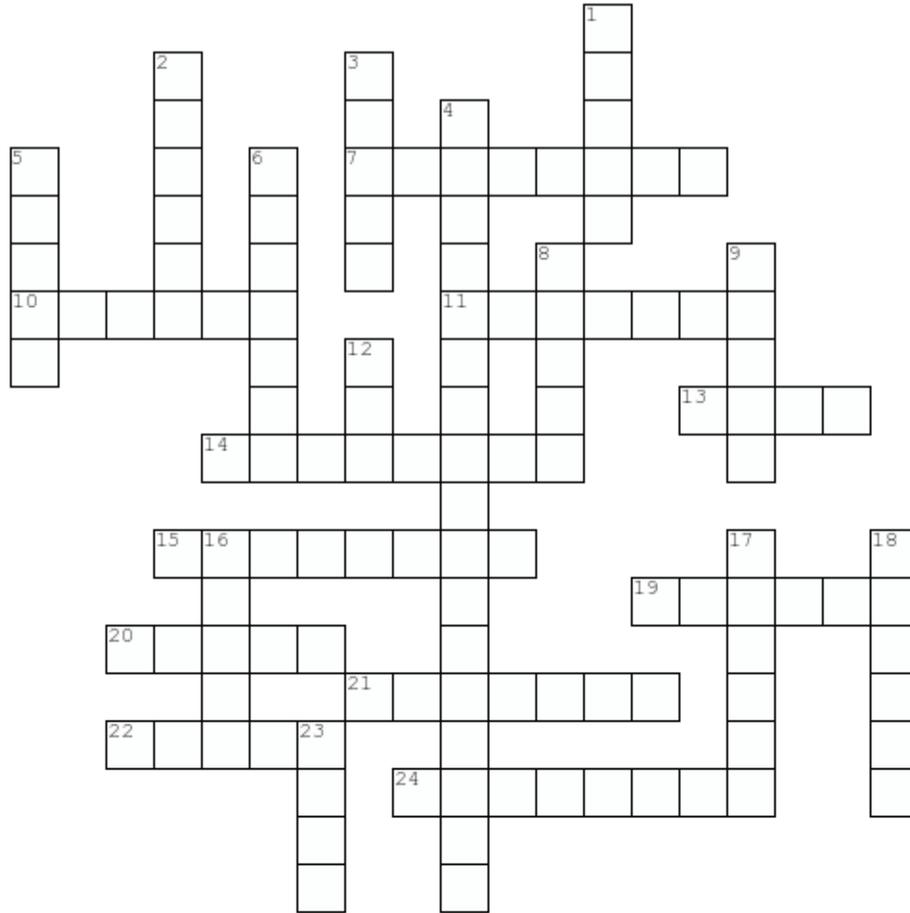
In many ways, Ezekiel and Jeremiah are related books, yet as Jeremiah is in Jerusalem as it is falling, Ezekiel is already in exile, having left with the first batch of exiles — those who surrendered to the Babylonians. The difference is quickly evident in the magnificence of the imagery used in Ezekiel in contrast to the fairly plain words of judgment in Jeremiah.

Ezekiel begins with a meeting with a group of "Living Creatures," similar to those in Revelation 4, which are later identified as cherubs or cherubim (so much for cute little babies floating around!). He also witnesses, much like Isaiah (Isaiah 6), the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus on the throne. What follows is an extended call of Ezekiel as a prophet along with the explanation of what will take place in Jerusalem...namely the destruction at the hands of the Babylonian army.

Epistles: Ephesians 5-6

Ephesians 5 begins with a call for believers to walk in integrity and faithfulness and then Paul shifts to addressing the nature of relationships in the family, reminding us that the relationship of the husband to the wife is meant to reflect the nature of the church. Paul closes with the well-known language of the "Armor of God," a clear reminder to us that we are engaged in spiritual warfare as Christians in this world.

Week 24



Created with TheTeachersCorner.net [Crossword Puzzle Generator](http://www.theteacherscorner.net)

Across

- 7.** This kind of angels are seen by Ezekiel.
10. The woman with bleeding had been suffering from this for this many years.
11. 'Pay attention to what you hear; with the _____ you use it will be measured to you.'
13. David flees to Goliath's hometown of _____.
14. This woman was primarily responsible for John the Baptist's death.
15. Jesus taught the masses with this kind of teaching to keep the spiritually blind, blind.
19. The _____ of the Almighty makes a man understand.
20. This commentator seemingly comes out of nowhere in Job's story.
21. The Kingdom of God is compared to this kind of seed.
22. Saul tries to pin David to a wall with this.
24. This person becomes bound in friendship to David.

Down

- 1.** This is where the demoniac lived.
2. This person helps David escape Saul's grasp.
3. Moses' blessings of the tribes is reminiscent of this person's blessings in Genesis.
4. Moses' song covers much of _____ through the exodus. (2 words)
5. Goliath taunts the Israelites for this many days.
6. Elihu asserts that wisdom is learned in _____.
8. The name of one of Jesus' brothers.
9. This daughter was originally supposed to marry David, not Michal.
12. Jesus sends out his Apostles in groups...how many are in a group?
16. 'I kill and make _____; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver from my hand.'
17. This is the name of the demons who inhabited the man of the Gerasenes.
18. According to Paul, marriage represents the _____.
23. 'You were unmindful of the _____ that bore you.'