

# Bible Challenge 2017

## Week 32: August 6-12

### **Prayers: 1 Chronicles 16**

When the Ark of the Covenant is brought down into Jerusalem, David led a series of offerings and sacrifices to consecrate the action. As part of that, we have a song of thanksgiving. You can also find the language of this song broken between Psalms 105, 96, and 106 respectively.

The structure of this song is laid out in such a way that it reminds us of many of the reasons for which we are to worship God. Verses 8-13, focus on the worship of God for his wondrous works. Verses 14-24 focus on worshipping God for his covenant (and for His faithfulness to that covenant). Verses 25-34 circulate around worshipping God for his Person and character. And finally, verse 35-36 close with a cry to God for deliverance...calling out to God for our own needs. There are many ways to structure our worship of God and many places in Scripture that can guide our ordering of worship, but this provides us a clear and structured format from David, which he used as he led the people. Their response was a hearty, "Amen!" Then they worshipped God before the Ark of the Covenant.

### **Gospel: Luke 1-2**

As we begin Luke's narrative, we should pay careful note to how he begins his Gospel. Remember, Luke was not an Apostle nor was he present for any of the events he records. Thus, he says he has taken to *compile* a narrative of the things that have transpired and to (verse 3) give "an orderly account" (ESV, NIV)...literally, a "chronological account." The NASB probably comes closest by translating this as "an account in consecutive order."

In other words, a typical Jewish narrative typically groups events together for thematic reasons or theological reasons, not so much for chronological reasons. Luke, being a Greek Physician and writing to a Greek audience, sets forth to put these events he has heard into a Chronological order. Sometimes people are disturbed by the fact that the order of events in Jesus' life are a little different when found in the different Gospel accounts...these are not errors, these simply reflect the character and personality of the authors and of their designated audiences.

The rest of Luke, chapter 1, focuses on the announcements of the birth of John and Jesus. These stories we all know very well, so I will only make a few comments.

- 1) The prayer of Zechariah which has been heard (verse 13) is a prayer for the consolation of Israel — the coming Messiah. The substance of this prayer can be seen later in this chapter.
- 2) Both Zechariah and Mary exhibit doubts at the call of Gabriel, but only Zechariah is judged because even in the wake of Mary's doubt, her response is "let it be according to your word."
- 3) Martha is 6 months pregnant when Mary conceives her divine baby. This explains why she stayed with Martha for about 3 months (verse 56). She was likely serving as Martha's nursemaid and midwife.
- 4) If people wonder whether it is possible for a fetus to be born again, here is an example. At 6-months in the womb, John leaped in the presence of his embryonic savior. Further, Jesus is every bit, fully God and fully man as but the smallest embryo in Mary's womb.
- 5) While Mary is called "Favored one" (verse 28) and "Blessed amongst women" (verse 42) as many Roman Catholics point out, this has nothing to do with Mary as a woman and everything to do with the role that God has elected for her to play in redemptive history. There is one other woman that is referred to as "blessed amongst women," and that is Jael in Judges 5.
- 6) It seems odd to many that John would spend most of his life in the wilderness. This is not only a fulfillment of prophecy (Isaiah 40:3), but the wilderness is the place where God cares for his people and they have to rely on him (Hosea 2:14). John will be calling the people out into the wilderness not just for a baptism of repentance, but as the beginning of the church age where the church will no longer remain "in the land."
- 7) Chapter 2 contains the birth narrative that we all know well, along with the narrative of Jesus' circumcision, presentation at the temple for covenant purification, the return to Nazareth (Luke does not record the account of Jesus' flight to Egypt), and then the account of Jesus being "confirmed" at the temple at 12 years old...here is his Bar-Mitzvah, where he becomes a "Son of the Law" in Jewish practice. Each of these events teaching us of Jesus keeping every letter of the law from even his youth.

### **Wisdom: Proverbs 10-11**

Proverbs 10 begins a new section of the book that is explicitly labeled as the "Proverbs of Solomon." Remember, as we move through this book that while Solomon authored the book as a whole, he did not author every proverb...for many sections of the book he acts more as a compiler or an editor.

The irony of the first proverb in this section cannot be passed over without a mention. Here is Solomon writing that a wise son makes a glad father but a foolish son makes a sorrowful mother. How foolish, though, was his son, Rehoboam. Solomon had died before Rehoboam entered into his great folly, but it is not sad at how often the children do not listen to the wisdom of their parents and elders...such is the way of sin.

In the end, 11:30, the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life...amen and amen.

### **History: 2 Kings 7-14**

In our readings, we cover from about 853 BC to about 770 BC. It is easy to get lost in the oftentimes quick succession of kings. In addition, many of the kings overlap each other in their reigns, a reminder of the strife that was ongoing during this time. Within this period of time, and amongst all of these kings, only Joash is listed as a good king. When we compare this chronology with the chronology contained in Chronicles, we find that Uzziah (a second good king) also reigns during this time, though he does not officially receive a mention until the following chapter. Joash, though, during his reign, brought reform.

This young king comes to power through a quite dramatic series of events. When Ahaziah died, his mother went on a rampage, seeking to kill the entire household. Ahaziah's sister escaped the clutches of her wicked mother and rescued her nephew, keeping him hidden for six years as her mother tried to reign in the land. She would find an ally in the priest, Jehoiada, who recruited the captains of the guard to protect young Joash so they could bring him into the throne-room and crown him king. When the young king's grandmother found out about the coronation, she raised the alarm of treason, yet the guards, loyal to the rightful child king, captured her and would put her to death outside of the gates. Thus, at the age of seven, Joash (also written as Jehoash) began to reign under the oversight of the priest, Jehoiada.

He repaired the temple, bringing an end to the pilfering of the priests. What he did not do was to completely bring to an end the idolatry of the land, for people were worshipping all sorts of "gods" on the high places in Judah. Yet, let us not be too harsh with him, for how many churches today still have their "high places" — things that cannot be altered or touched regardless of whether they are Biblical or not.

In the final section of our reading this week, we are introduced to another prophet that most of us know well...Jonah, the son of Amittai. This is the one and the same Jonah as was called to go to Nineveh, having a run in with a large fish and an even bigger God while he tried to flee from God at sea. We are not entirely sure whether this mention is before his adventure in Nineveh or after (I would argue after), but here we find Jonah being positively identified within the historical narrative.

### **Prophets: Ezekiel 43-48**

This section completes the book of Ezekiel. Remember once again that this is highly literary and prophetic language, designed not to give us a literal depiction of the new Jerusalem, but a spiritualized picture...designed to encourage those in exile that they have not been forgotten by the God of Glory.

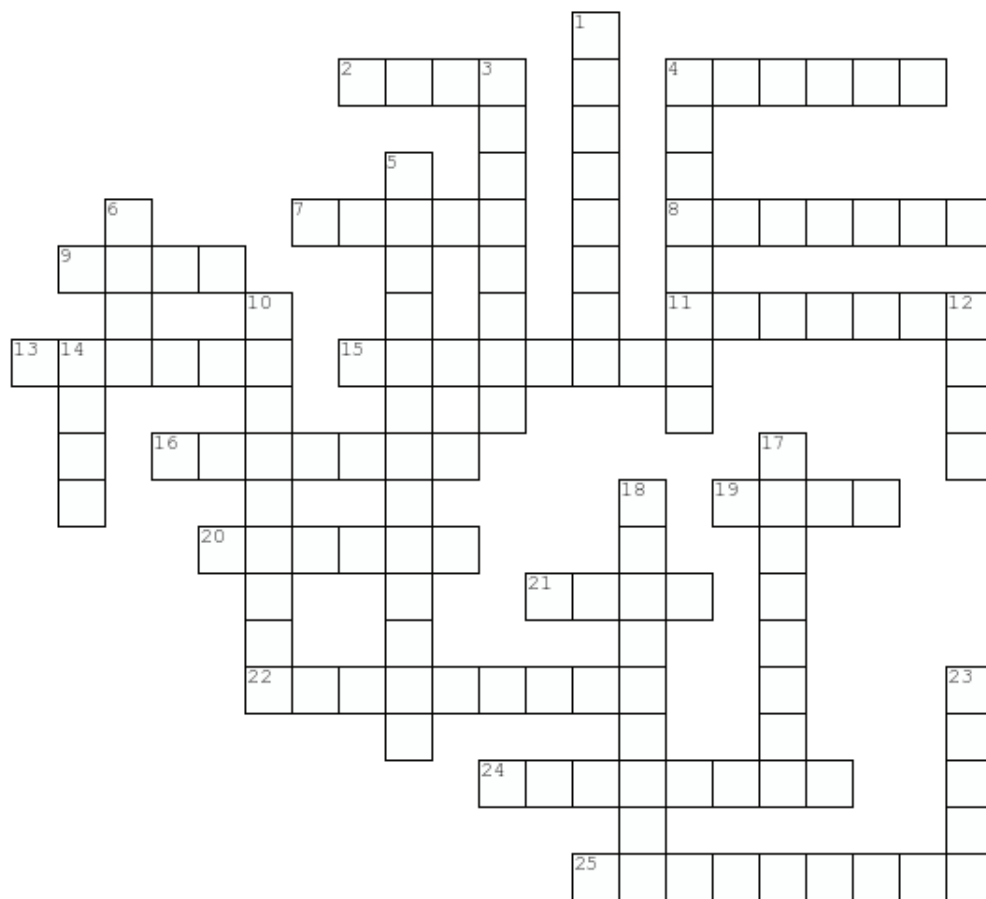
### **Epistles: 1 Timothy 1-2**

As we move from Thessalonians into Timothy, we also transition from letters to churches to letters to individuals. These are sometimes grouped together and referred to as Paul's "Pastoral Epistles" (not that the letters to the churches are not pastoral in nature).

As we enter into this first letter, Paul is writing very much like we are used to seeing him write. He speaks against false teachers who have established themselves in the church and reminds Timothy of the power of the Gospel. Timothy was sent by Paul to the church in Ephesus to address many of the problems that were going on in that region, hence the counsel...though it is good counsel for us today as well. Chapter 2 begins with a reminder of the importance of prayer for all kinds of people and ends with an exhortation against women in leadership in the church. As Adam was formed first, he is the covenantal head.

The final statement in the chapter is rather quizzical and has caused many people to speculate all sorts of things. So, what does it mean that the woman will be saved through child-bearing? The best answer is that this is a reference not so much to all women, but with respect to Eve. The promise of the Gospel given in Genesis 3:15 is that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent...salvation not through Adam, but through the son of the woman...ultimately found in Jesus...she was saved through the child born of woman, just as we all are.

# Week 32



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## Across

2. A man from this region was raised from the dead because his body was thrown on the dead bones of Elisha
4. The old priest in the temple waiting for the Christ to be born.
7. This son of Amittai is a well-known minor prophet.
8. The archangel who announced John's and Jesus' birth.
9. These ate the flesh of Jezebel at Jezebel.
11. He was 22 years old when he became king and only ruled 1 year before he was assassinated.
13. How many years old was Jesus when he had his bar mitzvah?
15. Paul says that he was appointed a \_\_\_\_\_ and an Apostle.
16. Paul had sent Timothy to this city to address problems the church was having.
19. The babbling fool will come to this.
20. This person (governmental representative) shall not tax the estates, according to God's law (Hint: see Ezekiel 46:18).
21. This king executed Jezebel.
22. This man, along with Alexander, was put out of the church by Paul for their blasphemy.
24. 'Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the \_\_\_\_\_.'
25. 'Sing to the Lord all the earth, tell of his \_\_\_\_\_ from day to day!'

## Down

1. The mother of Ahaziah who tried to kill Joash.
3. The king of Syria.
4. This person is like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes.
5. 'No foreigner, \_\_\_\_\_ in heart and flesh, shall enter my sanctuary.'
6. Doing wrong is like this to a fool.
10. John the Baptist's father.
12. The priest shall teach the people the difference between what is \_\_\_\_\_ and common.
14. He who troubles his house will inherit this (hint: a fallacious play about the Snopes trial)
17. This Caesar ruled when Jesus was born.
18. The aunt of Joash who saved him.
23. How old was Joash when he became king?