

Bible Challenge 2017

Week 9: February 26-March 4

Prayers (Psalm 28-31)

We continue with psalms of David through our readings today. These are largely direct psalms of praise and thanksgiving to God for who he is and for what he has done. They serve as a wonderful set of prayers to guide our prayer-life as we enter into this new week. May all we say and do be done in this spirit. Note, Psalm 30's superscript as well. This was written for the dedication of the Temple. You will probably remember that God did not permit David to build the Temple (his son, Solomon would), but David still made preparations for the building of the Temple, preparations that included songs of praise and thanksgiving for its eventual day of dedication.

Gospel (Matthew 12)

Due to a misstep on my part, if you are following along with these readings, you already read Matthew 12 last week. I will yet comment on the language of the unclean spirit. Too often, Christians think, "what if I could just beat this sin that always tears me down" or "If I could just change that habit." Whatever it is that we need out of our lives, we must remember that we need to fill that time with a practice that is Godly and holy lest we fall back into the comfortable sin from which we once fled.

Wisdom (Leviticus 25-27)

Chapter 25 begins the rules regarding the Sabbatical year and the Year of Jubilee. The Sabbatical year was to be celebrated every seventh year, when the fields were allowed to go fallow and no formal planting or harvesting was allowed. Anything that did grow on its own ("volunteers" as we call them today) could be eaten and God promised that if the people were faithful in observing this practice, the land would yield food enough for them and for their servants and animals.

Why is a Sabbatical year of value? It first of all gives people who farm the land a rest from their regular labors. More importantly, it afforded all people who worked the ground the time they would need to commit themselves to the study of God's Word. It removes excuses and reminds us that if we pursue spiritual things, God will ensure that our earthly needs will be met.

The Year of Jubilee (Isaiah and Jesus call this, "The Year of the Lord's Favor" — Isaiah 61:2; Luke 4:19), is the seventh Sabbatical Year in a cycle... Thus, the fiftieth year was a Sabbatical Year of Sabbatical Years. Not only did one let the croplands rest, but all debts were forgiven, slaves were set free and land that had been sold to repay debts would be returned to its original owner. It was to be a time of celebration and worship and God promised that if the people would be faithful in observing these years, that there would be no poverty or famine within the land. The sad thing is that there is no evidence that the people ever practiced this.

We close out the book of Leviticus this week with a series of laws about making vows to God. These would include both the dedication of items to God or even the dedication of yourselves to God's use.

History (Exodus 16-23)

We now begin the travel from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai. This begins with troubles, though. How does one feed that many people and animals. We are told that about 600,000 fighting men came out of Egypt (Exodus 12:37). That does not include, women, children, or the elderly and it did not include livestock. It is reasonable, then, to assume that several million people were

a part of a caravan such as this; the food that they could carry would have had to have been expended quickly. Thus, God sends Manna and will provide water from a rock. Manna literally means "What is it?" in Hebrew. This, though, enabled them to move on.

The Israelites also win their first battle with the nations between Egypt and Canaan, the first being Amalek. We are given more detail in Deuteronomy 25:17-19 as to what the people of Amalek were doing — cutting off the Israelites that were at the rear of the baggage train of people and attacking stragglers. The victory then was one that was not only for the people of the day, but God declares in that victory that he will be at war with Amalek from generation to generation.

The Israelites arrive at Mount Sinai in Exodus 19 and God offers the 10 Commandments in chapter 20. These commandments constitute the Moral Law of God which we are to obey from age to age. As Jesus said, "not a yodh or a serif will fall away from the Law before the heavens and earth pass away" (Matthew 5:18). What follows the giving of the law is the giving of a series of case laws — applications of the Moral Law which will form the basis for Israelite Civil Law in the Promised Land.

Prophecy (Isaiah 41-45)

You may be noticing that the tone of Isaiah has changed drastically as you move into these chapters. While judgment for idolaters is still on the table, this feels much more like a plea from God to reason with him and rely upon His protection and deliverance. There is also the idea of the Suffering Servant (a theme that describes an aspect of the work of the Messiah), who is the Lord's chosen one and who will break the power of the idols in the land.

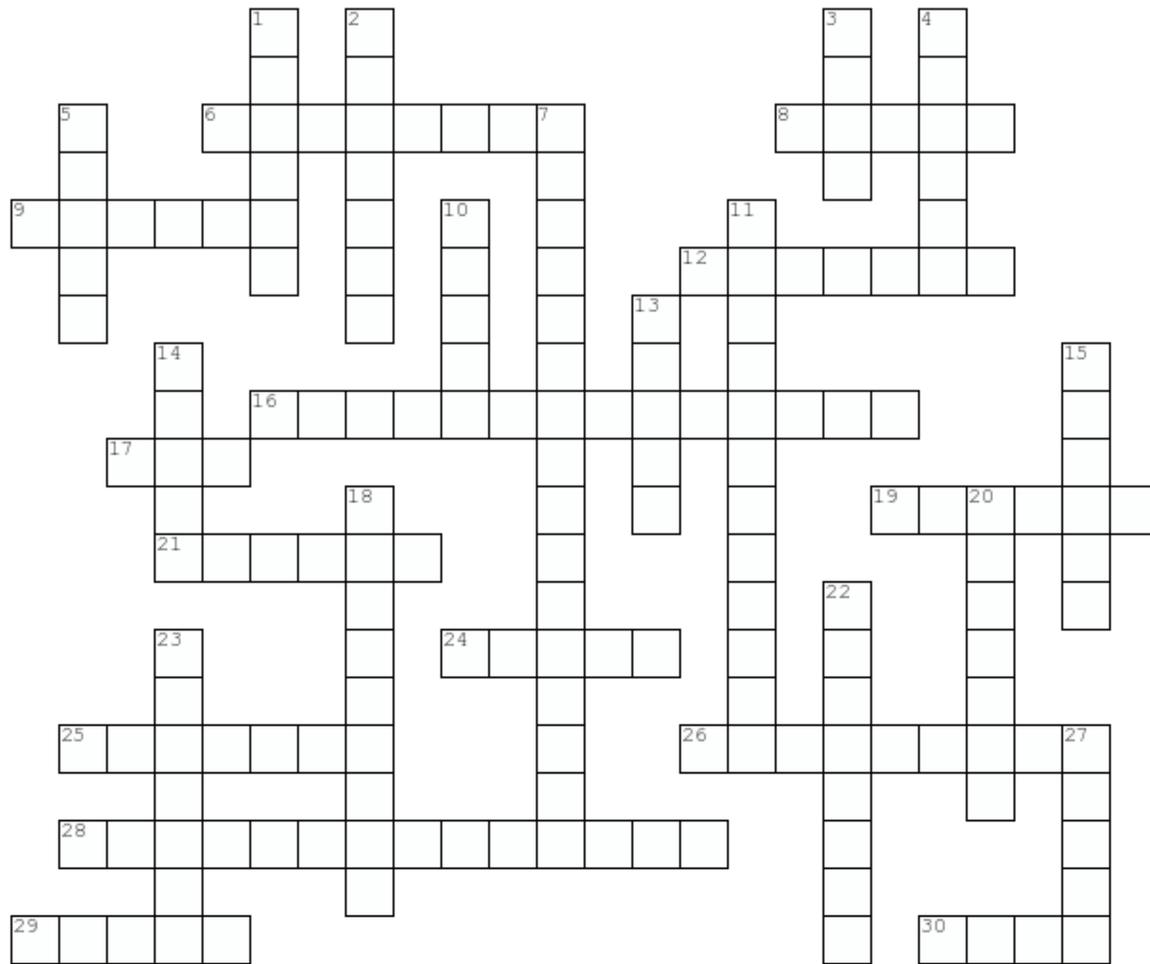
As we wrap up our reading in Isaiah this week, Isaiah offers a remarkable prophecy. We are told that it will be a man by the name of Cyrus who will subdue the nations and deliver the people from exile. This prophecy takes place about 350 years before it will be fulfilled. And, while it is not uncommon to see prophetic statements within the prophetic books, here we are even given the name of the one who would fulfill the prophecy.

Epistles (1 Corinthians 4-6)

Paul begins to change gears a little, to defend his authority as an Apostle. What we know from reading these two letters to the Corinthian churches as a whole is that sometime after Paul's initial visit, other "apostles" came who were more charismatic than Paul. And, it seems, that these others gave the people a pass on their sin and disparaged Paul's ministry. While there are no more Apostles in our day and age, the scenario is not that unusual even today, where many of the "mega-churches" who have a degree of "star-power" in their pastorates, will disparage those who pastor smaller and more humble churches. Why listen to a "nobody" when you can listen to a famous "somebody." Paul defends his ministry on the simple basis of his calling. Christ has called him to serve as an Apostle, so it is not about Paul... never was. And, the same defense should be embraced by church pastors all over the land when challenged by the entertainment-driven world. If Christ has called me to serve, it is to him alone that I am ultimately accountable.

What follows is Paul's rebuke against the church. They have tolerated sexual immorality, lawsuits amongst believers, and prostitution. And Paul's words to us, through this church, is that we have been bought by Christ with a price...we should live like it.

Week 9



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

Across

6. Believers are not to have this amongst themselves.
8. If an animal is dedicated to God and one wishes to redeem it for personal use, this much shall be added to its price.
9. If a man steals from his neighbor, he shall pay _____ in restitution.
12. Which one of David's sons built the Temple of God.
16. In this year the land was allowed to go fallow.
17. This was one of the men who held up Moses' arms while Joshua led the armies.
19. The voice of the Lord breaks these.
21. Psalm 30 was written for the dedication of this.
24. The name of the man who will deliver Israel from Exile.
25. Jesus is Lord of this.
26. God's people are called to keep His Sabbaths and to _____ his sanctuary.
28. Those who do this are Jesus' mother and brother and sisters (4words)
29. God gave the Israelites this from a rock.
30. Glorify God in your _____.

Down

1. The first military victory in the wilderness was against whom.
2. After giving the 10 Commandments, God gave them this (2 words).
3. This is the month in which the Feast of Unleavened bread is in.
4. Moses' wise father-in-law.
5. In the world's eyes the preacher is a _____ for Christ's sake.
7. A term that is applied to the Messiah.
10. 'What is it?'
11. God says he blots out our transgressions, _____ (4 words)
13. God gave the Israelites this bird for meat.
14. A Tree is known by this.
15. Jesus quotes from the psalms when he says at his death, 'Into our hand I commit my _____.'
18. 'The _____ against the Spirit' will not be forgiven.
20. God has turned my mourning into this.
22. The Lord is the _____ of his people.
23. This 50th Year was also called (by Jesus) the Year of the Lord's Favor
27. Works of Idolatry are _____ wind.