

Psalm 98-99, Hebrews 1-6 (#77) Revised 2023

Psalm 98 — This psalm helps us to remember that God loves to rescue his people. *How has the LORD rescued you?*

Psalm 99 — The psalmist reminds us that our omnipotent God provides both forgiveness and discipline when we go astray. *What were the sins of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel? See Exodus 32:35, Numbers 20:10-12 & 1 Samuel 15:11,35;16:1.*

Hebrews— This book was written during Nero’s persecution sometime between 67 and 69 A.D. when the Jewish Christians were sorely tempted to leave Christianity and return to Judaism due to their spiritual immaturity and their lack of the knowledge of the scriptures. Both the Apostle Paul and Peter had been martyred by this time, but the city of Jerusalem had not yet been destroyed and the temple was still offering sacrifices. This book clearly states that Jesus Christ is vastly superior to the angels, Moses, Joshua, the Hebrew high priests, the sacrifices, and the covenant. Now that Christ, the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, is here, the Jewish sacrificial system established by God through Moses at Mount Sinai is obsolete. The author calls for the recipients “to be imitators of those who through faith and endurance inherit the promises (6:12).” The MacArthur Study Bible, the Life Application Bible, and others suggest that although the writer of Hebrews is unknown, it is possible that it was written by one of the following: Barnabas, Apollos, Luke, Silas, Clement of Rome, Philip, or Priscilla and Aquila.

Hebrews 1— Hearing of the great temptation for the Jews to return to Judaism, the author declares the superiority of Jesus over angels by quoting several verses from the Old Testament declaring Jesus to be God, the changeless creator, who is sitting at the right hand of the Father. The writer says about Jesus, “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power (v. 3a ESV).” *1. How is Jesus superior to angels? 2. What work has God given angels to do? See verse 14, Acts 10:3-5, Psalm 34:7, 1 Kings 19:5-7, Acts 12:23, and Revelation 5:11-12.*

Hebrews 2— Now the writer hits on a major theme of this book which is for Hebrew believers to persevere and to pay close attention to the word given about Christ and not to drift away from it. God's people are in great danger when they neglect their great salvation which was confirmed by Jesus with powerful signs, wonders, and miracles. The dominion of the world to come will be under the authority of man not angels because Christ became a man and tasted death for humankind. Jesus is the very center of everything since through His sufferings He saves us, frees us from the slavery of the fear of death, and gives us victory over the power of the Devil. Because of His suffering as a human being, he has become a merciful and faithful high priest and is able to help us. *How can a Christian drift away from the great salvation he or she has in Christ?*

Hebrews 3— This chapter presents Christ as superior to Moses since the builder of the house is greater than the house itself. Just as Christ was faithful as the Son over God's house, and Moses was faithful as a servant in God's house, so we are to faithfully hold on with courage to the hope we have in Christ and not to test God as the children of Israel did for 40 years in the wilderness. We must never be hardened by sin's deceitfulness but hold firmly to our confidence in Christ so that through faith we will enter God's rest and receive the inheritance He has for us. *What does it mean for a Christian to enter God's rest?*

Hebrews 4— Just like the children of Israel in the wilderness, the believing Jews were tempted to leave the rest that they had found in Christ and return to Judaism. The key to enter God's rest is complete faith in the salvation that is found only in the finished work of Christ on the cross and not in our own efforts. So, the promise of entering God's rest was not just for Joshua's day but is also for us "today." Just as God rested the seventh day from His work of creation, so too we can rest in God in order to receive His eternal promise and not drop out because of disobedience (vv. 1-11). God's Word is powerful like a double-edged sword or a surgeon's scalpel which is able to cut through everything in order to expose our unbelief, our thoughts, and our motives (v. 12 The Message). Nothing and no one can hide from God, but everyone will be held accountable and fully exposed to His all-seeing eye (v. 13). Since we have a great and superior High Priest in heaven interceding for us, we must come boldly to Him to find mercy and grace when we need it (vv. 14-16). *What important lessons are taught to us in verses 13 and 16? Amplify.*

Hebrews 5— The author continues to speak of the superiority of Christ over the descendants of Aaron. Just like Aaron, Jesus also was appointed and chosen by God. Being man, He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. Unlike Aaron, Christ never sinned so He never had to make an offering for Himself. During His earthly life, Christ became an effective high priest through learning obedience by what He had suffered. From all that He patiently endured through loving submission to the Father's will, He arrived at full maturity and perfect obedience and became a source of eternal salvation for those who obey Him. Being declared by God a high priest after the line of Melchizedek, His priestly order was superior to that of line of Aaron. The reason for the doubts about Christ's superiority to old Judaism is that these Jewish believers had not progressed in their spiritual journey but were still feeding on the milk of basic scriptural principles instead of eating the solid spiritual food of a maturing believer. *Why do you think these Jewish believers were still immature? How can this apply to the lives of Christians today?*

Hebrews 6— The writer urges the believers to stop going back to the basics over and over again, but to build upon these elementary foundational truths, and to grow in spiritual maturity through a deeper knowledge of God's Word (vv. 1-3). Verses 4-9 have been interpreted in various ways, but the passage seems to be hypothetical showing that a true believing Jew cannot lose his or her salvation and will not return to Judaism. Verses 9-10 indicate that the recipients are true believers and that their lives reflect evidences that accompany salvation (vv. 4-10). These believers had come a long way but continued faith and perseverance, not laziness, was needed to realize their hope, and for them to inherit God's promises (vv. 11-12). God not only promises us the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ, but He confirms it with an oath. This hope we have is like an anchor of a boat and makes our lives safe and secure through the storms of life since Jesus is continually interceding for us before the Father (vv. 13-20). *Write out five verses from the Bible which are anchors to your soul when the storms of life come upon you.*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV, c. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB, c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion, c. 2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc., Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible, c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc., Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009 David C. Cook. 9. Halley's Bible Handbook, c. 2000 Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 Answers from the Bible, c. 2006 Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible, c. 2000 Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c. 1992 Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014 Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.

Psalm 100-101, Hebrews 7-12 (#78) Revised 2023

Psalm 100— This is a song celebrating God, who is both our Creator and our Shepherd. *Consider verse 3. How does it feel to be cherished by God?*

Psalm 101— David ponders God's love and vows to uphold righteousness during his reign. *How can we internalize David's passion to order our thoughts, conduct, and relationships?*

Hebrews 7— This chapter quotes the passage in Genesis where King Melchizedek appears to Abraham. It shows that Jesus is superior to Aaron the high priest because the priesthood of Jesus was after the order of Melchizedek. Aaron gave tithes to Melchizedek in that when tithes were given by Abraham, Aaron was in Abraham's body. The one who receives tithes is greater than the one who gives them (vv. 1-10). Since the priesthood of Aaron was not able to make people perfect, another priesthood was needed. David prophesied that the Messiah would come in the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4). The rest of the chapter gives various reasons why the priesthood of Christ is superior to that of Aaron. *List the ways that the priesthood of Christ is superior to the priesthood of Aaron. See verses 16-17, 23-25, and 26-28.*

Hebrews 8— Now the author speaks of a superior covenant that is administered in a superior place by a superior high priest with superior promises. The earthly sanctuary and tabernacle were just copies and shadows, but their reality is found in the heavenly sanctuary in the very presence of God. Since the first covenant was not faultless because of an inadequate priesthood and sacrifices, and since it produced only temporary results, the Lord promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34 a New Covenant which gives us completeness and permanency. *Give three advantages that the New Covenant has over the Old Covenant. See verses 10-12.*

Hebrews 9— This chapter begins with a description of the contents of the tabernacle that were located in the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The high priest would enter the Most Holy Place just once a year to sprinkle the blood on the Mercy Seat, first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people of Israel, with the result being a temporary cleansing. Christ, however, entered the Most Holy Place in Heaven once for all with His own blood in order to obtain eternal redemption. The old sacrificial system offered temporary ceremonial purity, but the blood of the Messiah cleanses our consciences from guilt and frees us to serve the living God (vv. 1-15). Just as a will only takes effect upon the death of the one who made it, the death of Christ caused the New Covenant to become operative and in consequence makes us heirs of a heavenly kingdom which shall never pass away. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness, and without the shedding of Christ's blood there is no complete removal of sin. Now that the sins of those who trust Christ are forever put away through His one sacrifice, the purpose of His second coming is not to deal with the sin problem but to bring us eternal salvation. *What two false teachings does verse 27 refute?*

Hebrews 10— The annual sacrifices by the High Priest in the Old Covenant were a constant reminder of our sin and guilt showing that the worshipers could never become perfect or lose their consciousness of sin. God's delight was not in animal sacrifices but in the voluntary sacrifice of His Son Jesus who came to do the Father's will and give His body as an offering to take away all sin once and for all (vv. 1-10). The high priests never finished their work since sins were never fully atoned for, but Jesus offered one sacrifice and then sat down at the right hand of the Father showing that full the payment of all sin was made. By His one offering we are perfected forever so that God no longer remembers our sins (vv. 11-18). Now we don't have to rely on a high priest to bring us into fellowship with God since we can enter with great boldness through the blood of Jesus. So that we can hold on to our confession of hope without wavering, we need to encourage one another to do good works and to regularly be a part of the local assembly of believers (vv. 19-25). To return to Judaism is unthinkable since it would mean to trample on the Son of God, count His precious blood as worthless, and insult the Holy Spirit who drew them to Himself. The result would be that there would be no payment for their sins, and they would have to suffer the wrath of the living God. Now they need to endure suffering, live by faith, and patiently wait to receive the promised reward (vv. 26-39). *Considering verses 24-25, why is it important to be an active member of a local church? What are its benefits?*

Hebrews 11— We now enter God’s Old Testament Hall of Fame as we see men and women who lived by faith without ever receiving the complete fulfillment of the promises God had given them. The recipients of this letter were asked to follow the examples of these great heroes of the faith. Abel, Enoch, and Noah were the pre-flood saints who gave us an example of faith and obedience during a time when the world mocked and ridiculed them. By faith Abraham and Sarah left Ur and Haran to a land that God would show them and had Isaac when their bodies were as good as dead. By faith Moses left all the sinful enticements of Egypt and chose to suffer with God’s people because he saw Him who is invisible. The author continues giving a long list of faith’s warriors with many of them triumphing in this life in miraculous ways while others were persecuted and even martyred. This great gallery of men and women of faith had not yet received the promise of the better covenant which is found in the salvation that the Messiah offers. *Describe from this chapter what faith is and what it does.*

Hebrews 12— After receiving encouragement from the cloud of witnesses of chapter 11, the Hebrew believers are inspired to run the race with perseverance by looking to the example of the Lord Jesus Christ who endured the cross and suffered hostility from sinners (vv. 1-3). Now the writer shares the purpose of suffering in the life of the Christian. Because of God’s love for us as His children, He disciplines us in order that we might share in His holiness, righteousness, and peace (vv. 4-13). When trials and temptations come, instead of receiving God’s grace during these trying times, we can allow a root of bitterness spring up in us, and many will be defiled. Esau’s immoral and irreverent lifestyle caused him to sell his spiritual inheritance for a single meal (vv. 14-17). Now the choice is clear for the Jewish Christians. Do they want to return to the Law, Moses, and the fearful presence of God at Mount Sinai and be eternally separated from God for their sin, or be lifted through Christ’s merits to the heavenly realm, Mount Zion, a kingdom that can never be shaken? We must worship God “with holy fear and awe. For our God is a devouring fire (vv. 28b-29 NLT).” *What should be our response to God’s discipline in our lives? See verses 5 to 13.*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV, c. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB, c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion, c. 2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc., Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible, c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc., Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009 David C. Cook. 9. Halley’s Bible Handbook, c. 2000 Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 Answers from the Bible, c. 2006 Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible, c. 2000 Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c. 1992 Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014 Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.

Psalm 102, Hebrews 13, II Kings 1-5 (#79) Revised 2023

Psalm 102— The psalmist reminds himself of God’s compassion and glory in the midst of intense personal grief. *How does reminding ourselves of God’s goodness help in times of great distress (see verses 12, 13, 18-21; Hebrews 10:23)?*

Hebrews 13— In this last chapter of the book of Hebrews, the author gives instructions on how to live out their faith in very practical ways. The epistle gives tender appeals to let brotherly love continue, to show hospitality, to give empathy for those in prison, to honor the marriage vows, to be content with the material things we possess, and to trust in God’s protection (vv. 1-6). The lives and the faith of the elders of the churches should be followed, respected, and imitated. Just like Jesus suffered outside the gate of Jerusalem, these Jewish believers need also to bear the disgrace that they have experienced from being excluded from the Jewish community. There is no longer a need of animal sacrifices because of the cross, but we are to continually offer sacrifices of praise by acknowledging allegiance to His name. After asking for prayer, the writer gives a glorious benediction and closes with the desire to be with these fellow believers soon. *What does the author say about: prisoners (v. 3), marriage (v. 4), Jesus Christ (vv. 8, 12, 20-21), strange teachings (v. 9), and what our response should be to the leaders of the church (vv. 17)?*

II Kings— This book is a continuation of I Kings and begins with the King Ahaziah of Israel and the transition between the prophets Elijah and Elisha. In chapter 17 we see the captivity and permanent dispersion of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria. The book ends with the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity and exile of Judah to Babylon. II Kings began about 850 B.C. and ended with the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

II Kings 1— Now Elijah has a confrontation with the son of Ahab, Ahaziah, who is the king of Israel. After becoming seriously injured in the palace, Ahaziah sent messengers to Ekron in the territory of the Philistines to inquire of Baal-zebub to see if he would recover from his injury. Being informed by the angel of the Lord what was happening, Elijah intercepted the messengers and asked “Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub?” He then told the messengers that the king would certainly die. Upon hearing Elijah’s message, the king sent back to Elijah a captain with 50 soldiers and demanded that Elijah appear before the king. Elijah called down fire from heaven and consumed all the men. After this happened to a second group of 50 with their captain, a third captain and his 50 men showed great humility and pleaded for mercy on their lives. Elijah spared them and went with them to declare in person to the king that he would certainly die. *What does this story show about (1) the spiritual state of King Ahaziah who had three opportunities to repent, (2) the hearts of the three captains, and (3) lost humanity today? See II Peter 3:8-9.*

II Kings 2— The final days of Elijah’s ministry were coming to a close and soon he would be taken up to heaven in a whirlwind. Although he tried to convince Elisha to not go with him, Elisha would not be deterred and stayed with Elijah until his transition into heaven in a chariot of fire drawn by horses. Upon coming to the Jordan River, Elijah struck the waters with his cloak and the river parted so that they could cross the river on dry land. Elisha asked Elijah for a double portion of his spirit and received it. Returning from Elijah’s transition to heaven, Elisha came again to the Jordan River and struck the waters with Elijah’s cloak that was left behind, and the waters parted as before. Upon crossing the river, the sons of the prophets all recognized that the spirit of Elijah was now resting on Elisha. The prophets complained because of the bitter water and unfruitful land. Elijah put salt in a new bowl and threw the salt into the spring, and the water became purified at that moment. Because a group of young men mocked Elisha saying, “Go up baldy,” Elisha cursed them, and two bears came out of the woods and mauled 42 of them. *Was Elisha justified in cursing the young men who called him names? Why or why not?*

II Kings 3— Although King Joram, son of Ahab, was not as bad as his father, he still clung on to the sins of Jeroboam that caused Israel to go into idolatry. Since Moab had ceased to pay tribute that had been paid to Israel since the days of King Omri, King Joram formed a coalition with King Jehoshaphat of Judah and the king of Edom to go and attack Moab. Upon taking the route of the wilderness through Edom for seven days, they found no water for the army or the animals. Although King Joram thought it was their doom caused by the Lord, Jehoshaphat asked for a prophet of Yahweh so they could inquire of Him. Finding out that Elisha was near, the three kings went to Elisha who asked for music to be played so he could give prophecy. The Lord commanded them to dig trenches which were filled with water the next morning by the Lord. Not only did water come from the direction of Edom and fill the land, but also the water appeared to be blood to the King of Moab who thought the three kings had fought among themselves. Moab attacked the armies prematurely, and Israel and the coalition fought against Moab, and victory soon followed for them. Seeing defeat, Mesha, king of Moab sacrificed his firstborn son as a burnt offering to their god Chemosh. The chapter ends with these words, “The fury (wrath) against Israel was great; they withdrew and returned to their own land (v. 27b, NIV).” *Why was the fury or wrath very great against Israel? Explain the meaning of this verse (v. 27b).*

II Kings 4— This chapter gives four powerful miracles the Lord performed through Elisha. First, after the death of a prophet, his creditors wanted to take a widow’s two sons as slaves to pay off the debt the late prophet owed. Elisha multiplied the small amount of oil that the widow had so she could pay off the creditors and also have money to live on (vv. 1-7). Since he was an itinerate prophet, a wealthy Shunammite woman regularly offered Elisha meals and eventually built a small room on the roof of her house for him to stay every time he passed by Shunem (located in north central Israel). Because of her

great kindness to Elisha, the Lord gave the woman and her husband a son whose birth Elisha had predicted a year earlier. In time, the son became sick and died, and through the power of the Lord, Elisha raised him from the dead (vv. 8-36). During the time of a famine in the land, Elisha ordered the attendant to prepare a large pot of stew for the sons of the prophets. One of the young men gathered herbs and wild gourds to put into the pot but didn't realize that they were poisonous. Upon finding out the stew was deadly, Elisha threw flour into the pot which purified it and made it edible (vv. 38-41). Finally, Elisha fed one hundred prophets by multiplying twenty individual loaves of bread so that all would be able to eat. This miracle happened according to the Word of the Lord (vv. 42-44). *What might be the reasons why God would allow the Shunammite's son die? See also II Kings 8:1-6.*

II Kings 5— This incredible story of Naaman, the commander of the army of Aram (Syria), is also told by Christ in Luke 4:27 where Naaman would represent the Gentiles who would believe in Him. A captive servant girl from Israel tells Naaman's wife about a prophet in Samaria who could cure her master of his leprosy. The king of Aram sends this valiant Naaman, loaded with gifts, to Samaria to be healed, but the king of Israel instead thinks he is picking a fight. After hearing of the king's consternation, Elisha has the king send Naaman to him. Upon Naaman's arrival, Elisha sends his servant Gehazi to tell Naaman to go to the Jordan River (32 miles away from Samaria) and immerse himself seven times in the river. After the immediate reaction of rage for lack of respect and such a simplistic solution, and through the encouragement of his servants, he went to the Jordan River, dipped seven times, and was healed of his leprosy. Naaman desired to say thank you by delivering great gifts, but Elisha refused them. Elisha's servant, Gehazi, secretly ran after Naaman and asked for some of the gifts. Upon his return, he was confronted by Elisha and was struck by this same disease of leprosy that Naaman once had because of his lying, deception, and greed. *Describe the faith (or lack of it) and values of the five key individuals in this chapter: (1) the young captive girl from Israel, (2) Naaman, (3) the king of Israel, (4) Elisha, and (5) Gehazi. #6. p. 206.*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV, c. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB, c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion, c. 2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc., Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible, c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc., Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009 David C. Cook. 9. Halley's Bible Handbook, c. 2000 Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 Answers from the Bible, c. 2006 Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible, c. 2000 Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c. 1992 Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014 Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.

Psalm 103, II Kings 6-11 (#80) Revised 2023

Psalm 103— David reminds us to be mindful of all of God’s benefits and encourages us to praise Him for all that He has done. *What are the five benefits listed for which we can praise/bless the Lord? Give five other benefits we have as a Christian.*

II Kings 6— As the school of the prophets grew in number, there was need to expand their facilities to accommodate the students. Going to the Jordan River to cut down trees for lumber for the new building, an iron axe head fell into the water. Since the axe was borrowed, there was anxiety in the heart of the one who had lost it. Elisha had them cut a stick, throw it into the place where the axe head had dropped, and the iron axe head floated to the top of the water (vv. 1-7). The king of Aram (Syria) was waging war against Israel, and every time they formed a strategy to fight against the Israel’s army, Elisha would warn the king of Israel and keep Aram from gaining victory. Finding out that it was Elisha who was warning the king of Israel, the king of Aram sent a large army to Dothan to capture Elisha and keep him from informing the king of Israel. After striking the army of Aram with blindness, Elisha led the army to Samaria to stand before the king of Israel. Elisha advised the king to give the army a feast and send them back to the king of Aram (vv. 8-23). Sometime later, King Ben-hadad of Aram marched up to Samaria and besieged the city for an extended period of time so that eventually the city was suffering great starvation. When an act of cannibalism was heard by the king, he put the blame on Elisha and then went to take Elisha’s life. The king knew the Lord was the one who caused the famine and siege and figured there was no way the Lord could reverse it. *What are the lessons we are taught by the story of Elisha’s servant who had his eyes opened to the invisible protection of God upon them (v. 17)? See also Psalm 34:7, Psalm 91:11, Hebrews 1:13-14, and Matthew 26:53.*

II Kings 7— When the king’s messengers came to Elisha to declare the king’s anger over the famine because of the siege, Elisha prophesied that within a day the city of Samaria would be delivered from the King of Aram, and the siege would be over, and food would be readily available. The incredulous captain responded that it would be impossible for that to happen and paid for his disbelief with his life the next day. God used lepers to advise the city of Samaria the next morning that the army of Aram had fled and left food, supplies, and animals behind. “The Lord had caused the Aramean camp to hear the sound of chariots, horses, and a great army (v. 6a, CSB).” When the good news was heard by the people, they

rushed out of the gate to gather the spoils and trampled to death the captain of the guard in fulfillment of Elisha's prophecy. *The lepers said, "We're not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves (v. 9a, NIV)." As Christians we have the eternal good news of the gospel to offer. Give the names of those God has put in your life who need to hear the good news of Christ. How do you plan to reach them?*

II Kings 8— Elisha warned the Shunammite woman to leave Israel because of the seven-year famine the Lord would send. Obeying the word of the Lord, she moved her family to the land of the Philistines and returned to Israel when the famine was over. The very moment she went into the king to appeal for the return of her house and land, Elisha's servant Gehazi was relating, upon the request of the king, the miracles of Elisha including the raising of her son from the dead. Because of this, all of her land was restored by the king (vv. 1-6). King Ben-hadad of Aram received word that Elisha had come to Damascus, and so he sent Hazael, the commander of his army, to ask if he would recover from his illness. Elisha wept when he revealed to Hazael that he would become the next king and would do horrible atrocities to Israel. The next day Hazael killed Ben-hadad and became king in his place (vv. 7-15). Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, became king of Judah and was married to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and did great evil in Judah. When Joram of Israel died, Ahaziah his son took his place and continued to do evil. (vv. 16-29). *Upon reading the story of the Shunammite woman in this chapter, what spiritual lessons can be applied to our own lives?*

II Kings 9— Elisha commissioned one of the young prophets to go to Ramoth-gilead and anoint Jehu to be king, and commanded him to eliminate every one of Ahab's descendants because of his evil and to avenge the blood of the prophets (vv. 1-13). Having been wounded in a war with Hazael, the king of Aram, King Joram of Israel returned to the palace in Jezreel to recuperate. King Ahaziah of Judah, a grandson of Ahab, came down to visit Joram. Coming to Jezreel with a company of soldiers, Jehu killed both Joram and Ahaziah and took their bodies to the field of Naboth to fulfill the prophecy of Elijah (vv. 14-28). Upon arriving at the palace in Jezreel and seeing Jezebel in the window of the palace above, he commanded the officials that were with her to throw her down. Her death fulfilled the prophecy of Elijah, "On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs will devour Jezebel's flesh (v. 36b, NIV)." *Thinking of the horrific death of Ahab's descendants, why is sin, disobedience, and idolatry so evil?*

II Kings 10— After the death of Joram, Ahaziah, and Jezebel, this chapter details the complete purge of every one of Ahab’s descendants including sons, relatives, close friends, and all Baal worshipers. Motivated by the zeal of the Lord, Jehu begins by the elimination of the 70 sons of Ahab. Fearing the fierce wrath of Jehu, the rulers, elders, and guardians delivered the heads of the 70 sons to the entrance of the gate of Jezreel. Next, all the close friends and priests of Ahab and the relatives of Ahaziah were slaughtered by Jehu’s men. Finally, all the prophets, worshipers, and priests of Baal were summoned to the temple of Baal where they were killed, and the idols and worship center were destroyed. Although he did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, God promises Jehu that four generations of his sons would sit on the throne of Israel because of his zeal to completely eliminate the line of Ahab.

Verses 31-32 revealed that although Jehu carried out God’s instructions about Ahab’s line, he didn’t turn away from the sins of Jeroboam which included the worship of the golden calves. What was the result of incomplete obedience in the life of Jehu? Stop right now and ask the Lord to reveal to you any area of incomplete obedience in your life. If anything comes to your mind, confess it and fully surrender it to God.

II Kings 11— In this very dark history of Judah, Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel and mother of Ahaziah who was killed by Jehu, began to destroy all the royal heirs. Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah and wife of Jehoiada the chief priest, stole the infant son Joash, the only living descendent of David, and kept him hidden in the Temple for six years. At the age of seven, Jehoiada anointed Joash as king of Judah with the help of the Levites and the military (vv. 1-12). Hearing the rejoicing of the coronation of King Joash, the self-proclaimed Queen Athaliah hurried to the temple to investigate what was happening. She was seized by the commanders and taken outside and executed. After making a covenant between the Lord, King Joash, and the people, the temple of Baal was torn down and King Joash took his rightful place on the throne. *Upon the eradication of Ahab’s family and Baal worship in Israel, Athaliah retaliated and killed all the descendants of King David (she thought). What does the Bible say about revenge for the Christian? See Matthew 5:38-48, and Romans 12:17-21.*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV, c. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB, c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion, c. 2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc., Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible, c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc., Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009 David C. Cook. 9. Halley’s Bible Handbook, c. 2000 Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 Answers from the Bible, c. 2006 Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible, c. 2000 Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c. 1992 Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014 Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.