

## Psalm 100-101, Isaiah 53-59 (#77)

**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?*

**Isaiah 53**— The fourth Servant-song continues with the clearest and most explicit prophecies concerning the mission of the coming Servant who would vicariously atone for the sins of the world. This chapter was so descriptive of Christ's first coming that liberal scholars said it had to be written after the life of Jesus. In 1947 the Dead Sea Scrolls were found and dated from 250 B.C. and after and contained the book of Isaiah proving that it was prophecy not history. When Jesus came, His humble birth and unpretentious life did not seem to reveal the great warrior king they were looking for, but only those with the discerning eye of faith understood His real mission to redeem humanity. The theme of verses 4 to 12 is the substitutionary atonement by the suffering Servant for our sins resulting in forgiveness and healing. This passage makes it clear that Jesus was not a martyr, nor was His death an accident, but His sacrificial death was predetermined in order to satisfy the righteous wrath of Yahweh and bring cleansing and forgiveness to many. *From verse 4 to 12, write down the part of the verses that declare the substitutionary payment for our sins.*

**Isaiah 54**— Now that the suffering Servant has taken care of the sin problem, Israel's husband Yahweh will again restore His relationship with His wife which began at Mount Sinai but was abandoned temporarily due to her continued adultery with other gods. Just as God made a covenant with Noah that it would never rain again after the flood, He also makes a covenant with Israel that He will never again be angry or rebuke them. The Lord promises that the storm-battered city will be rebuilt and will be secure under a government that is just and fair. Yahweh promises victory in battle against any and every nation that tries to attack Israel. *The Lord promises Israel that He will never again be angry or rebuke Israel for their sin and disobedience, and that His covenant of blessing will never be broken (vv. 9-10). What is the exact time that this promise will be fulfilled? See also Jeremiah 31:31-34, 36.*

**Isaiah 55**— Yahweh invites anyone and everyone to come to Him who is thirsty and hungry and find satisfaction in what He provides. If Israel listens and obeys, the Lord will make an everlasting covenant with them as He did with King David and will cause them to be the leader of nations. For those who are willing to abandon their wicked lives, seek the Lord, and return to Him, He will have compassion on them and abundantly pardon. Just like rain comes and saturates the ground, making it germinate and sprout, so God's Word will accomplish its purpose and produce the intended fruit. Great joy and blessing will be heaped on Israel as they renew their relationship with Yahweh. *Where do the people of this world go to in order to find satisfaction? What really satisfies?*

**Isaiah 56**— The Lord stresses the importance of justice and righteousness for His future kingdom where no one will be excluded including foreigners and eunuchs. All those who love Yahweh, become His servants, and keep His Sabbath will be acceptable to God. His house will be called a house of prayer for all nations, not just for Israel. Starting at verse nine, Isaiah switches from Israel's future blessing to a condemnation of their watchmen who live to fulfill their own selfish desires and enjoy drunken parties. *Who are the watchmen mentioned in verse 10? What did Isaiah say about the watchmen?*

**Isaiah 57**— Sometimes people wonder why the righteous die early, but God says that He is protecting them from evil because they will find rest and peace for them when they die (vv. 1-2). Isaiah thunders judgment on Judah for polluting the land with idolatry and the sacrifice of children which will ultimately lead them into the Babylonian captivity (vv. 3-13). The Lord in His mercy and grace works to restore those who are penitent and are willing to humble themselves before the High and Exalted One. Yahweh longs to heal and restore the wayward so that they may find the peace their hearts desire, but there will never be peace for the wicked (vv. 14-21). *Where does the Lord live (dwell)? Why is this important? See James 4:6.*

**Isaiah 58**— This is a powerful chapter that speaks of our hypocrisy in which we go through the rituals of fasting, attend to the services of the church, but not living moment by moment in the presence of the Lord. We do not enjoy fellowship with Him or meet the needs of the poor by serving them. The people of Judah thought that if they fasted and did all the temple rites, then God would have to respond to them regardless of the evil they were doing. The Lord then tells them the type of fast day that is acceptable to Him. If they follow what He commands, then the glory of the Lord will appear and God will answer their cries. True spiritual piety can never be separated from compassion and justice. #6, p. 309. If they would obey the Lord with acts of compassion and love, He promises to guide them, strengthen them, and use them in rebuilding the ruined cities. Then the Lord stated the Sabbath was to be a day of rest in which they would enjoy their relationship with Him, but instead it had become a day of personal pleasure and commercial commerce. *What kind of fast day did God have in mind for the Jews? See verses 6 to 7. How can you apply these verses to own your life?*

**Isaiah 59**— These difficult days in our world are no different than during the days of Judah before the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. Then as now, the real problem is that our sin and rebellion has separated us from our God, and untold evil has been committed. Isaiah then enumerates a long list of wickedness including violence and murder, lying and deceitful lips, and injustice including the attacking of those who renounce evil. When the world is at its darkest point, the Lord will bring righteousness and salvation to the repentant but vengeance on the wicked. In verses 16 to 21, Isaiah looks into the far future to see the coming of the Redeemer to Zion to save those who have turned from their sin and fear His name. Yahweh will make His covenant with Israel and give them His Spirit in order to enable them to obey His commands and seek Him. *What future event is Isaiah speaking of when he says, "The Redeemer will come to Zion?" See Zechariah 14:3-4, Romans 11:25-27, and Revelation 19:11-16.*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups . c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV. 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 Questions & 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, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.

## Psalm 102, Isaiah 60-65 (#78)

**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)?*

**Isaiah 60**— After the thick darkness of the Day of the Lord in which God will judge the whole earth for their wickedness, the light and glory of the Lord appears as He comes to reign in Jerusalem. Sons and daughters of Israel from all over the earth will come to dwell in the Promised Land, the wealth of the nations will flow into it, and the splendor of the temple of Yahweh will be glorious. The gates of Jerusalem will be opened continuously so that people and kings of the earth can come with silver and gold to honor the Holy One of Israel. The trees of Lebanon will be brought to beautify the Lord’s glorious sanctuary, the descendents of those who oppressed Israel will come and bow down, and the Lord will make His chosen people “an object of eternal pride, a joy from age to age (v.15b HCSB).” No violence, devastation, or mourning will be a part of this kingdom age, but the words to describe this time will be peace, righteousness, and salvation. In verse 19, the prophet seems to look beyond the millennial kingdom to the New Jerusalem in the eternal state (Revelation 21-22). *Verse 1 says, “Arise, shine, for your light has come,” and in verse 3 it says, “and your nations shall come to your light.” What is meant by the word “light?” See Isaiah 9:2, Matthew 4:12-16, and John 8:12.*

**Isaiah 61**— This chapter speaks of the coming anointed Messiah and His kingdom where mourning will be over, good news will be proclaimed to the poor, and prisoners will be freed to receive a crown of beauty in exchange for ashes (vv. 1-3). This new era will be one of rebuilding the ancient ruins, of Israel being honored by foreigners bringing them treasures from around the world, and strangers becoming their servants (vv. 4-7). The Lord who loves justice will make an everlasting covenant with Israel and their descendents in order to prosper them and show to the nations that they are truly blessed by Him (vv. 8-9). What a transformation has taken place in Israel! The bride of Yahweh has adorned herself with the garment of salvation and the robe of righteousness (10-11). *Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2 in the synagogue in Nazareth. When announcing Himself as the Messiah by reading these verses, what did He leave out and why? Compare Isaiah 61:1-2 with Luke 4:16-21.*

**Isaiah 62**— The Lord through the prophet speaks of His determination to transform Jerusalem from a forsaken and desolate city to one where her righteousness shines like a bright light to the nations of the earth. Yahweh will renew His relationship with His wife Israel and call her Hepzibah (My delight is in her) and Beulah (the bride of God), and she will become a glorious crown in the hand of God (vv. 1-5). Now watchmen on the walls are to pray

and cry out to Yahweh day and night until He makes Jerusalem famous as the City of Praise. When this happens God's people will no longer be plundered but will be able to eat and drink of their own harvests (vv. 6-9). "Build the highways and clear the boulders from the roadways because your Savior is coming and His reward is with Him." Finally, after many centuries of waiting, Israel will truly be called the Holy People and the Lord's redeemed (vv. 10-12). *Verse 6 speaks of the watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem. What was their assignment, and what other prayer in the Bible is similar? Explain. See Matthew 6:9-13.*

**Isaiah 63**— The chapter begins with the Messiah meting out vengeance on the wicked nations (Edom) at the Battle of Armageddon at the consummation of the tribulation. Isaiah describes Yahweh's unfailing love, faithfulness, and mercy upon Israel down through the centuries, but they rebelled against Him and grieved His Holy Spirit in their continued disobedience (vv. 1-10). "We remember the olden days when Moses, God's servant, led us through the Red Sea and finally gave us rest in the Promised Land," Isaiah says (11-14). Speaking for Israel, Isaiah asks God to show compassion on them since His name is Redeemer who needs to act in order to keep the people of Israel from straying in their ways and hardening their hearts. Living as conquerors during times of peace and security did not last very long for Israelites, and now the enemy is trampling down the temple and taking them as captives (vv. 15-19). *What similarities are there between Isaiah 63:1-6 and Revelation 19:11-15 when looking at the return of Jesus Christ to earth to judge the nations?*

**Isaiah 64**— The Israelites long for the manifest presence of the Lord just as they experienced it at Mount Sinai when the mountains quaked and God came down to be with His people. Isaiah admits that their sin is what has caused God to turn His face away from them, and that even their righteous acts are like filthy, polluted rags (vv. 1-7). The prophets said, "Yahweh, You are our Father and potter and we are the work of your hands so don't hold your anger against us forever. Look at what total destruction has happened to the temple and the city of Jerusalem, but now we implore You to take your anger away from us (vv. 8-12)." The words in this chapter were written 100 years before they happened showing the amazing omniscience of God. *Verse 4 says, "From ancient times no one has heard, no one has listened, no eye has seen any God except You, who acts on behalf of the one who waits on Him (HCSB)." What does it mean to wait on the Lord? Illustrate and explain.*

**Isaiah 65**— The Lord longs to be found by the rebellious and obstinate people of Israel, but they don't want to follow His ways and seek His face. Yahweh will repay them for their evil deeds such as worshipping false gods, being involved in the occult and demons, and eating forbidden food (vv. 1-7). Verses 8 to 16 contrast the wicked majority who are eliminated by God and the righteous servants who will be preserved to return to the land of Judah. This prophecy may be a dual fulfillment by speaking about the close at hand judgment on the wicked Jews and the preservation of the righteous remnant at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (586 B.C.), but may also speak of the still future time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7) during the day of the Lord's wrath on the whole earth (vv. 8-16). From verse 17 to the end of the chapter, Israel and the world are in the kingdom age where holy and purified Jerusalem will be the focus. The bad memories of the past will be forgotten, the blessings of all people will be greatly multiplied, and peace and prosperity will prevail (vv. 17-25). *In verse 17 the Lord says, "For I will create a new heaven and new earth." After reading verses 18 to 25, what evidence might there be that this is different from the "New heaven and New earth" found in Revelation 20:1?*

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## Psalm 103, Isaiah 66, Colossians 1-4, I John 1 (#79)

**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. *Who does David encourage to praise God (hint: look for the word praise in the psalm)?*

**Isaiah 66**— The chapter begins by seeing a contrast between the righteous and the wicked. The righteous are humble, submissive, and tremble at God’s Word, but the wicked people are guilty of eating unclean food, idolatry, murder, delighting in detestable practices, and persecuting the godly. A day is coming when God will execute judgment on all evil doers, and “they will see the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against Him (v. 24 HCSB).” In contrast, Yahweh guarantees that the righteous will rejoice in their immediate deliverance from the wicked, and the new Israel will be born in a day when the Messiah appears and will transform Jerusalem and the land of Israel. The nations will come to Jerusalem to see the glory of Yahweh bringing their wealth to honor Him, and there will be peace flowing like a river. Israel will continue in its preeminence throughout the Millennial reign of Christ and on throughout eternity into the new heavens and new earth (v. 22, Revelation 21, 22). *Who is the one who the Lord esteems and looks favorably upon? See verse 2b. Fully explain what this means.*

**Colossians**— This book was written by the Apostle Paul about 60 A.D. when he was under house arrest in Rome. Paul had never been in the city of Colossae and so this church was founded by Epaphras, who was one of his converts who had reported to Paul heresies in the church. The theme of this epistle is the “Preeminence of Christ in all things.” “Jesus Christ is the supreme Lord of the universe and Head of the church and therefore He is the only One through whom forgiveness is possible, making legal obligations or philosophical studies irrelevant in matters of salvation.” #11 p. 309. In chapter two Paul condemned legalism, mysticism, and asceticism which began to cause havoc on the churches in Asia Minor. In chapter 3 through 4:6, Paul explains true godly behavior in the believer’s personal life as well as in the family and the workplace. The book ends with personal greetings to many believers in the church.

**Colossians 1**— Paul begins by commending the church for their faith in Christ, love for the saints, and hope that is reserved in heaven for them. This spiritual health of the believers was produced by the powerful message of the gospel which is bearing fruit and growing all over the world (vv. 1-8). He prayed that the saints in Colossae would know the will of God and have the power to obey it through right living. Because of the work of Christ, they were rescued from the dominion of darkness and received the forgiveness of sins (vv. 9-14). False teachers were trying to influence the church by saying that Christ did not actually become human flesh but was only spirit. The verses that follow (vv. 15-24) clearly define the person, nature, and work of Christ showing Him as the Lord of Creation (vv. 15-17) and the Lord of redemption (vv. 18-20). The very purpose of redemption is to take alienated and hostile creatures and reconcile them to their Creator through Christ’s death on the cross and present them holy and blameless. Now Paul shares the once hidden mystery that now he is making known to both Jews and Gentiles which is Christ living in us that gives us the “assurance of sharing His glory (NLT).” Paul’s goal was to preach Christ

so that he may present everyone mature in Christ.

*Explain the meaning of the following phrases given by the Apostle Paul about Christ; (1) "He is...the firstborn over all creation" (2) "He is...firstborn from among the dead," and (3) "God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him." Verses 15, 18, and 19.*

**Colossians 2**— Although the Gnostics taught that there was a secret knowledge hidden from most believers, Paul taught that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ, and therefore because we are united with Christ, all that we need is provided to us (v. 3). By faith we can live a Christ-centered life by letting our roots grow down deep in Him and allowing our lives be built on Him. "For the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily in Christ (v. 9 HCSB)," and "you also are complete through your union with Christ (v. 10 NLT)." Through this union, we have buried the old life of sin and have become alive in Christ with all our sins forgiven. The legal demands of the Old Testament law were erased and taken away by being nailed to the cross, thus disarming and defeating Satan and his host of evil spirits. Now Paul fights the legalism of false Jewish teachers who tried to add dietary laws and special days as part of the means of being saved in addition to believing in Christ. Paul said that these rules and rituals are only a shadow of the reality which is found in Christ. Don't allow yourselves to get caught up in ascetic practices like the worship of angels, the seeing of visions, or other dietary regulations which are commands and doctrines of man but will not give you victory over evil desires. Only when we stay connected to Christ who is our head will we grow up healthy, strong, and properly nourished. *What were the philosophies that Paul warned the believers not to be captivated by (v. 8)?*

**Colossians 3**— A life honoring to Christ does not come through legalistic practices or ascetic behavior (chapter two) but comes when we set our hearts and minds on heaven's priorities and eternal realities and thus receiving power for godly living through the indwelling presence of Christ. In order to do this we need to put to death sins of sexual attitudes and behavior as well of sins of speech. #3, p. 2041. Since we are Christ's chosen ones we need to put on the six signs of love given in verses 12 and 13. Although the heretics were trying to cause division in the church, the believers were to allow the peace of Christ and the word of Christ to rule in their hearts. Verses 18 to 4:1 deal with the home and work place by addressing wives and husbands, children and fathers, and slaves (employees) and masters (employers). Each believer has his or her own duties and rights, but everything is to be done for the Lord, knowing that if we properly respond to those in leadership or authority, we will receive an inheritance as our reward from the Lord someday. *How do you understand the role of husbands and wives in marriage as taught in the scriptures? See Verses 18-19, Ephesians 5:22-33, and I Peter 3:1-7.*

**Colossians 4**— In verses 2 to 6, Paul speaks of a believer's responsibility to devote themselves to prayer and to share their faith to others. With the exception of Romans, Paul's closes his epistle with more personal news, greetings, and final commands than any other of his books. To summarize this book, "Paul makes it clear in Colossians that Christ alone is the source of spiritual life, the head of the body of believers. Christ is Lord of both the physical and spiritual worlds. The path to deeper spiritual life is not through religious duties, special knowledge, or secrets; it is only through a clear connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. We must never let anything



come between us and our Savior. “ #3 p. 2042. *What did Paul say was the proper way to communicate the gospel to the non-believer? See verses 5-6. What are some creative ways we can share our faith to our neighbors and friends?*

**I John**— This epistle was written by the aged apostle John to the believers in Asia Minor approximately 80 to 90 A.D. to encourage them in their faith and help them combat false teaching. Although John wrote this book more in a rambling style, he penned some very important passages regarding fellowship (koinonia) with Christ and each other, confession of sin, our relationship with the world, the refutation of Gnosticism, the faith that overcomes the world, and the assurance of salvation.

**I John 1**— John writes his first epistle in order that the believers would have full joy because of their fellowship with the Father and the Son. There is no darkness in Christ, and so those who claim to have fellowship with Him and still walk in darkness are lying and not practicing the truth. False prophets declared that they were sinless (v. 8) and that they hadn't sinned at all. Each believer must confess and admit their sin when they commit sin. *What does it mean to confess our sin? Say I John 1:9 by memory.*

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## Psalm 104, I John 2-5, II John, & III John (#80)

**Psalm 104** — God's greatness is celebrated in this psalm recounting the many wondrous things that He has done. *Imagine you were writing this psalm, how is He "very great" to you?*

**I John 2**— Whenever a Christian sins, he or she is able to rely on the faithfulness of Christ to defend us before the Father due to the merit of His atoning sacrifice on the cross. The sacrifice of Christ is sufficient for the sins of the whole world (v. 2), but only efficient to those who by faith have received the gift of salvation that Christ offers. John gives several tests in his epistle to show whether one truly has been born of the Spirit of God and has genuine faith. In verses 4 to 6 he says that true faith is seen through obedience to Christ's commands and living like He lived (vv. 1-6). Another test that He gives is the test of love (John 13:34-35). It is incongruent for a person to claim he is a believer and at the same time to hate his brother. The author indicates three levels of spiritual maturity in the family of God in verses 12 to 14. John gives an exhortation to the believers not to love the world; the fleeting fulfillment of the cravings of the sinful nature, the lust for material accumulation, and the boasting of what he has or does. Instead we are to have a continual focus on that which is eternal (vv. 15-17). We know we belong to Christ since we have the anointing of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). As we abide (remain) in the Holy Spirit, we are taught the truth about Jesus Christ, that He is both fully divine and fully human and that He is unified with the Father (vv. 18-29). *How can a Christian guard against the worldly influences that interfere with our love for God and one another? Extra: What are the three levels of spiritual maturity in the family of God given in verses 12-14? What are the characteristics of each stage and the spiritual growth each one is experiencing?*

**I John 3**— John begins with two incredible, purifying truths about each believer. First is the fact is that we are now God's children, and the other is that we will be transformed into His likeness at His coming for the saints. Now John strikes at the heart of Gnosticism which declared that the spirit of man is good but the body and physical realm are inherently evil, and therefore sin in a person's life is normal and unimportant. John declares that it does matter how a person lives since a genuine born-again believer has a new nature and the Holy Spirit who will not allow him to habitually practice sin. Although there may be individual sins in his life, continual habitual sin will not be a pattern in the life of a true believer (vv. 1-10). Another evidence that a person has passed from death to life is that they will love and care for fellow believers. If a person hates his brother, he acts like Cain who murdered his brother Abel and was under the power of the Evil One (vv. 11-15). We should not just say we love our brothers, but we must actually show the truth by our actions. We must authentically demonstrate our love by laying down our lives for each other as Christ did, and by meeting, as we are able, the material needs of those who live in deprivation (vv. 16-20). The Spirit of God gives us confidence before God that our prayers will be answered if we

trust in Jesus, obey His commands, and love our brothers and sisters in God's family (vv. 21-24). Verse 9 says, "Everyone who has been born of God does not sin." If a person who claims to be a Christian and continues to live in habitual sin, is that person really saved according to John? Explain.

**I John 4**— In the first six verses, the Apostle John returns to the theme of false teachers (1:18-27). Because of the informal and open service of churches during this time, these teachers would share a testimony or a teaching, but it would be a false teaching about Christ or some other subject. John wanted to make sure they applied the correct biblical tests to determine the truth from error. He assured them that the indwelling Holy Spirit had far greater power than the Evil One so they need not fear (vv. 1-6). Why should we love one another? First, the wellspring of love is God. Secondly, God is characterized by love. Without any obligation, the Father sent Jesus to be the propitiation for our sins which is reason enough for us to love each other (vv. 7-12). Thirdly, His love permeates our hearts so that we can love others. He gives to us full assurance that we belong to Him because of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. As we open ourselves to God's perfect love, it will cast out the fear of punishment and will give us confidence as we contemplate our future day of judgment before Christ. In summation, "Whoever loves God must love his brother also (v. 21)." *What tests should we use to see if messengers and their messages are truly speaking God's truth? See verses 1-6 and amplify beyond the text.*

**I John 5**— Now the dominate theme changes to the words "believe" and "faith." John declares that no person can live a life of love and obedience without having a born-again conversion experience. In reality, it is our faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord that transforms us into conquerors over the world, and causes us to delight in His commands rather than being burdened by them (vv. 1-5). John gives the three-fold witness that Jesus is God's Son, both fully human and fully divine. A false belief in John's time was that the "Christ" descended on Jesus the human being at His baptism, and the "Christ" left Him before He died on the cross so that when He died He was only human. John says the three witnesses are Water, Blood, and the Spirit. The Water represents the baptism of Jesus where the Father was a vocal witness of His Son (Matthew 3:27). The Holy Spirit was a witness at the baptism of Jesus as He ascended like a dove and rested on Him. The Blood of Christ on the cross is also a witness when the Father caused supernatural darkness, an earthquake, and the tearing of the veil in the temple (vv 6-8). John 15:26 shows that the Spirit is a witness of who Christ was and continues to this very day to be a witness of Christ in our hearts. Additionally, we have the witness of God's Word that whoever believes in the Son has eternal life (vv. 9-13). John concludes the chapter covering the topics of answered prayer, the sin unto death, and that through the death of Jesus Christ we have victory over the Evil One, a life of holiness, and true fellowship with the God. John finishes with "Little children, keep yourselves from idols (v. 21)." *How can we know that we have eternal life? See verses 9-13, Romans 8:16, Ephesians 1:13-14. Also apply other verses that would be appropriate.*

**II John**— Written about 90 A.D., this is a personal letter to the chosen lady who was most likely the hostess of a church that met in her house. Since these home churches were often encouraged and taught by teachers who travelled and visited different assemblies, John was making her aware of the charming false teachers who were spreading false doctrine about the deity and the humanity of Christ. John challenged her to full commitment to the truth of God as taught by the apostles.

As John writes to the elect or chosen lady, some believe this is a figure of speech that describes the church that is receiving the letter rather than an actual woman. John restates the theme of I John which is to walk in love and obedience to the Lord's commands. The word "truth" is mentioned five times in the first four verses and declares that all those who are in fellowship with Christ are able to discern the truth because of the indwelling Christ that is in them. The purpose of the letter was to put the elect lady on the alert for those who would pervert the truth about Christ. These deceitful teachers accepted the deity of Christ but denied His humanity. John wanted to make sure that the elect lady did not welcome these teachers or receive them into her home and thus share in their evil deeds.

*Verse 8 says, "Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward (ESV)." Taking into account verses 8-11 and other verses in the New Testament, how can we lose our full reward for eternity?*

**III John**— John addressed this letter to Gaius who was a leader in a home church commending him for his hospitality, encouraging him in his Christian life, and warning him about Diotrephes. Written about 90 A.D., this epistle was different from II John in that he did not address wrong doctrine, but a man who abused his spiritual authority and leadership in the church.

John the Elder wishes that Gaius would spiritually and physically prosper and lauded him for his faithfulness to the truth. Gaius was commended for his support and hospitality to strangers who shared the Word of Truth to his church body. John warned Gaius about Diotrephes, most likely a nearby pastor, for his abusive leadership and ungodly behavior. On the other hand, he commended Demetrius for his testimony of living the truth. *What were the reasons that Diotrephes was denounced by John? Have you ever known a leader in a church that was like Diotrephes?*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups . c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV. 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 Questions & 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, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL. 14. Life Essentials Study Bible, c. 2011, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN.